



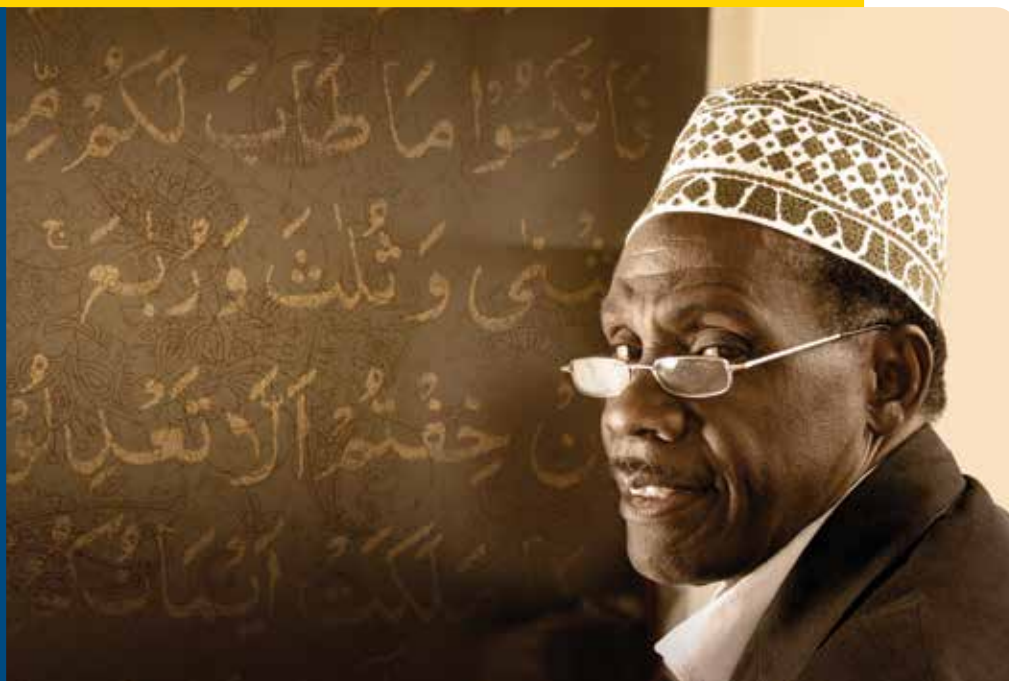
Advancing Tanzania's National HIV and AIDS Agenda: Advocacy Approaches to Mainstreaming Gender in HIV-Related Laws and Policies

KEY POINTS

Engaging men is central to preventing the spread and mitigating the impact of HIV. However, programmatic interventions alone are insufficient for engendering sustainable behavior change.

Supportive national, organizational, and workplace laws and policies that address the harmful gender norms that deter male engagement in health are equally critical to ensuring that programmatic efforts are effective and lasting.

The CHAMPION Project's policy and advocacy strategy engaged key decision makers in addressing male involvement in HIV prevention and reproductive health, built the capacity of partners to advocate for policy change, and directly contributed to the incorporation of male engagement language into national, local, and workplace strategies and documents.



BACKGROUND

The government of Tanzania is committed to confronting the gender-related factors that facilitate the spread of HIV. Inequitable gender norms—societal expectations about men's and women's behavior—encourage men to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors that fuel the spread of the epidemic, including unprotected sex with multiple, concurrent partners and violence against female partners (Barker & Ricardo, 2006). Further, many men equate illness with weakness, making them less likely to seek health care, including HIV testing and counseling (HTC) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. For these reasons, engaging men in health is of central importance to moving Tanzania's national HIV prevention efforts forward in a sustainable way.

The Tanzanian government's political will offers an important gateway for advocacy¹ action to ensure that HIV-related laws, policies, and guidelines at the national, organizational, and workplace levels are gender-responsive and implemented effectively. It is widely accepted that men who are more gender-equitable are more likely to talk with their partners about health, more likely to use family planning, and less likely to perpetrate gender-based violence (GBV) and engage in the unsafe sexual behavior that puts them and their partners at risk of HIV (Barker & Ricardo, 2006). Additionally, when health services are male-friendly, more men seek care and accompany their partners to antenatal care visits, which reduces the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (WHO, 2012; Mehta, 2001).

