

Community mobilization for HIV prevention: Individual and collective action in a rural South African intervention

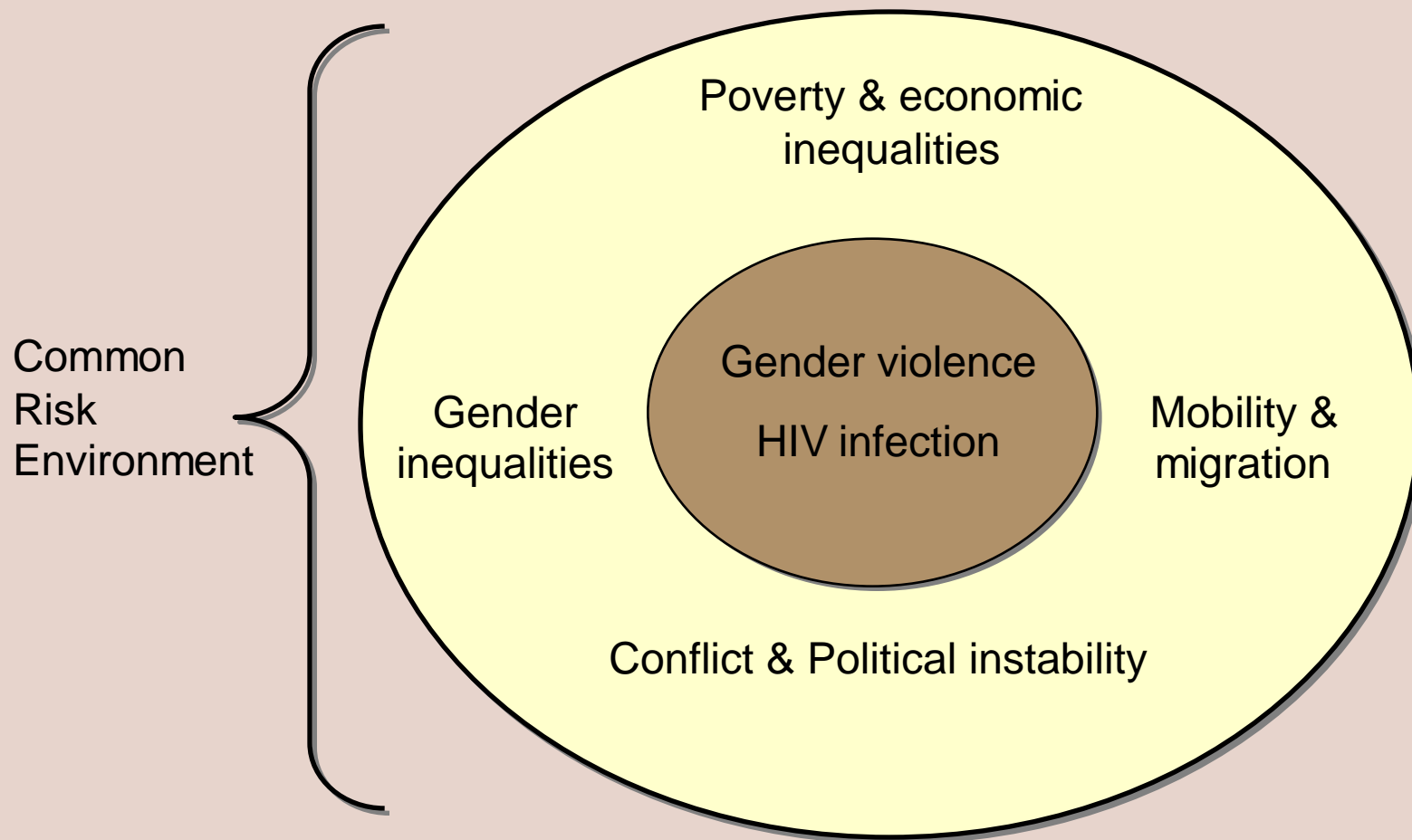


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Structural factors influence gender violence and HIV in southern Africa:



Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE)



- Engage in structural drivers of health at a community level
- Reduce HIV incidence and gender-based violence
- Study effects in a randomized control trial of 8 villages
- Partnership between
 - Public health: LSHTM, Wits University
 - Microfinance: Small Enterprise Fdn (SEF)

IMAGE program components

Microfinance

- Established provider with 40,000 clients in South Africa
- 'Solidarity groups' of 5 women
- Poverty focused approach

Gender Training

- Training integrated at fortnightly loan centre meetings (40 women)
- **Sisters for Life**
(6 months)
10 participatory sessions on gender and HIV
- **Community mobilization**
(8-12 months)
Participant-led action





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Why is Community Mobilization important to public health?

