



Renewal of FCM HIV/AIDS technical partnership – Toronto/South East District Council (Botswana)

Date:	May 9, 2007
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Shirley Hoy, City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends the renewal of the technical partnership between the City of Toronto and South East District, Botswana, (SEDC) under the auspices of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, for the time period 2007-2010. The City of Toronto will continue to support SEDC in improving their capacity to address HIV/AIDS issues with particular emphasis on helping establish a solid foundation for the South East District Youth Empowerment League (SEDYEL), a youth led soccer league which integrates HIV/AIDS awareness, health promotion, life skills, sexual health and youth leadership development.

The partnership with SEDC was established in 2002 after Stephen Lewis, the Special UN Envoy, made a plea to Canadians in 2001 to take up the HIV/AIDS challenge and FCM approached the City of Toronto to take the lead in establishing a project in Botswana which has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world. The partnership has two areas of focus: palliative care and support; and youth engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. the City of Toronto renew its partnership with the South East District in Botswana for a period of three years through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities International Centre for Municipal Development's Municipal Partnership Program,

with a view to increasing the capacity of that municipality and the municipal sector to address HIV/AIDS issues in Botswana and to move towards sustainability for the initiatives undertaken through the partnership;

2. the City Manager be authorized to enter into the necessary agreement to give effect to the renewal of the partnership; and
3. the appropriate City officials be authorized to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There are no additional resources required for any divisional budgets for this initiative. The City of Toronto's contribution will be in-kind through staff time for the City's part of the administration for the partnership, to participate in overseas technical exchanges, and to host technical exchanges for the partners in Toronto. All direct costs for travel, accommodation and related expenses incurred by City staff will be provided by FCM's International Centre for Municipal Development. Additional in-kind contributions will continue to be leveraged from other community organizations and institutions where appropriate.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact Statement

The City of Toronto's participation in technical partnerships such as this assists cities in the developing world with community and organizational capacity building initiatives. In the next phase of this partnership, the City of Toronto will continue to support SEDC in improving their capacity to address HIV/AIDS issues with particular emphasis on helping establish a solid foundation for the South East District Youth Empowerment League (SEDYEL), a youth led soccer league which integrates HIV/AIDS awareness, health promotion, life skills, sexual health and youth leadership development.

DECISION HISTORY

In May 2002, Council adopted an International Policy Framework with seven key goals. (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2002/agendas/council/cc020521/pof8rpt/cl009.pdf>) One of these goals is to position the City of Toronto as a caring and compassionate City, which assists cities in the developing world with community capacity building projects. Consistent with this goal, in May 2002 Council also approved the City of Toronto's involvement in an FCM-led partnership in South-East District, Botswana with a view to increasing the capacity of that municipality and the municipal sector to address

HIV/AIDS issues in Botswana.

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2002/agendas/council/cc020521/pof8rpt/cl010.pdf>)

FCM's approach to municipal capacity building involves an active dialogue among Canadian technical experts, their overseas counterparts, political representatives and members of civil society. At the same time, FCM establishes strategic partnerships with national municipal associations, such as the Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA).

The FCM has indicated its interest in the continuation of Toronto's participation in the Municipal Partnership Program in Botswana for a three year period.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Botswana has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world (38%). With a population of 1.7 million, everyone in that country is either infected or affected by the pandemic. The first step of the Toronto-South East District partnership was to identify priority areas that would benefit from skills exchange and training. The Partners selected Youth Engagement and Palliative Care and Support as key focus areas, with gender and stigma as cross cutting themes.

The project, led by Toronto Public Health, has mobilized considerable additional resources by bringing in other partner organizations. For example, Casey House, a hospice and community care organization in Toronto, has played a mentoring and training role in bringing palliative care principles to SEDC's Home Based Care program. Palliative Care principles are now integrated into the program and South East District plays a leadership role in developing and implementing national Palliative Care guidelines.

