

*(continued)*

However, the solution to these issues lies primarily in our individual behavior. The current programs are needed to help to save energy, to address poverty, to modulate fertility and migration, to prepare for upcoming pandemics, to address drug use, alcoholism, obesity, traffic accidents, suicides, and to live in peace.

However they are not sufficient, because they don't focus enough on fostering local ownership of the issue and of the solution. Local ownership enables individual behavior change to take place and be sustained in a supportive environment.

**We regain influence over our destiny.** To make those changes, we are not alone. We can rely on the communities to which we belong. We are to rediscover our own capacity for care and change, for community belonging, for leadership, for sharing who we are and what we know. We can connect worldwide with other communities and organizations for mutual support. With those communities, we can explore the common principles for action which emerge from their different experiences. As community life competence spreads, we can regain some influence over our own destiny and that of future generations.

**From AIDS Competence to Life.** This is why the Constellation is now offering to stimulate and to accompany Community Life Competence. While the Constellation started with offering the AIDS Competence process, groups have seen its relevance and invited us to apply it to help address malaria, diabetes, the avian flu, human pandemic preparedness.

**A process for change.** To respond to any life threat, communities go through a similar process: they build their own dream, face reality, care for those affected, address risk and vulnerability, assess change, learn and adapt; they mobilize their own resources first, while mobilizing external resources as and when needed. The Constellation organizes and fields SALT teams which accompany and link communities.

As human beings, the choice is ours: either we remain the passive targets of programs, which often aim at manipulating our souls, minds and purses, or we use our own human strengths to envision, think, discuss, act and adapt.

## The Constellation



our website  
our community

[www.aidscompetence.org](http://www.aidscompetence.org)  
[www.aidscompetence.ning.com](http://www.aidscompetence.ning.com)





## The Constellation

**We all have strengths.** Every community has the inner strength to envision, to act and to adapt. This is our core belief, and it stems from experience. From Merauke to Mombasa and from Bujumbura to Brussels, we are rediscovering community strengths: the human capacity for care and change, for community belonging, for leadership, for sharing who we are and what we know.

**We look for strengths.** Our energy for change comes from our regular immersion into community experience, at home and elsewhere. By asking appreciative questions, we discover and reveal strengths which communities themselves might not realize. We in turn are inspired to transfer the experience into our own contexts: at work, in our social and family lives. We call SALT our mode of interaction with communities: Stimulate, Appreciate, Learn, and Transfer. SALT is the DNA of the Constellation.



**We start from our common humanity.** There is one condition to our journey: we must recognize that we are all human, moved by similar hopes and concerns. In our interactions with others, we leave behind our references to a world made of experts and uneducated people, clerics and lay persons, rich and poor, donors and recipients. We then become free to share our experience and to appreciate others.

**Local ownership makes the difference.** Our discovery of human capacity started with AIDS. For two decades, large scale progress on AIDS was limited to Northern Thailand, Uganda and Brazil. The explanation for this progress is clear, and the evidence abounds in support of that explanation. These three settings have one distinctive characteristic in common: people took ownership of the issue and of the response to HIV and AIDS. Because they have acknowledged that AIDS was an issue of concern to their own lives they acted locally to reduce its impact.

However global policy is not taking into account the major lesson of the last two decades: its apex objective remains limited to ensuring universal access to the means for care, prevention and mitigation. The Constellation was founded in response to this shortcoming.

**Why a Constellation?** We envision a world where AIDS competence spreads faster than HIV. AIDS Competence means that *together we all live out our full potential because we act from strength to acknowledge the reality of HIV and AIDS, address vulnerability and risks, reduce its impact, learn and share with others, measure change and adapt.* Recognizing that the mobilization of information, technology and money is necessary, but not sufficient, it offers to stimulate and connect local responses to HIV as a strategy to release potential.

**It is about life.** AIDS is not the only threat to our lives. Diseases, new and old, have similar or greater (potential) impact. Climate changes threaten the livelihood of millions of people. Some clerics and political leaders instill fear and hate, thereby threatening our collective survival.



**Each one of us has the key.** The current policy responses to address those global concerns consist in targeting people with a mixture of information, money and technology. The global response to malaria consists mainly in ensuring universal access to the means of care and prevention such as malaria treatment and bed nets. Governmental and non-governmental organizations see health outcomes as the result of their programs, into which people are (sometimes) invited to participate. To address climate change, governments invest in technology and target their citizens with information, financial incentives and regulations. Peace is often enforced from outside without a parallel attention to the inner process of reconciliation.