



**Chaka Phillips, Barbados:
Change Agent on Youth Transformative Approaches and HIV/AIDS**

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I want to be defined not only by my HIV status but also for who I am, as a human being and a **Survivor**. A significant part of my ability to survive this illness has come from the support I have received from my family members and loved ones. My family has always been an interesting one; they allowed me from very early to tap into my creative self. As a young child my siblings and I were taken to plays, art shows and were introduced to the power of reggae music. These early artistic introductions have given me both a sense of creativity and open-mindedness both adding to the sustenance that has allowed me to live during this difficult time.

While I have been formally employed in several positions, as an Independent Consultant, such as Youth HIV-AIDS Consultant, both for private enterprises and the **United Nations Family**, this has always fascinated me and to this end I took up several formal and informal training courses to achieve this goal.

Since being diagnosed with HIV I was unable to work. However, as part of my belief in being a survivor and thinking that there was always Hope and seeing living with HIV not as a problem but as an obstacle to help me move forward, it has been important for me to become involved in activities that support the lives of those persons living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA)

Over the past two years I have been involved as a Resource person for the National HIV/AIDS Commission in Barbados and the United Nations Family.

Regarding the United Nations Family, I have also being involved in co-facilitating the focus group discussions initiated by the **World Health Organisation** and the **Pan American Health Organisation** that examined youth perceptions of HIV-AIDS. I was an active member of the C.A.R.E. support group and I have found a place in the growing demand for HIV-AIDS education and sensitization. I would like to mention specifically that I have been trained by the **United Nations Development Programme, UNDP**, on **Transformative Approaches** and in

particular in the area of HIV-AIDS and Leadership. To this end, I have become a **UNDP Change Agent**.

One of the most rewarding opportunities to date has been attendance at the El Salvador meeting of the **National Global Fund Project** on Malaria, TB and Aids where I contributed to the Design of the National Training Programme on **Transformative Approaches** such as Leadership and Emotional Intelligence.

In my spare time I engage in Creative writing, and in particular, in the Design of a Project/Programme on Arts and Media and HIV-AIDS, to Create New Icons to address HIV-AIDS and promote better education among the general population on the HIV epidemic in the Caribbean.