APPROACH

Conceptual Framework for Policy and Advocacy

CHAMPION's policy and advocacy work centered primarily on assisting the Tanzanian government with policy formulation and conducting research to inform policy, as well as

POLICY AND ADVOCACY INTERVENTION



reviewing existing policies and improving the environment for policy implementation at the community level. The project's policy and advocacy strategy was developed using an adapted version of the University of Texas's policy cycle model and outlines five steps in the policy process (Müller & Schumann, [no date]) (Figure 1).

This model acknowledges that policymaking is often a fluid rather than an inflexible top-down or bottom-up process. Strategies and activities outlined in the framework do not need to be executed in ordered steps and often require revision throughout the cycle. While policymakers can provide leadership in formulating and ensuring policy implementation, stakeholders across all levels—academia, civil society, service providers, the private sector, media, and communities—contribute to setting the policy agenda and holding governments accountable for implementation.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY AGENDA

CHAMPION's policy and advocacy agenda focused on HIV and AIDS, maternal and infant mortality, unintended pregnancy, low contraceptive use, and GBV. To ensure the sustainability of advocacy efforts, CHAMPION recognized that an advocacy agenda must be set by and for communities themselves. Through this bottom-up approach, specific policy changes within CHAMPION's thematic areas were guided by priorities set by local activists and community members

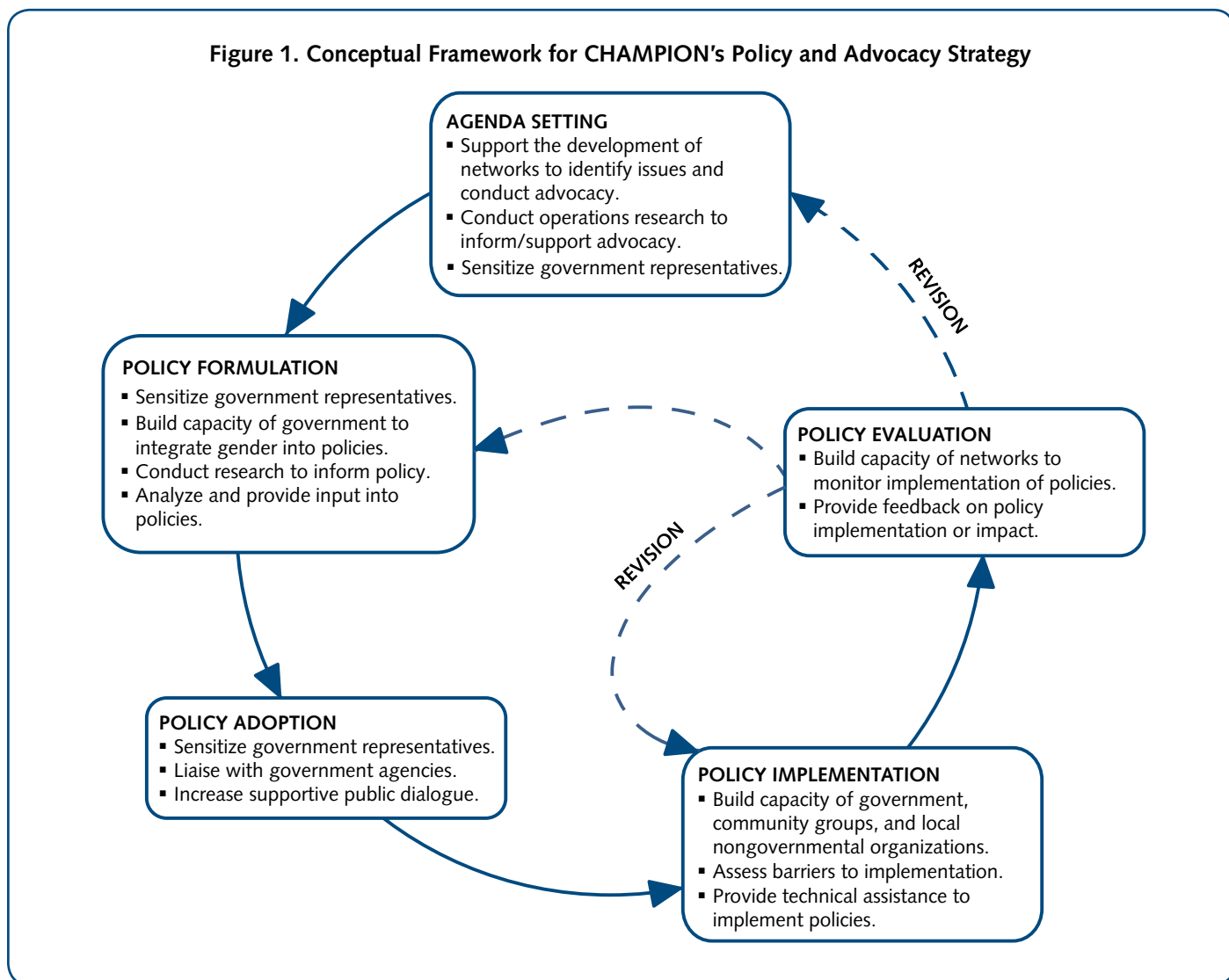
through one-on-one meetings and networks in which CHAMPION was engaged.

