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Tide Turning

- ◆ Preventing 12.2 million new infections and
- ◆ Saving 7.4 million lives by 2020

Written by Michael Schuenemeyer

The future is now. Getting to zero – zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero stigma and discrimination – depends on what we do today. Now is that moment which is filled with urgency about the future, a future free of HIV. The good news of 2011 is that the tipping point for turning the tide on the HIV & AIDS epidemic has never been nearer.

Although we are not yet there—and we must be clear about that—for the first time in the 30 year history of the HIV & AIDS epidemic there is the real possibility for a significant decline in the HIV & AIDS pandemic by the end of this decade. This is not mere hopeful aspiration. It is based on a scientific model called the Strategic Investment Framework which provides a road map based in real numbers for preventing 12.2 million new HIV infections and saving 7.4 million lives by 2020.

To accomplish this, the Strategic Investment Framework calls for an increase in targeted global HIV & AIDS funding of \$22 billion from now through 2015, which is then followed by a decrease in funding by 2020. The decrease in funding will come as a result of HIV programs reaching the most impacted populations and declines in illness and death because of the larger numbers of people re-

ceiving antiretroviral treatment (ART).

The key word here is “targeted.” Until now approaches to funding the HIV response have allowed unsystematic prioritization and investment to happen as interests and stakeholders competed for funding, spreading resources thinly among a vast array of projects. The Strategic Investment Framework calls for prioritization of funding based on a nuanced understanding of the epidemic, targeting most impacted areas and key affected populations with the most effective interventions.

What are the implications of the Strategic Framework for UCAN?

UCAN is already in sync with the framework in significant ways, particularly in terms of the framework’s six program areas and critical enablers (see Figure 1 on page 2). The 2009 General Synod resolution, “Calling for comprehensive HIV prevention in church and society,” which serves as the basic blue print for UCAN’s work. We focus our programs to support local churches, collaborations of faith and secular community organizations, and other agencies to address the needs of underserved key affected populations. These programs ad-

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Strategic Investment Framework

