

Due to the limitations of other HIV prevention, care and support projects in delivering effective results, CEEP sought a complementary approach, one that addresses the basic and immediate needs of beneficiaries; one that deals with the structural drivers of the epidemic; one that empowers beneficiaries both economically and personally to address the challenges that face them. Through addressing the basic needs of these beneficiaries, the commitment to the project is high with the resultant outcome of building capacity and the adoption of HIV and AIDS risk reduction strategies.

What is the HIV and AIDS risk reduction approach?

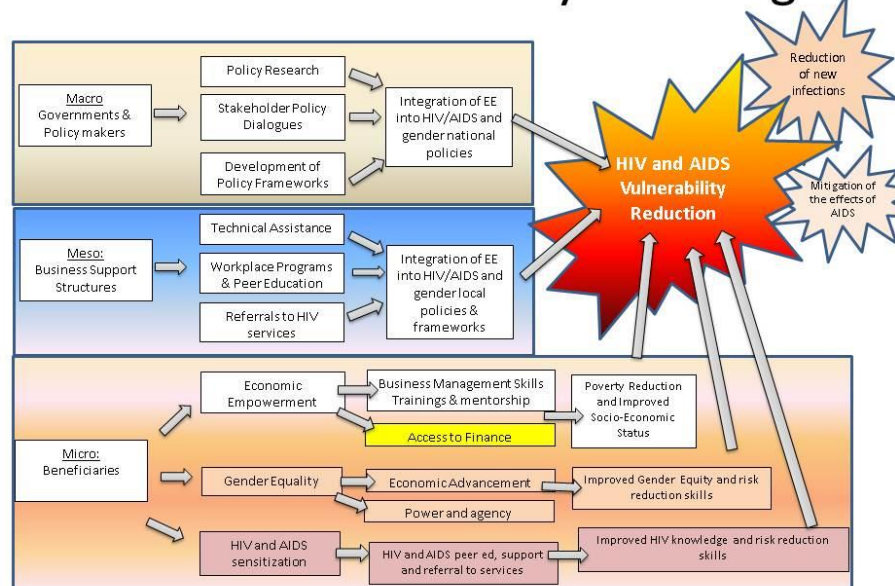
CEEP recognizes that there are numerous factors that can influence a person's HIV and AIDS vulnerability. The reduction of this vulnerability encompasses two aspects:

- the reduction of HIV vulnerability through a combination of HIV prevention strategies. These strategies include economic empowerment, behavioural strategies (e.g. reduce the number of partners and make correct and consistent use of condoms), biomedical strategies (e.g. medical male circumcision, prevention of mother to child transmission, voluntary counselling and testing), advocacy with national, provincial and local structures as well as the implementation of HIV workplace programs.
- The second aspect refers to the mitigation (or reduction) of the effects of HIV and AIDS on the individual, families and communities. Through the economic empowerment, HIV sensitization and referral to appropriate services, CEEP is able to reduce HIV and AIDS impact for people infected and or affected by the epidemic.

The framework

Working within a systems framework, the CEEP approach considers work at a Macro, Meso and Micro level. The focus on the Macro level promotes an enabling environment through work with national governments and policy makers to ensure that the relevance of this approach is seen at all levels and support is offered

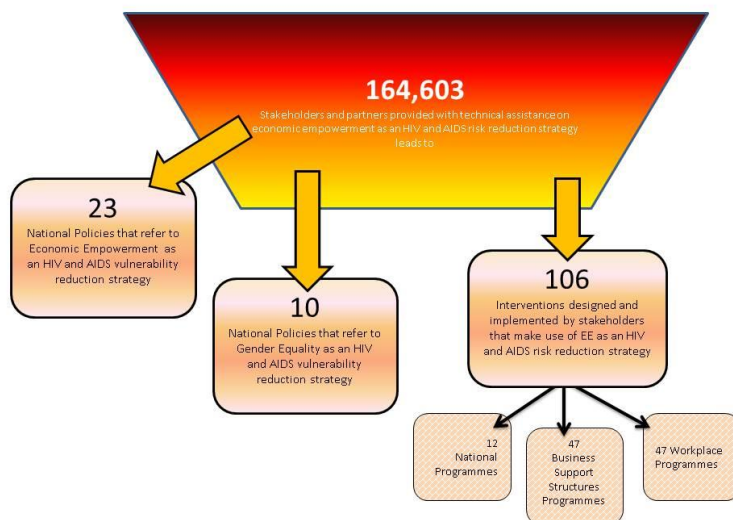
The Model: The Theory of Change



to the project. At a meso level, the project focuses on building the capacity of business support structures within the participating countries and regions. These support structures provide the platform from which to access and assist the informal traders located within the project's hotspots. This assistance includes the provision of peer education, training and mentoring to the traders to improve their businesses as well as the provision of information and referrals to services where applicable. At a micro level, support is offered to the beneficiaries at three levels. At the first level, economic empowerment is central and here beneficiaries are provided with knowledge, skills and resources to start or improve their businesses. At a second level, issues of gender equality is addressed and beneficiaries examine the manner in which gender can increase their HIV and AIDS

vulnerability as well as the social space to implement their economic empowerment skills. And at a third and final level, beneficiaries are provided with information and skills on HIV and AIDS through peer education and support. This knowledge is augmented through the provision of referrals to the relevant services to be found at health care sites, e.g. VCT, PMTCT, MMC, treatment and care.

