



ACCM DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE GIPA PRINCIPLES

GIPA means the Greater Involvement of People living with HIV/AIDS, and derives from a principle embedded in the Paris AIDS Summit Declaration of 1994. At this summit, leaders of 42 nations met together to determine how they could effectively respond to the AIDS crisis.

The Declaration, signed by all nations attending the meeting, acknowledged the central role of people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) in AIDS education and care, and in the design and implementation of national and international policies and programs, in order to successfully tackle HIV/AIDS. It also acknowledged that, for positive people to take on a greater role in the response, they need increased support.

By this Declaration, **AIDS COMMUNITY CARE MONTREAL (ACCM)** acknowledges its full support of the GIPA Principles.

To encourage the greater involvement of people living with HIV in all levels of policy making, and project design and implementation, ACCM expects and supports the following outcomes in our society and in the world:

- Training and employment of PHAs as counsellors
- Voluntary counselling and testing centres run by trained PHA counsellors
- Referral to peer support on diagnosis
- Help with disclosure of HIV status to family
- Respect for the confidentiality of positive people involved in the response
- Building capacity of PHAs; provision of skills and appropriate training to develop their organisations, build networks, carry out research, and design, implement, monitor, evaluate and sustain projects and programs
- Skills training and encouragement to go public about living with HIV (providing they have good personal support, secure housing and income).
- Engagement in the decision-making processes, providing input into policy design, in an equal partnership with other decision makers
- Encouraging more positive women and others disadvantaged by their gender, sexual orientation, ethnocultural identity economic status, age or level of ability to take leadership roles in the movement
- Provision of incomes to PHAs so they can live healthy lives
- Employment opportunities made available to enable these actions to happen

Why Do We Need GIPA?

The GIPA Principles are important for several reasons. Publicly acknowledged involvement helps to reduce stigma and discrimination and can be a powerful tool in breaking down the barriers of fear and prejudice. PHAs bring the unique perspective of their experience to the range of organisations and agencies working in AIDS. PHAs have a great deal to contribute towards the challenges posed by AIDS, if they are given the opportunity to spell out their needs on an equal platform with government and non-government organisations. We have learned by now that both prevention and care and support need to go hand in hand. It is a continuum. When PHAs put a face to AIDS, speak out and become involved in policies and programs, the impact is enormous and profound. PHAs challenge the myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. They make people realise that anybody can contract HIV. PHAs perform valuable functions in society and in the HIV/AIDS movement. Within the movement, PHAs are powerful HIV/AIDS educators, counsellors, and policy makers among other roles. Their involvement in the response also builds up the morale of other positive people. The essential link between protecting human rights and promoting public health suggests that a greater pool of PHA activists must be encouraged.

What ACCM will do to give meaningful support to the GIPA Principles

It is the aim of ACCM not to merely give token support of the GIPA Principles, but to be proactive in the goals intended. In this sense we will:

1. Establish a PHA Advisory Committee to the Board (*name to be determined*). This committee will be separate from the Board of Directors and its role will be determined by *Terms of Reference* which will initially be determined and approved by the Board. Any subsequent changes to these Terms of Reference will be as a result of consultations with the PHA Advisory Committee and approval of the Board. Amongst other things, PHA Advisory Committee will report to the membership at the Annual General Meeting on how the organization is doing regarding PHA involvement as outlined in this GIPA Declaration.
2. Actively solicit and invite PHAs to submit applications for employment in the organization as outlined in the Personnel Policy.
3. Actively encourage and recruit PHAs to become volunteers in the organization. This volunteer participation should be at all levels and according to the individual capacity of each person.
4. Actively encourage and recruit PHAs to present themselves for election to the Board of Directors. Once elected to the Board of Directors PHAs will be encouraged to play a meaningful and active role on all of the committees of the Board, including the Executive Committee.
5. Actively and regularly invite, encourage and facilitate consultation with all PHAs who are members of ACCM in regards to programming and services provided to PHAs.
6. Support initiatives of PHAs in activities that they undertake to better the lives of People Living with HIV/AIDS. This support could take the form of promotion, financial or logistical support, depending on the resources available and the support that is requested.
7. Pursue, support and encourage advocacy efforts for issues outside of the organization.

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