Figure 1

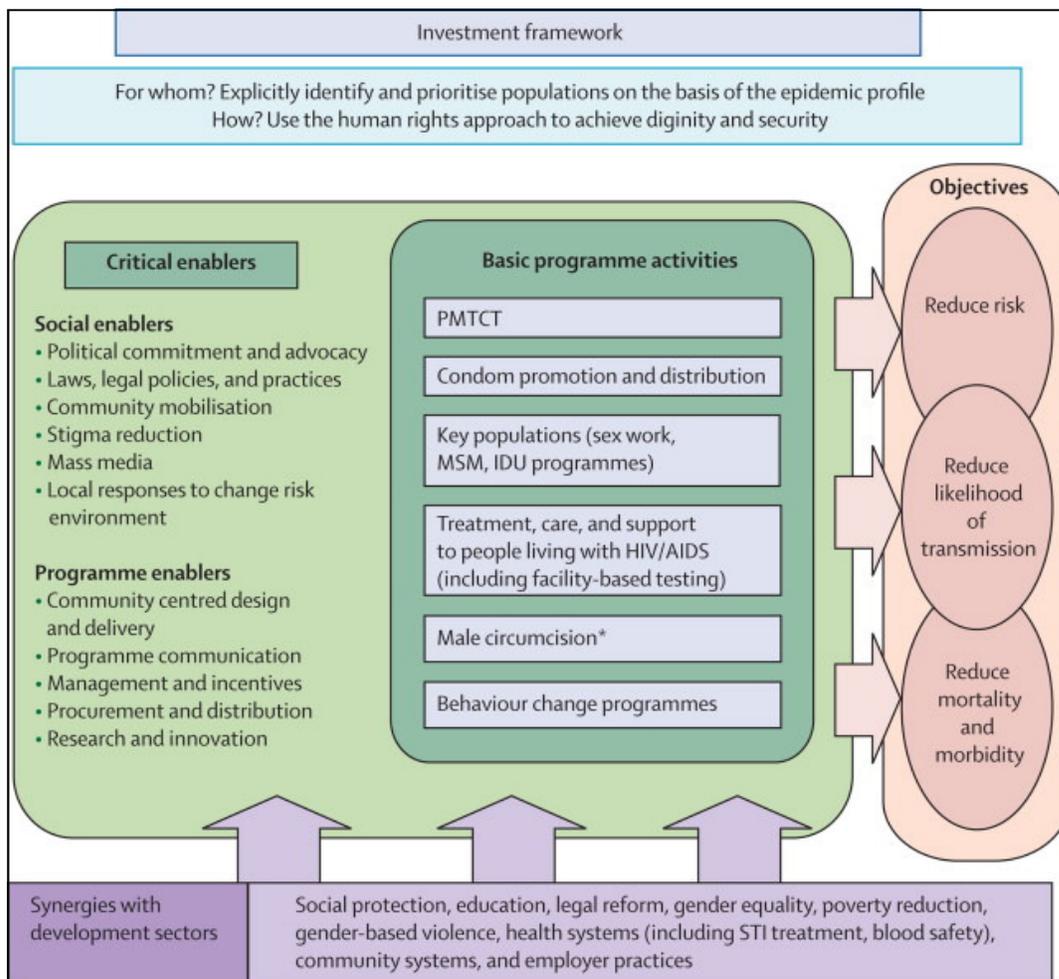


Figure 2

Strategic Framework's projected funding needs (billions USD)	2011	2015	2020
Basic programmes (total)	\$7.0	\$12.9	\$10.6
Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT)	\$0.9	\$1.5	\$1.3
Condom promotion	\$0.4	\$1.5	\$1.3
Sex work	\$0.2	\$0.2	\$0.2
Men who have sex with men (MSM)	\$0.3	\$0.7	\$0.7
Injecting drug use	\$0.5	\$2.3	\$1.5
Treatment, care and support (including provision of provider-initiated counseling and testing)	\$4.5	\$6.7	\$5.5
Male circumcision (applicable in generalized epidemics with a low prevalence of male circumcision)	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$0.1
Behaviour change programmes	\$0.2	\$0.7	\$0.7
Critical enablers	\$5.9	\$3.4	\$3.7
Synergies with development sectors	\$3.6	\$5.8	\$5.4
Total	\$16.6	\$22.0	\$19.8

Tide Turning

(Continued from page 1)

dress the issues of PMTCT (prevention of mother to child transmission), condom use and distribution, and working with a variety of populations, including: MSM (men who have sex with men) and IDUs (injection drug user). UCAN provides assistance to congregations offering care and support to people living with HIV/AIDS.

UCAN also helps local churches and other faith-based communities to understand themselves as one of the synergistic sectors engaged in HIV response. We are generating some of the “critical enablers” identified in the framework as the “Complementary strategies to increase the effect of basic programme activities...” These include social enablers, such as mobilizing communities, reducing stigma, and working locally to change the risk environment. We are in a good position to both generate momentum and engage collaboratively in the HIV response in the U.S. and around the world.

The promise of the Strategic Investment Framework makes this is an “All hands on deck!” moment in the epidemic. Every setting of the church has role. How can you help your church, neighborhood, city, state and country get to zero? How can you raise awareness, reduce stigma, and provide care

and support for those living with HIV? How can you influence public policy and advocate for the increased funding needed now so that the full potential of the framework may be realized.

Today we have the opportunity to become the tide turners in this pandemic. UCAN invites you, the whole United Church of Christ and anyone else to be tide turners with us.

For all the urgent calls to increased involvement in HIV response, the call today has never been more urgent or filled with more promise and hope. 12.2 million people in the world are counting on us to do our part and 7.4 million lives depend on our collective response.