- Behaviour change
 - Learning in action-oriented way (Ramirez-Valles)
 - Supportive peer norms (Busza & Baker; Gregson et. al)
- Changes to structural environment (Parker et al; Heise & Elias)
 - Developing local leaders (Beeker et al)
 - Effective resource management (Guareschi & Jovchelovitch)
 - Shifts in government policy (Freidman & Mottiar)



IMAGE Process Evaluation

➔ *Was the IMAGE intervention delivered as planned and what was the response to it?*

	2001-2004		2005-2007	
Qualitative data	Data Source	Quantity	Data Source	Quantity
	Participant observation notes	134 hours	<i>In-depth interviews:</i>	
	Reflection meeting notes	30 hours	Opinion leader (HIV / Gender)	15
	Observation diaries of programme field staff	240 hours	Opinion leader (Microfinance / Development)	12
	Focus group discussions with programme clients	16	Programme client	24
	<i>In-depth interviews:</i>		Programme field staff	47
	Programme client	15	Programme management	22
	Programme drop-out	19	Programme sponsor	5
Quantitative data	Data Source	Quantity	Data Source	Quantity
	Attendance registers	406 clients	Quarterly progress of scale-up	10 times
	Questionnaires on intervention acceptability	385 clients		

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Why is Community Mobilization central to IMAGE?

- Problem-solving and critical consciousness

People have a lot of ideas about their own problems and how to solve them and your role as facilitator is not to tell them what the solutions are but to help them to come up with solutions. So that was very much emphasised as part of the community mobilisation. (RADAR manager)

- Diffusion of messages to men and youth

Community mobilisation is like creating waves of conscientisation beyond your primary group. (RADAR mgr)

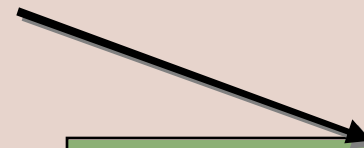
- Engagement of wider community

Phase 2 of Sisters for Life is an attempt to maintain responsiveness to community needs and engage the broader community in mobilizing for collective action and change. (IMAGE monograph)



How did Community Mobilization work?

Community mobilization was probably the most unplanned planned part of it. And it was deliberately unplanned... This was one area where we knew in order for it to work, it had to be a bit freer. (RADAR manager)

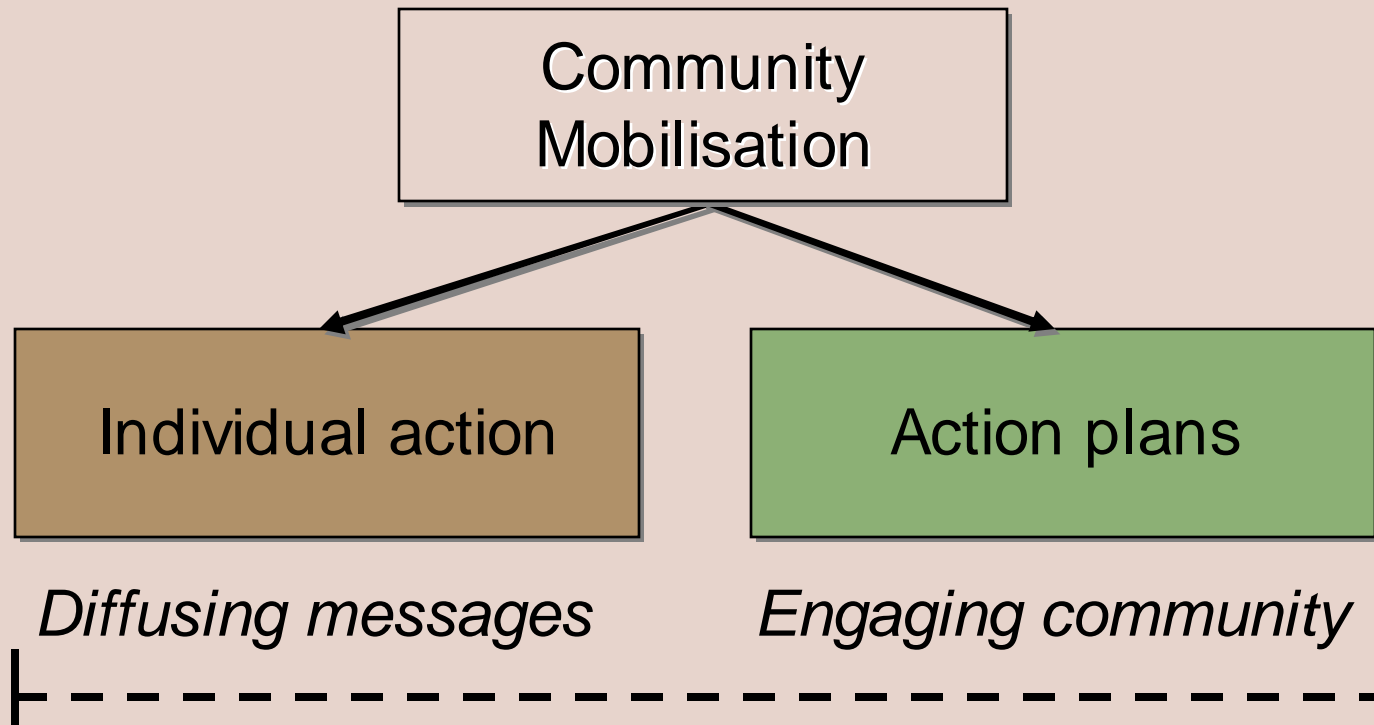


Action Plans

Engaging community

Natural leaders are responsible for developing an Action Plan with their centres, with the aim of implementing what they regard as appropriate responses to priority issues. (IMAGE monograph)

How did Community Mobilization work?



