

# Deirdre Seery

Cork, Ireland



# Background

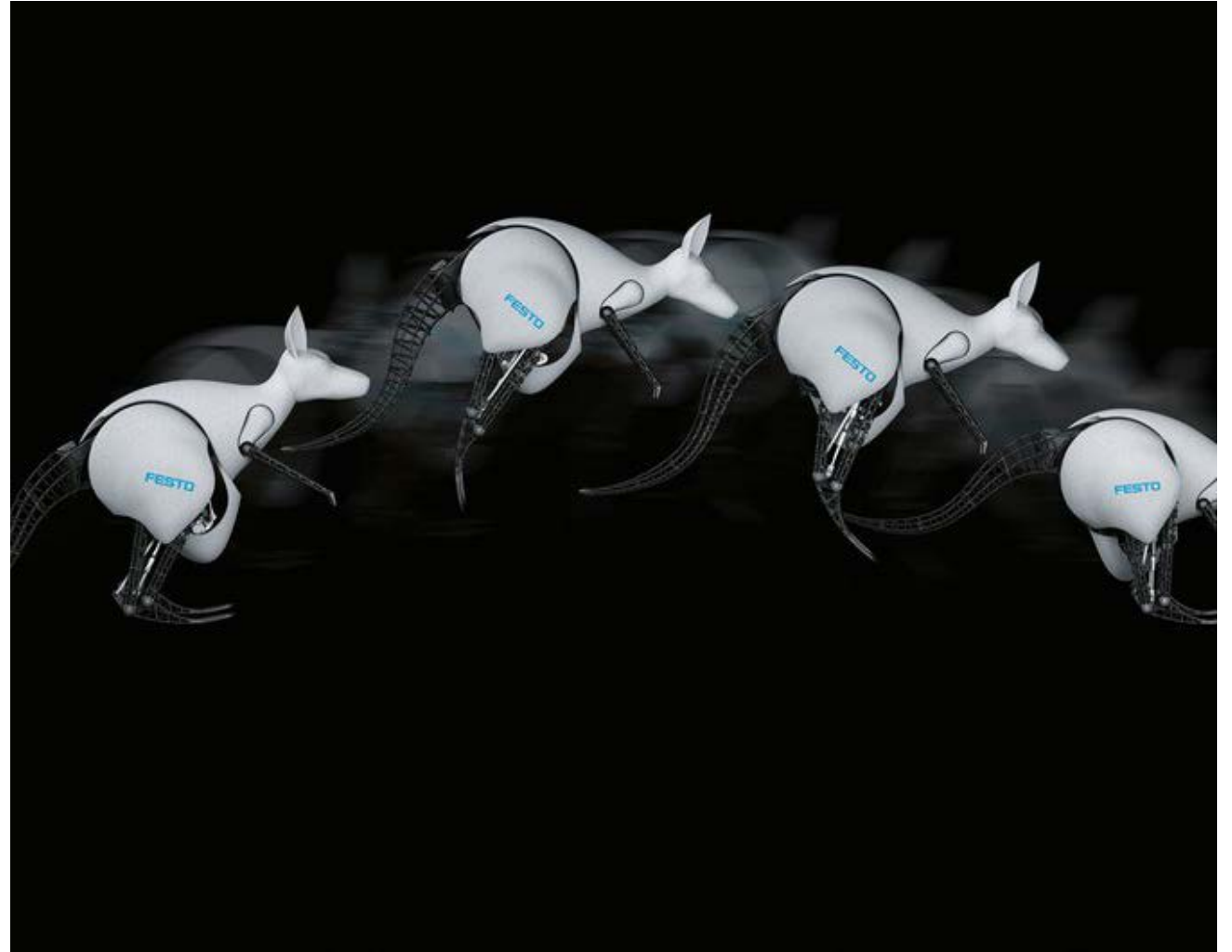
- I have worked in the field of HIV for 25 years
- I have been involved in numerous European networks over the years
- For example, Change, the predecessor of AAE
- Latest involvement – Quality Action
- Member organisation of AAE Europe since its foundation
- Member of HIV Services Ireland Network
- Interests – continuous quality improvement, effective prevention, innovation and reflective practices, role of civil society

# Our questions

- How can civil society maintain its role to advocate in the field of HIV policies?
- How can civil society in your region be strengthened in times when the influence of civil society organisations is being pushed back?
- What should AAE's role be to support advocacy and how passive, active or proactive should AAE be when it comes to advocacy at national level?