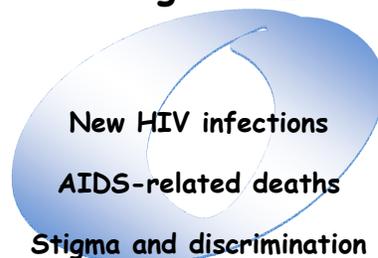
The Strategic Investment Framework was developed by a cohort of international scientists and experts from a variety of agencies, including UNAIDS, the Global Fund, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Government. It is published on www.lancet.com Vol377, June 11, 2011.

Rev. Michael Schuenemeyer is Executive Director of UCAN, Inc. and Executive for Health and Wholeness Advocacy, United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries.

**We believe
it is
our task
to heal
and to
mitigate
suffering
in a way
that is
untied to
judgment
and
tied to
justice.**

**Bishop Yvette
Flunder**

Getting to ZERO



AIDS 2012 & Interfaith Pre-Conference

July 22-27, Washington, DC

July 19-21, Howard University

Washington DC is the place to be in July of 2012. That's when 20,000 people from around the world are expected to come together for AIDS 2012, the International AIDS Conference, July 22-27. The conference will draw people from all sectors of the AIDS response, including people living with HIV/AIDS, faith leaders, scientists, community and government leaders, and service providers.

"Turning the Tide Together" is the theme for the conference which will provide a vast array of opportunities to share, learn, network and collaborate with the people leading charge to get to zero. UCAN will be there and is involved in the planning groups for several of the faith activities, which will include

- an Interfaith Pre-Conference, "Taking Action for Health, Dignity and Justice" at Howard University July 21-22.
- The National Faith in Action HIV & AIDS Coalition is planning a workshop and rally leading into the opening of the main conference on Sunday, July 22

- There will be a Multi-Faith Networking Zone in the Global Village which will have a variety of exhibits, vendors and a cultural program—all of which is free and open to the public.
- The AIDS Quilt will be displayed on the mall in Washington DC and planning is underway for an interfaith worship to launch the display.
- A "We Can End AIDS" mobilization/march for Human Rights & Economic Justice will take place on July 24.

More than anything, AIDS 2012 will be a place for the global community (of which we are a part) to galvanize into a common movement to realize the vision of "Turning the Tide Together" on this pandemic by the end of this decade.

Registration opens December 1, 2011 with early registration. Early registration closes February 23.

For more information:

- AIDS 2012: www.AIDS2012.org
- Faith Activities: www.e-alliance.ch/aids2012/

"We Can End AIDS"

Mobilization for Human Rights and Economic Justice, July 24, 2012

On July 24, 2012 thousands of people are expected to join in collective action in Washington DC, calling for:

- **Full funding** to end HIV and AIDS
- Respect for **Human Rights**
- 15 million people on **AIDS treatment** by 2015
- **An end to Trade Deals** that put profits before lives
- **Stable Housing** for everyone
- Evidence-based **HIV Prevention**

www.wecanendaids.org



The United States has a new national organization for houses of worship and other faith based organizations working together to turn the tide on the HIV & AIDS pandemic. It is called the National Faith in Action HIV & AIDS Coalition. The organization is in early stages of development utilizing the internet, Facebook and AIDS 2012 in Washington DC to mobilize participation.

It has been more than a decade since such an organization has existed in the U.S., which created a gap in the capacity of the faith response to HIV. The launch of the National HIV & AIDS Strategy, the development of the new Strategic Investment Framework and AIDS 2012 coming to Washington DC in July provided the impetus to mobilize and

build the capacity of the faith response in the U.S. The has never been greater or more urgent.

The National Faith in Action HIV & AIDS Coalition already has a presence on Facebook and it plans to launch it's web site in January 2012 (www.faithinactioncoalition.org).

At AIDS 2012, there are plans for a side event workshop and rally leading into the opening of the conference on Sunday afternoon, July 22.

UCAN is serving as the administrative and coordinating body, as well as the fiscal agent.

Antiretroviral Treatment as Prevention

A study release last spring provides overwhelming evidence for antiretroviral treatment as prevention. The HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 052 study reports that antiretroviral treatment can reduce HIV transmission by 96%, demonstrating the importance of scaling up access to treatment, a key aspect of the Strategic Investment Framework discussed in the lead article of this newsletter.