A lesson that came out was that community mobilization doesn't have to be all big mass movements and marches and so on, that it can be everybody trying to speak to their child and giving each other support around that. (RADAR manager)

Individual action

Clients shared information	Qualitative Example
É with children	<i>Many parents have difficulties in talking to their children about relationships and other intimate issues. But health talk made us challenge our fears. (IMAGE Client)</i>
É with partners	<i>I never used to talk to my boyfriend about it but I am now. I would tell him if I am not happy and about the importance of condom use. (IMAGE Client)</i>
É a mongst neighbourhood children	<i>We went to a school and got learners together. Some laughed but others accepted our lessons. We told them about different types of diseases, and that you must use a condom. (IMAGE Client)</i>
É with friends and relatives	<i>I felt privileged to get educated on matters that were so important to me. We shared this information with our fellow neighbours and relatives. (IMAGE Client)</i>
É at work, church, stokvels	<i>I shared health education with health care members. My colleagues say I am more enlightened and useful and I attribute most of it to SEF education. (IMAGE Client)</i>



Collective action

Clients engaged in collective action

Qualitative Example

by hosting workshops for men

We organised Men as Partners from Joˆburg who came and did their workshop with the men in the neighbourhood about issues of abuse and helping in the household. (SFL staff)

by intervening in local conflicts

I immediately turned around and went back into the house told him to stop abusing his wife... I would not have done it had it not been the knowledge I got from SEF. (IMAGE Client)

by partnering with local councils

SEF women have played an important role in the community. We have organised the all-women meeting, in which we told the chief, civic leader and the police about the crime in the area. (IMAGE Client)

through new committees

Women went to the chief to report a rape committee they will accompany the survivor to the police station and to the hospital to help them in the many issues around rape. (SFL staff)

through marches

We organised a march against women abuse in our area. Many women attended it. It was even published in our local newspaper To be a SEF member means to be active and say no to oppression of women. (Client)

During CM, clients experienced:

- empowerment

I felt so proud that I managed to say something which made a change in someone's life. (IMAGE client)

- a desire to creatively solve problems



In general I think we lack power. I was thinking if we carry our placards and go and stand by hospital gates and picket there. We need police to escort us and we more manpower backup to succeed. (IMAGE Client)

- an understanding of how to engage community

It is difficult because people have different views and some are criticizing us, but we have learnt many things during the organization of the march. The important lesson is that women need to speak with one voice. (Client)

- confidence to start new groups

There are services we did not have. After we joined SEF we called all members of our village and set up a burial society. SEF gave us the courage to form this club. (IMAGE Client)

Participation in Community Mobilization

Statement	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
I was active in trying to formulate and do an action plan with my centre	50	36	12	1
I participated in the activities organised by my centre in our village and local area	48	29	21	2
I think my centre was successful in trying to change things in our village through its action plans	56	35	7	2




- Some clients were active, others less so...
They participated but there were some people who were excellent and some were just backriders who put responsibility on the shoulders of those who were selected. (SEF staff)
- Individual action was more flexible
It takes us a lot of time and energy to do it... We can teach our children and friends but I find it difficult that I have to leave my business and run around. (IMAGE Client)

Constraints to participation

Constraints	Qualitative Example
Skills building	<i>In our heads we felt, okay, naturally a workshop will help them prioritise their plans and away they go. And what we didn't realise is the centres were very different in what their needs were. (IMAGE Manager)</i>
Establishing client ownership	
Monetary incentives	<i>You cannot just say, ok you've finished the training now go ahead and mobilize. Unless you're prepared to pay them. So in this case, the only payment that they're getting is guidance. (SFL Trainer)</i>
Low skills/ confidence	
Other commitments	<i>Women don't have time to leave their businesses and concentrate on community activities because SEF wants its money when repayment time comes, so many women sacrifice activities for their businesses. (Client)</i>
Lack of financial resources	
Social dynamics (eg. privacy)	
Lack of community support	<i>The neighbours want to see us doing agricultural projects rather than doing something that is political. I think that there are some people who are threatened by what SEF women are doing. (IMAGE Client)</i>
Limitations by local leadership	

Lessons for Community Mobilization in future health programs

Lessons Learned

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build strong skills amongst participants• Provide ongoing support through facilitators• Provide incentives for participation |
| Personal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect existing participant commitments•  Individual-level action may be more feasible• Provide financial resources for mobilization ideas |
| Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with community structures early• Discuss social dynamics that hinder mobilization• Plan alongside powerful community members |