
Meeting Report for CHRAJ/WAAF Stigma & Discrimination Platform Project

Inception Meeting for Stakeholders

Held Tuesday February 3, 2015 at the CHRAJ Head Office, High Street Accra



WAAF and CHRAJ would like to thank all those who were able to attend the S&D Platform inception meeting and provide meaningful comment and feedback on current and upcoming projects related to fighting stigma and discrimination against PLHIV and key populations.

Welcome Address: CHRAJ

The stated purpose of the meeting was to help build a need for and familiarity with the CHRAJ S&D Reporting System put in place to help facilitate the protection of vulnerable people as a part of CHRAJ's mandate. When the rights of vulnerable populations are violated, there should be a mechanism in place to protect their rights and provide them with access to justice. CHRAJ has seen the need to find creative ways of addressing the human rights issues experienced by PLHIV and key populations. However, the organization faces the challenge of a limited network, preventing these populations from accessing information and channels of communication that may allow them to report S&D in their communities. As a result, the human rights of these populations have not to this point been adequately protected. In order to fulfill CHRAJ's legal mandate, the organization has pursued collaboration with other organizations with expanded networks, especially those established among PLHIV and key populations as advocates and service providers for vulnerable people. The goal of the collaborations and the purpose of the meeting are to build relationships that will help increase the need for using the S&D Reporting System and encouraging more people to see the need to report when they experience stigma and discrimination. To do



this we need to know what the challenges are that keep target populations from accessing the system and find solutions to those challenges.

Presentation on Stigma and Discrimination and the S&D Reporting Platform: CHRAJ Health Rights Desk



The S&D Reporting System has been developed over the course of the last several years through various collaborative and strategy meetings, particularly with Ghana AIDS Commission, and culminating in the launch of the web-based reporting system in January 2013. The launch involved various trainings to ensure that the human rights officers within CHRAJ could adequately address the needs of the individual cases being brought before CHRAJ, as well as ensure that privacy and

confidentiality are being adequately addressed in the process to protect complainants. Two trained officers at the Health Rights Desk complete the intake process and send the complaint to be assigned to an investigator. The purpose of this inception meeting is to introduce the collaborators and stakeholders to what is planned for the next steps. The demand generation strategy currently being implemented to create increased demand for the system and intake of new cases. This process involves collaborating with advocacy and outreach programs in cooperation with organizations who have established contact with key populations and are able to provide the public education programs necessary to inform vulnerable people about the system. This requires a focal person within the organization who has been trained on the use of the system. As of the time of the meeting, 22 cases have been reported, which highlights the need for further outreach so that more can be done to protect the rights of vulnerable populations.

Concerns were expressed by stakeholders who had used the system to report a complaint that the length of time between when the complainant registers the complaint and when they



receive a response from CHRAJ was too long, which was discouraging to complainants. The desire for more responsiveness from CHRAJ officers in regards to receipt of a complaint and details regarding follow up and steps being taken to address the complaint was expressed. CHRAJ personnel emphasized that every complaint may follow a very different timeline depending on the nature of the complaint and the procedure for contacting the respondent to ensure responsible handling of the case. Avoiding breaches of confidentiality takes priority in this procedure, which involves delicate handling that may result in a longer process, but ultimately protects those involved. CHRAJ recognizes that officers should acknowledge the receipt of cases, and that focal persons may always follow up with the CHRAJ officers if they are concerned with the status of a complaint. Cases entered into the web-based system also now have a tracking number that will allow focal persons and complainants to check the status of the complaint.

Stakeholders also discussed the need to reach out directly to the LGBT community directly and build relationships there. CHRAJ expressed that one of the current goals of the program is to build new connections with groups that will facilitate further communications, understandings, and outreach within key populations, including the LGBT community. The organization recognizes the unique capacity for the networks that exist around each stakeholder group to facilitate this goal. CHRAJ is relying on these groups to help promote outreach opportunities, while providing effective access to focal persons within the groups to help facilitate safe and confidential reporting of stigma and discrimination.

Presentation on Improved Uptake of S&D Reporting System: WAAF

WAAF has partnered with CHRAJ and stakeholders to help address gaps in the S&D reporting platform. The challenge has been in understanding why the platform is underutilized. The currently identified gaps include low demand for reporting human rights abuses and violations among PLHIV and key populations, inadequate knowledge of the existence of the platform and its purpose, inadequate understanding of what constitutes a violation under Ghanaian law that results in not knowing what to report, and privacy concerns related to whether or not reports are confidential and CHRAJ can be trusted. To address these gaps, WAAF will act as an intermediary between CHRAJ and stakeholder groups and beneficiaries. These community partners will help identify key community members to act as focal persons who can act as peer educators and advocates who can help create demand for the S&D Reporting Platform. These focal persons will be trained using a specifically designed training module created to focus on the causes behind the previously mentioned gaps. Marketing materials may also be modified to better suit the target populations, and will then be distributed to 200 identified sites. The end result will be higher demand for the platform, clarification of cases that can and should be reported, increased understanding of stigma and discrimination as well as human rights among target populations, and ultimately that justice is being done.



Stakeholders were provided with a copy of the training module outline for review and feedback. Any questions, comments, or suggestions can be directed to Gideon at WAAF who can be reached at gideon@waafweb.org or by phone at 0243 040 687. Trainings will be held in five regions starting in April and going through May. Specific dates will be distributed at a later date. Trainers from CHRAJ will spend three days in each location training a different specified key population group on that day to allow stigma and

discrimination issues specific to that population to be addressed fully. Focal persons in those areas should identify a maximum of 20 participants per session and mobilize the group, assisting in finding an appropriate venue to conduct the trainings.

Discussion following the presentation clarified that the term key populations as currently outlined by CHRAJ include MSMs, female sex workers, and intravenous drug users, but stakeholders helped to broaden that definition to address the LGBT community on a larger scale. CHRAJ representatives also mentioned workshops being offered March 16 through 20 on gender and sexual diversity. Each day of the training is designed for particular types of organizations. Please address further inquiries to CHRAJ.

Feedback on Marketing Materials: Discussion by All

The current Discrimination Reporting System brochure and call card were distributed and stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on what could be added to encourage people to use it. Emphasis was placed on building a better message that will promote trust and communication between target populations and CHRAJ. Suggestions included the following:

- The message should be general, not only for specific populations, so that it has a wide appeal.
- The message should be based on the constitution of Ghana, and maybe even list some of the rights.
- The message should be more simple, such as something like “Have you been stigmatized? Call here.” If it is too complicated, no one will read it. It should be a short and catchy message.
- Cartoons can be used to attract the eye along with a simple, catchy message.



- The language being used should be consistent between the marketing materials and CHRAJ.
- The materials should appeal to diverse target populations, as it will be distributed at a wide variety of sites.

Soft copies of marketing materials will also be brought to trainings for further review and feedback.