ADVOCACY NETWORKS

CHAMPION worked through a number of networks to reform national, organizational, and workplace policies to support HIV prevention, stigma reduction, reproductive health (RH), and health-seeking behavior among men. The project undertook much of its national-level advocacy work with partners through MenEngage Tanzania (MET), an advocacy network (led by CHAMPION from 2008 to 2014) that promotes male engagement in HIV prevention and SRH. CHAMPION was an active member both of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Gender Coalition and of Mkuki (the National Gender-Based Violence Coalition for CSOs). Both networks provided ample opportunity for leveraging resources, exchanging information, and strengthening partner capacity.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY TARGETS AND PARTNERS

In recognition of each of the policy cycle, advocacy and policy-related activities spanned the national, district, and community levels and targeted policymakers, government agencies, media, district council AIDS committees, private- and public-sector employers, and local government associations. CHAMPION engaged a number of partner organizations,



Box 1. Illustrative list of CHAMPION's policy interventions

Policy Formulation

- Consulted with local stakeholders to identify policy needs related to male involvement in HIV prevention.
- Provided technical assistance (TA) in the drafting of new national, organizational, and workplace policies.

Policy Adoption

- Sensitized government, community, and religious leaders on the importance of engaging men in SRH.
- Liaised with government agencies to promote the adoption of gender-transformative HIV-related policies.

Policy Implementation

- Provided TA to government and civil society stakeholders on integrating gender-transformative approaches into relevant national strategic plans, policies, and programs.
- Identified and addressed barriers to policy implementation.

Policy Evaluation

- Analyzed existing policies to measure their level of implementation and/or impact.
- Built government and civil society capacity to monitor and evaluate policy impact.

networks, and activist and community groups to support and implement its advocacy and policy-related activities. These included the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), Tanzania Policy Forum, CHAMPION Community Action Team (CAT) members, and local religious leaders.

POLICY REFORM

CHAMPION's policy objective was to strengthen national, regional, and district HIV- and RH-related laws, policies, and guidelines to ensure they provide direction on engaging men to improve SRH outcomes. In line with the conceptual framework for engaging in the policy cycle, CHAMPION worked at various points of the policy process with a focus on gender transformation and male involvement in ensuring health (Box 1).