# Strengthening CSOs

- Isolated?
- Insulated?
- Innovative?
- Over-reaching? Under-reaching?
- Partners? Competitors?
- Accountable?
- Value for money?
- Expert? Coalface?
- Evidence based? Anecdotal?
- Misunderstood? Not the real deal?
- Honest?



# Challenges

- Funding and funders – power politics
- “Normalisation” of HIV – included with other infectious diseases
- Professionalisation of HIV field
- Emerging issues – PReP for example
- Sustaining and building momentum
- Promoting the human rights of key populations
- “Doing the right things right” – Quality Action
- Scattered – “what becomes of silent songbirds”?

What AAE can facilitate – break out in song



# Scale

- Larger than the sum of our individual parts
- Being part of AAE means being part of a European movement to make a difference

# Reach

- Advocacy
- Research
- Resources, Documentation
- Experience
- Affirmation of what we are doing well

# Example of Rapid HIV testing

- HIV prevention workshop 2010
- Visit to Copenhagen
- Resistance from practitioners in Ireland
- Resistance from funders
- Introduced non-funded service
- Funded pilot – free, campaign, evaluation
- Generally accepted – WAD day theme promoting it
- The future?
- What supported us? Knowing it worked elsewhere – We can do it!





## Provides

- Clearing House – accessible data with filters – Add templates to capture practice-based evidence?
- Contacts list - networking
- Representation at Civil Society Forum
- Skilled personnel
- Opportunity to scale higher
- Opportunity to reach further
- Opportunity for CSOs to speak with authority



# Quality Action Map

Quality Action has trained people from:

-  AUSTRIA
-  BELGIUM
-  BULGARIA
-  CROATIA
-  ESTONIA
-  FINLAND
-  FRANCE
-  GERMANY
-  GREECE
-  IRELAND
-  ITALY
-  LATVIA
-  LITHUANIA
-  LUXEMBOURG
-  NETHERLANDS
-  NORWAY
-  POLAND
-  ROMANIA
-  PORTUGAL
-  SLOVAKIA
-  SLOVENIA
-  SPAIN
-  SWEDEN
-  SWITZERLAND
-  UK





# People out there- community of practice



# What makes us stronger?

- We can advocate if we have confidence in our practices
- Informed practices
- Responsive and innovative practices
- Have evidence that we are doing the right things right
- If we are connected and part of something bigger than ourselves
- If we know how to use this connectedness
  - Biennial conference? Workshops? Linkages?

# Advocacy role of civil society

- Comes from our strengths
- Civil Society Forum at European level
- Involvement of key populations
- Improve feedback loops to CSOs from European level
- We can be informed about what is happening elsewhere
- We can approach others for information
- Belief that we can make a difference at policy and practice levels

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. **What you do makes a difference**, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” —Jane Goodall



edutopia





# AAE's advocacy role – Passive, active, proactive?

- Passive? Why bother?
- Proactive? Who? Why? How?
- Active? Who? Why? How?
- AAE is not just others. We are also AAE.



# Challenges

- Imbalance across Europe around attitudes to HIV, sexual orientation, sex, drug use, respect for CSOs etc.
- Inherent power imbalance between state sector (funders) and CSOs (funded, hopefully)
- HIV not so high on the agenda as it used to be
- Continued rise in new infections

