

# HIV/AIDS and Religious Institutions



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## The Role of Churches in the fight against HIV/AIDS and stigma within the Migrant sub-community in Netherlands

[Outreach activity initiated by NAMIO<sup>1</sup> in cooperation with St. Gobeze

### **Background**

According to an official statistics, many migrants live with HIV/AIDS among in The Netherlands. Concerned community organizations and community leaders need to be alarmed and get involved in the fight against this problem within the migrant sub-societies in this country. We believe that religious organizations have direct role and responsibility to the community. Besides, they have good access and good acceptance within the community.

Further more, as spiritual institution, churches are expected to render spiritual related and other supports to victims of this sickness. The bible teaches that Christ has come for those who are in problem; who seek help and to reconcile man with the Father. The church need to play the leading role in this and in comforting victims and fighting public problems such as HIV/AIDS. There are so many brothers and sisters who are wailing out there in this foreign country. What has the church to do in this regard? The victims try to activate each other to come together.

Dear brothers, NAMIO together with St. Gobeze would like to bring this problematic to your attention and talk about possible care/support services your church may consider to embark on. We believe that the priests and other leaders of your church are willing to fully cooperate and work with us .

### **The issues**

We want to address/communicate the following issues:

- 1) How does the church see/understand the problem and what is it doing to protect its members?
- 2) What is the church doing to comfort and care for people living with this problem?
- 3) What can the church do to limit the spread of this sickness within the community and to break the taboo of talking about HIV/AIDS and limiting social discrimination against people living with the virus.

### **Strategy: how are we going to do the activity?**

1<sup>st</sup> St. Gobeze and NAMIO will discuss about the above issues with the priests/pastors and other leaders and plan an info workshop/conference for the general members and other related people;

2<sup>nd</sup> Together with the church an information workshop/conference will be organized. Church members and other people from the target community will be invited. If possible medical doctors and interested journalists from the target communities will be involved in the activity. It could be more appealing if the workshop/conference is implemented in the week of religious festivities.

3<sup>rd</sup> if the church leaders and the community are willing, an overview of outcomes of the activity/the meeting will be broadcasted via selected Medias.

### **Cost**

<sup>1</sup> **NAMIO** stands for **National Association of Migrant Organizations** against HIV/AIDS and other STI'S  
KvK inschrijving: 30208618 KvK Utrecht Bank: 459985418 ABN-AMRO



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NAMIO will cover necessary costs to implement this activity. Asmare Yalew (vice chairman of NAMIO) is delegated by the board to implement this activity. The board expects Haimanot Belay of St. Gobeze (member of NAMIO) to plan and execute the activity together with Asmare Yalew. If necessary other board members of NAMIO and St. Gobeze can be involved.