The multinational 052 study enrolled 1763 discordant couples, i.e., a couple in which one person is HIV positive and their partner is HIV negative. The study posed two questions: Would antiretroviral treatment of the HIV positive partner reduce the rate of transmission to the negative partner, and would immediate therapy slow disease progression in the HIV positive person, as compared with delayed therapy?

The answer to the first question was overwhelmingly, yes. The answer to the second question was not quite as strong, but still a definite, yes.

Antiretroviral therapy is not perfect and will not be the ultimate answer to controlling and ending the HIV epidemic. A variety of medical factors and the costs are some of the concerns. Nevertheless, universal access to treatment, care and support remain the right goals. Having the tools in hand to not only save lives and maintain or restore health in HIV positive persons, but also to reduce transmission to their sexual partners makes access to treatment a moral obligation.

Antiretroviral therapy still needs to be part of comprehensive programs that include treatment, care, support and that utilize multiple evidence-based approaches to the prevention.



Pernessa Seele, CEO
The Balm in Gilead

National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, March 4-10, 2012

www.NWPHA.org

Come, let us join together and become a powerful force of conquering HIV & AIDS and healing lives, families and communities in our lifetime. Faith communities of all ethnic backgrounds and individual believers are invited to join in the ever-flowing synergy of prayer and education for the healing of AIDS, March 4-10, 2012.

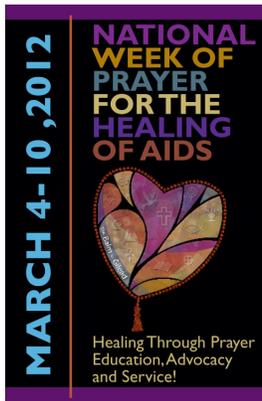
There is still no cure for HIV, but many persons living with HIV & AIDS have the opportunity to live a long, quality life if they are able to access treatment and care. However, far too many Americans still do not know the basic facts of HIV; and every 9 1/2 minutes an individual in the U.S. becomes infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Stigma and discrimination toward people living with HIV is still the norm in many communities, including many communities of faith, as well as, families, schools, and neighborhoods.

Together we must shine a brighter *light of faith* on AIDS-related ignorance, stigma, discrimination and hatred. Together we can give voice to America's dire AIDS epidemic; communicate the messages of faith that honor the worth and dignity of every child of God and work to eliminate HIV related stigma and discrimination; and share information and engage in activities that prevent new HIV infections and promote universal access to treatment, care and support.

The universal Spirit of God is calling us to pray. Let us join our hearts and minds and spirit March 4-10, 2012 in a week of prayer, education and advocacy.

—Pernessa Seele, CEO of The Balm in Gilead

More information, including worship resources and a toolkit, is available at www.NWPHA.org.



2012 HIV & AIDS Calendar

For more information: www.aids.gov/awareness-days/

- February 7 — National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- March 4-10 — National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS
- March 10 — National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- March 20 — National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- May 18 — HIV Vaccine Awareness Day
- May 19 — National Asia and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- June 8 — Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- June 27 — National HIV Testing Day
- July 8-14 — Stepping-up in Faith Week
- July 19-27 — AIDS 2012 and Interfaith Pre-Conference, Washington, DC
- Sept 18 — National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day
- Sept 27 — National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- Oct 15 — National Latino AIDS Awareness Day
- Dec 1 — World AIDS Day

Sacred Jazz Benefit Concert

Mt Zion UCC, Cleveland

Written by Deneen Terrell

I have been struggling to write the information about the HIV/AIDS event, so many things went wrong and so many things went right. Being such a perfectionist I wanted it to be spot on my first go round.

I had wanted to host a HIV/AIDS Benefit concert for two years, but initially I did not have the help I needed. I tried to recruit an individual who signed-up for the church's HIV/AIDS committee to assist me but it didn't work out.