# What kind of difference can AAE make?

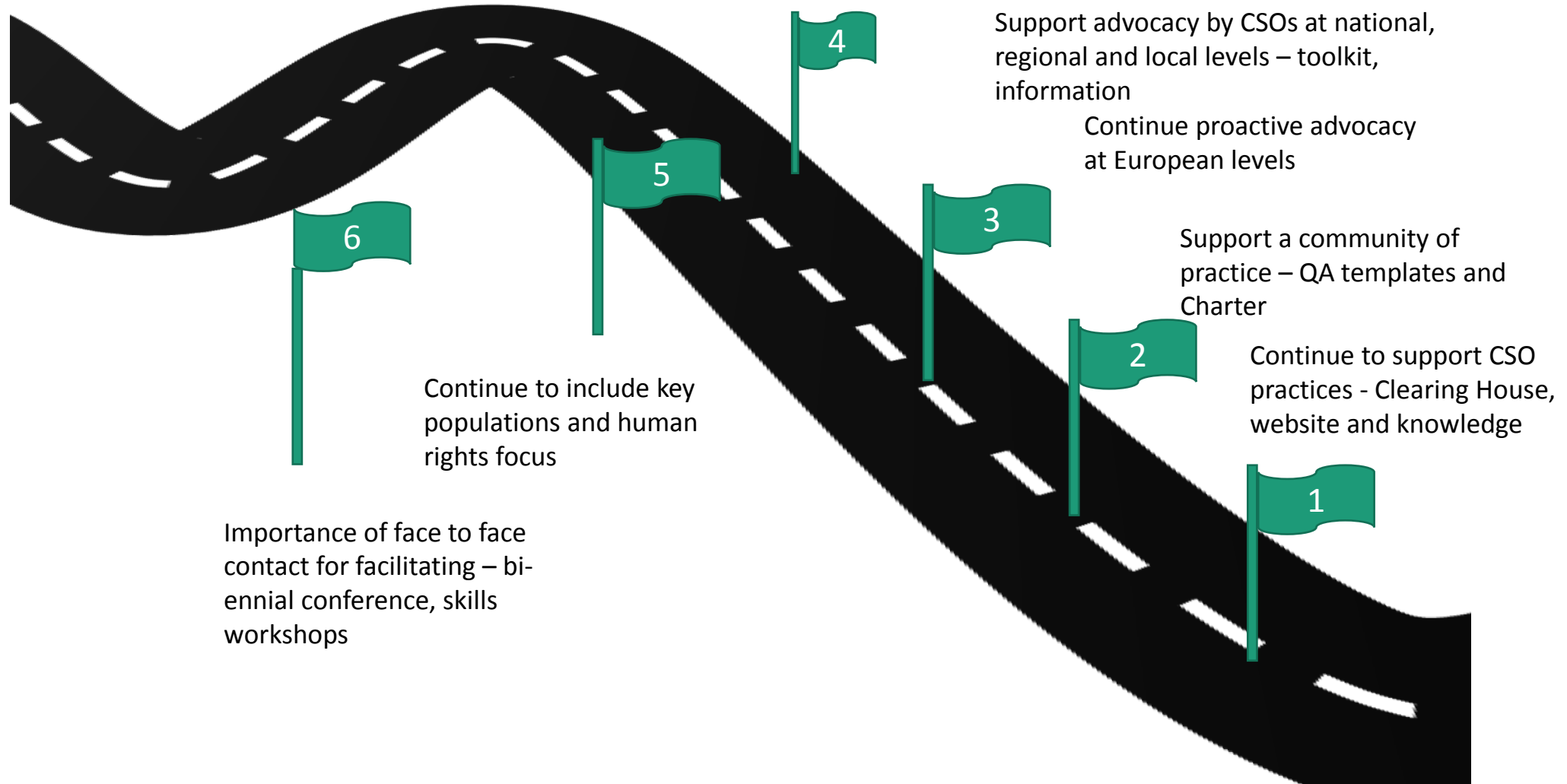
AAE advocacy role –

- Continue proactive advocacy at global and European levels
- Continue to involve key populations from across Europe and human right focus
- Continue to influence HIV policies
- Strengthen advocacy at national, regional and local levels
  - How can this be achieved?
  - What do we as CSOs and individuals need?
  - Emerging issues – e.g. PReP

# What AAE can do at national, regional and organisational levels?

- Active advocacy role at national level if invited by national or regional CSOs
- Promote and Implement the Quality Action Charter based on the principles of self-reflection, participation and collaboration, transparency, innovation, passion and commitment and supportive environments.
- CSO support to upskill organisations - advocacy toolkit, sharing information and knowledge of practices around Europe,
- Signposting to people who know – Helpline?

# For discussion workshops



We can break out in song