Effects and outcomes of the project:

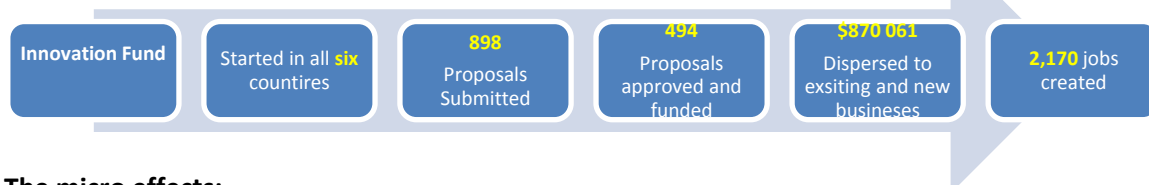


Macro effects:

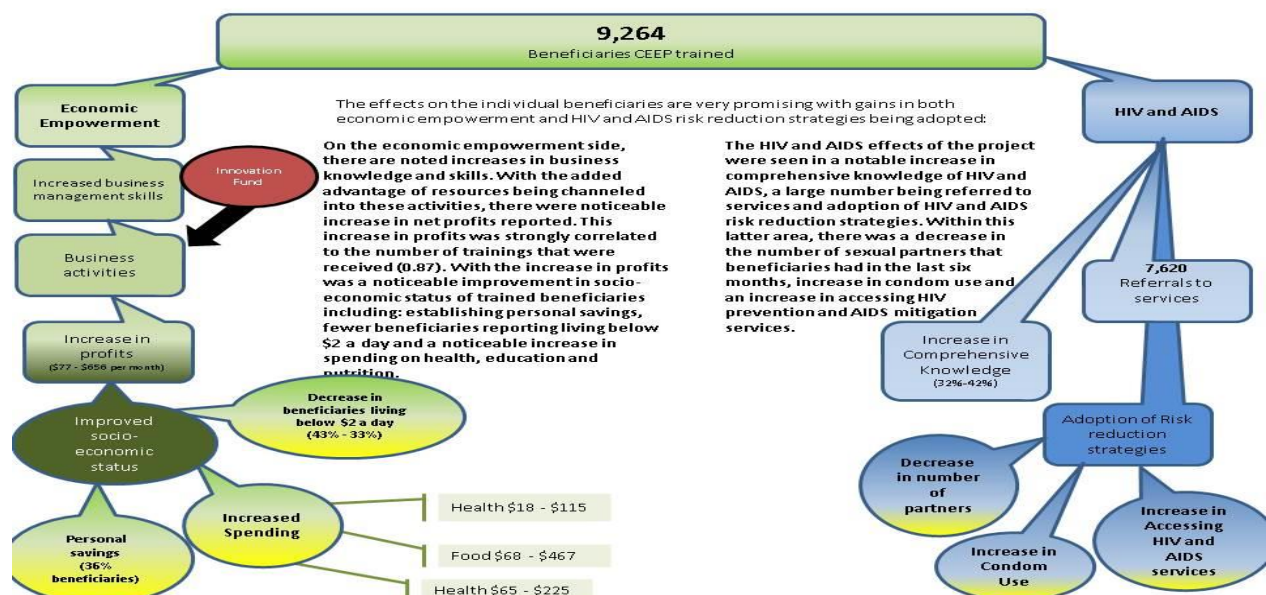
Through the provision of technical assistance and strategic information to 164,603 stakeholders and policy makers, Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality – two methods for HIV and AIDS risk reduction, have been incorporated into National policies and intervention programmes run by the stakeholders. This enthusiastic response speaks to the relevance of the project at a macro level

Meso effects:

At a meso level, the project has 2 distinct activities. The first focuses on the support that is offered to the Business Support Structures (BSS) to which the beneficiaries belong as members and the second focuses on the support and resources offered through the Innovation Fund. Through the innovation fund the following has been achieved:



The micro effects:



The quantitative numbers above give an indication that the project is having an effect on the beneficiaries' lives. However, it is through an analysis of the qualitative data that we have an idea of the breath or fundamental nature of these changes. For example:

- **"I am now able to send my children to school and afford three decent square meals in a day. That business training was a springboard to change in my life situation"**
- **"I have been able to increase my sales from USD 150 per day to around USD 800 per day since attending SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business Training)."**
- **"I now know how to cost and price my goods and calculate my profit...before I was making a loss and didn't know it"**
- **A former sex worker having started a business, selling sour milk known as chambiko, says: "The project is providing a ray of hope and soon our lives will change"**

There are many other comments by beneficiaries on the input of the project, as can be seen from the case studies and site visits.