So, I put the concert on pause and focused on raising some money on my own. I started having various fundraisers, like selling some of my Jewelry, and I raised enough to rent a hall, but not yet enough for the concert. Then, I attended a breakfast that Barbara Baylor of the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Network of Greater Cleveland organized, The Women of Faith HIV/AIDS Breakfast. I was truly inspired by Dr. Redden's and Kimberlin Dennis' speech on doing something about the HIV/AIDS in our community. Those two speeches inspired me to move now, and even if I had no help that was okay.

I planned the benefit on my own and struggled to find a 501c3 organization to be the fiscal agent. Barbara encouraged me to ask UCAN (When Barbara came on the scene everything start falling more into place). With UCAN as fiscal agent, I was able to get some individual contributions and business donations, however I discovered I was too late for some. It is best to send requests for business donations 6 to 8 months in advance because budgets are done the first 3 months of the yearly budget for 90% of the companies.

I was able to get a gift certificate from Best Buy, \$500.00 from Cleveland Clinic, a one night hotel stay at the Double Tree Hotel

and tickets for the International Film Festival in Cleveland.

There were many other companies I had hoped to get donations from. I received information from University Hospital to submit the fundraising letter in January and from Ford and Kia to submit the information 6 months in advance. I really wanted to get a car and raffle it off for \$100 a ticket. I hope to get that next year if I decide to this again.

The Concert:

Everyone that took part in the concert did so pro bono, except one band. There are always challenges in organizing an event like this. A few of the volunteers bailed out the day of the event and we had to create a choir on the fly when one scheduled wasn't able to come.

All of the speakers and singers were phenomenal and inspiring. I could not ask for more from them. Yes, it was a struggle to get the full support of the church and I wish more people had attended to hear the message and feel the passion that the speakers bestowed on the audience. Nevertheless, Rev. Paul Sadler spoke with me and said I was making a difference in the church.

And he was right. From the concert we made \$1,776 in sales and donations. Once we paid for the entertainment, caterer and the cake, we were able to give \$1077 to the AGAPE HIV program in Cleveland, and we donated \$100.00 to our church.

All in all, I had a wonderful experience planning the event. It gave me sense of purpose. Giving back is something that I love doing and I will continue to do it.

Deneen Terrell is a member of the Mt. Zion UCC in Cleveland, OH and serves on UCAN's Board of Directors.



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Free Download: *Affirming Persons, Saving Lives* www.ucc.org/apsl

Affirming Persons, Saving Lives (APSL) is the comprehensive HIV prevention curriculum published by the United Church of Christ. With nearly 1,000 pages of lesson plans and fact sheets, the curriculum is a complete resource designed to help churches become learning centers for HIV prevention, care and support.

APSL addresses the root causes of the HIV pandemic—including HIV transmission. Centered in the assurance of God's love for every human being, the curriculum promotes the values of healthy self-worth and respect for the worth and dignity God has bestowed on each and every person.

By providing medically accurate information and teaching practical decision-making and skills, APSL supports responsible choices. The curriculum affirms abstinence—both from sexual intercourse and drug use—as the most effective means to prevent HIV transmission. APSL builds the skills of learners to say "no" effectively to unwanted drug use or sexual intercourse.

APSL teaches adults and teens how to recognize behavior that increases the risk of HIV transmission. It includes sessions to help parents discuss HIV effectively within their families, urges them to become knowledgeable about HIV, and encourages them to be partners in the education of their children.



Next Issue:
Summer/Fall 2012
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UCAN's Mission

Contributions may be made
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UCAN's Mission Statement

The mission of UCAN, Inc. (The United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network) is to build a network of people, congregations and organizations within and beyond the United Church of Christ for care giving, education and prevention in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic by:

- Providing technical assistance to help congregations and other settings of the church start and build their capacity and programs;
- Offering training in the use of the UCC's comprehensive HIV and AIDS curriculum, *Affirming Persons, Saving Lives*, as well as other HIV and AIDS educational resources;
- Giving leadership for education and information on public policy concerns; and
- Prioritizing its work to bring critical presence to those most affected by HIV and AIDS in the United States and throughout the world.