Policy Review and Development

CHAMPION made important contributions in the area of policy formulation with respect to HIV prevention, including the successful inclusion of language on engaging men in the promotion of gender equity in the National Multi-sectoral Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS (2008–2012). The project reviewed key national documents—including the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's National Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission (eMTCT) of HIV Plan (2012–2015), the national Safe Motherhood Law (2012), and TACAIDS' Gender Operational Plan for HIV Response in Tanzania Mainland 2010–2012—which resulted in the inclusion of language and strategies to engage men in the national HIV response. Additionally, technical assistance was provided to civil society stakeholders and private- and public-sector employers to review existing organizational and workplace laws, policies, and programs to ensure the integration of gender-responsive and male involvement approaches, identify policy gaps, and support the drafting of new policies and guidelines where needed.

ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

CHAMPION's advocacy objective was to build a network of like-minded organizations and institutions with the capacity to advocate for policies that increase gender equity, prevent HIV and GBV, and improve RH. The project employed a participatory approach to its advocacy work and undertook numerous activities, including conducting advocacy training for various network partners, government agencies, and other

stakeholders (Box 2). Trainings focused on building partner capacity to analyze policies and programs through a gender lens, advocate for policy change, and engage the media in reporting on related issues.

Media Engagement

The objective of CHAMPION's media engagement strategy was to increase knowledge and awareness of HIV, SRH, gender, and GBV and build the capacity of media owners, editors, journalists, and advertisers to report on these issues. CHAMPION sponsored media tours and press conferences at the district level to generate media attention to its work. Additionally, the project ran radio and television advertisements, conducted press interviews, published opinion editorials, and distributed promotional materials.

Community-Level Advocacy

CHAMPION disseminated policies and trained community leaders at the district, ward, and village levels on gender-responsive HIV, SRH, and GBV laws and policies. These efforts secured local buy-in and strengthened implementation at the local level. For example, Council Health Management Teams incorporated male engagement approaches to HIV and SRH into district Comprehensive Council Health Plans.

Box 2. Illustrative list of CHAMPION's advocacy interventions

- Built networks with civil society stakeholders to advocate for new and improved policies.
- Reviewed existing laws and policies to identify gaps related to CHAMPION's thematic areas.
- Sensitized government personnel to garner policy support.
- Used mass media to propel a national dialogue on positive male involvement in promoting gender equity and SRH and preventing HIV and GBV.
- Developed advocacy action plans with civil society partners and networks.
- Built the capacity of local stakeholders in networking, coalition building, and advocacy on issues related to CHAMPION's priority areas.



A couple attending a reproductive health visit at a CHAMPION-supported health facility.

CATs conducted awareness-raising and outreach events, such as dramas, health fairs, and community dialogues, with the support of CHAMPION staff and local partner organizations. Individual champions were also identified by their communities as role models of gender-equitable behavior to lead advocacy efforts within their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective advocacy for policy change needs to be strategic, adequately funded, well-coordinated, timely, and evidence-based. Assessing the impact of policies is crucial to ensuring that they are effective and supported and that ineffective policies are revised. Advocacy efforts have the greatest impact when they are implemented with a holistic understanding of the larger policy environment and have set policy objectives. Strengthening laws and policies related to engaging men in health is necessary but not sufficient to ensuring their sustainability. National and local stakeholders have a key role to

play in ensuring accountability for policy implementation at the national, local, organizational, and workplace levels.

Future policy and advocacy initiatives should ensure that stakeholders are well-positioned to advocate effectively, whether engaging decision makers or conducting community-based education. Organizational capacity to conduct advocacy should be built across both government and civil society partners to ensure local buy-in and fidelity to policy implementation. Participatory processes are often time-consuming, yet they are essential to catalyzing long-term social change. Engaging local officials and government agencies to plan and budget for male involvement activities in annual plans helps to ensure impact. Likewise, while the process of obtaining government approval of national documents can be slow, this too is critical to institutionalizing policy change.

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¹ Advocacy is a set of actions undertaken by a group of committed individuals or organizations to introduce, change, or obtain support for specific policies, programs, legislation, issues, or causes (USAID, 2008).

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