



## **The Use of Potential Social Structures and Entities for HIV Prevention Education: The role of Queen Mothers in Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

Stigma, misguided beliefs in causes and effects of chronic diseases in cultural settings and other health seeking behaviours made the incorporation of HIV and AIDS control program into the health care delivery system in Ghana very difficult. We decided to use queen-mothers to be forces of sexual behavioural change for health action. One of the available resources of human capital structures in the health systems and communities is the queen-mother entity.

The Central Regional Health Directorate decided to use 22 queen-mothers to implement HIV and AIDS prevention education and sexual behavioural change for a two year period. They mobilized the sexually active, and in and out of school youth in their communities to learn the importance of HIV and AIDS prevention to health and wealth creation. I, Ebenezer Koomson, led the design and the implementation of this program as the regional HIV/AIDS Coordinator in this region.

Three hundred and two (302) community meetings were organized during the period under review. Ten (10) community durbars and cultural displays on responsive reproductive health practices to combat HIV infections, associated myths, stigma and misconceptions were organized. One hundred and fifty nine (159) parents joined the clubs to give social support and motivation to strengthen the youth to accept the concept of involving the youth in decision making for their healthy sexual lifestyles. Forty-seven (47) patients and their partners were treated for sexually transmitted diseases.

Utilization of potential social structures for health communication and promotion is necessary to support the efforts of health organizations. The benefits could be visible during evaluation and subsequent re-adjustment done or otherwise, especially in limited resourced settings in sub-Saharan Africa.