The youth engagement component of the partnership is focused on establishing a sustainable Kicking AIDS Out (KAO) initiative through the South East District Youth Empowerment League (SEDYEL). The KAO approach integrates HIV/AIDS awareness, health promotion, life skills, sexual health and youth leadership development into the youth run soccer league which extends across the entire district. SEDYEL is a partnership between the City of Toronto, SEDC, Commonwealth Games Canada (CGC) and Mathare Youth Sports Association of Kenya (MYSA) with support from UK Sport.

Kicking AIDS Out is an approach used by an international network of organizations to bring the power of sport to fight the spread and stigma of HIV/AIDS. KAO recognizes the skills and capabilities of local youth and builds grassroots youth leadership capacity using a "youth for youth" peer approach.

COMMENTS

Accomplishments of the Toronto-SEDC Partnership:

The Toronto-SEDC Partnership has been established now for five years and has accomplished a great deal in both focus areas. The goals of the Palliative Care and

Support focus areas have essentially been achieved, with the mentoring and support of Casey House. Palliative Care principles are now integrated into the SEDC Home Based Care system and many of the staff and volunteers have received training and support in this regard. The Home Based Care Coordinator will act as a master trainer for other staff and volunteers in the district and the country as a whole. While there is still a long way to go for SEDC to achieve the supports and resources it needs for a comprehensive Palliative Care and Support Program, the support from the City of Toronto will move to one of “strategic advice” on a check-in basis only. The partnership will therefore focus primarily on youth engagement.

The Youth Engagement efforts are now being concentrated on establishing a sustainable Kicking AIDS Out (KAO) initiative in SEDC through the youth-led South East District Youth Empowerment League (SEDYEL). The accomplishments of SEDYEL are nothing short of extraordinary. In less than two years they have been able to establish 80 soccer teams, 13 of which are girls’ teams. SEDYEL engages about 2000 children and youth from all villages in the district. This is a first for Botswana where it is unheard of that youth have organized such a venture on a “youth for youth” basis and with such a strong emphasis on girls’ participation in all aspects of league organization, outreach and the sport itself. Both female and male leaders have begun to develop self confidence and skills in organizing, outreach, HIV/AIDS and sexual health information sharing and public speaking. It is clear that the very act of being engaged in an initiative that is both intellectually and physically challenging, has already made a profound difference in many participants’ lives. Anecdotal evidence also points to a reduction in crime in the district, attributed to the establishment of SEDYEL. In fact a number of former youth gang members are active participants. This is significant in the context of a country with very high HIV/AIDS prevalence, poverty and youth unemployment.

Sustainability issues:

While SEDYEL is clearly a “youth for youth” initiative and must remain so to be successful, the ongoing support of adult mentors and senior staff from SEDC, as well as support from national government, the community and private sector, is crucial for the project’s success. The concentrated infusion of resources to get SEDYEL established, through the support of CGC and UK Sport in project funding and paying for two MYSA coordinators to be in Botswana for a year to get SEDYEL off the ground, has enabled SEDYEL to make excellent progress in a short space of time. That said, the peer leaders have only just begun to acquire the skills required to run such a “youth for youth” initiative, and the league itself is not yet on solid ground.

CONCLUSION

Continuation of the partnership will help to ensure the sustainability of SEDYEL. It is recommended that the FCM sponsored partnership be renewed for 2007-2010. Ensuring that SEDYEL is firmly rooted across the district and the KAO approach fully integrated, will be a major contribution to assisting SEDC to engage its youth and thereby reduce the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS.

The partnership has benefited enormously from regional linkages, primarily through the partnership with the Mathare Youth Sports Association of Kenya. It is clear that establishing and strengthening regional linkages can leverage considerable additional resources and strengthen information and skills sharing in a cost effective manner. Countries in the region share many of the same issues and sharing best practices and strategies can be very helpful. The City of Toronto will therefore work with FCM to develop an HIV/AIDS networking approach through municipal government using the Botswana partnership as the foundation.

CONTACTS

Phillip Abrahams
Manager, Intergovernmental Relations
Strategic and Corporate Policy
Phone: 416-392-8102
pabraham@toronto.ca

Barbara Emanuel
Senior Policy and Strategic Issues Advisor
Toronto Public Health
Phone: 416-392-7464
bemanuel@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Shirley Hoy, City Manager