

Second Consultative Meeting on Rethinking HIV/AIDS and Development

The *Second Consultative Meeting on HIV/AIDS and Development: A Review of USAID Progress in Africa* highlighted the urgent need to respond differently and more effectively to prevent HIV/AIDS from destabilizing the world. The meeting clarified concepts, outlined the rationale for multisectoral approaches, reviewed USAID progress in each sector, identified future directions, and made recommendations.

The focus was largely on the future actions that each sector could take to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on the sector. Key individuals from each SO participated, along with representatives of cooperating agencies (CAs) and other partners.

Thought Provoker

How do you do development if life expectancy is 29 years and the decision horizon is greatly truncated?

The response to the HIV/AIDS crisis cannot be addressed in a business-as-usual fashion. A rapid and drastic response is necessary to contain the impact of the epidemic.

Multisectoral Approaches to HIV/AIDS: The Concept

Multisectoral approaches to HIV/AIDS are defined as the actions that each sector could undertake to mitigate the impact of the epidemic on its core business. Such actions would serve to strengthen each sector's abilities to contribute to economic development and to continue advancing sector-specific HIV/AIDS care and prevention. This sectoral approach is distinct from cross- or inter-sectoral approaches, as the latter terms both refer to different sectors working together to achieve a common goal, such as orphan care.

Each development sector needs to identify and adopt the HIV/AIDS activities that support the achievement of its sectoral objectives. This does not necessarily mean that each sector has to undertake additional HIV/AIDS activities that fall outside its normal business. For example, agricultural extension workers may need to advocate changes in cropping patterns in view of the shortage of labor and, but they may not necessarily have to distribute condoms.

Mitigating HIV/AIDS' impact on different sectors and the economy is an important and yet neglected element of the HIV/AIDS program. The three components of an HIV/AIDS program—mitigation, care/support, and prevention—are interrelated and form a continuum. All require that different sectoral agencies strengthen their functions. The most successful national program, which is in Uganda, has all three components. At least a dozen development sectors have been responding to the HIV/AIDS problem in Uganda.

Multisectoral Approaches: An Imperative

The events of last two years indicate that a multisectoral approach is not a matter of a choice but a necessity. The capacity of each sector to carry out even its normal business is already so weak that the debilitating effect of HIV/AIDS has not been obvious. However, these pre-existing dysfunctions will not mask HIV/AIDS' ravages much longer. Estimates indicate that African health systems may lose 20 percent of their employees to HIV/AIDS over the next several years, threatening the health systems in these countries with collapse. Similarly, in some countries, more teachers are dying from AIDS than are being trained. In a few years, hard-won educational gains in these countries will be lost and their education systems will be decimated. All along the line, each sector has to prepare itself to adjust to such losses and mitigate the future impact of HIV/AIDS.

USAID Progress

USAID has made considerable progress in adopting and promoting multisectoral programs. In terms of commitment, the most impressive expression came in Mr. Natisios' June 2001 cable that called for all sectors to address the HIV/AIDS issue.

The Bureau for Africa's Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD) has formed technical working groups on HIV/AIDS in each sector to promote sound sectoral responses. After analyzing best practices from countries, AFR/SD had toolkits and briefs developed in each sector, most recently in democracy/governance and natural resource management. These have been disseminated to a wide variety of audiences and are being applied in different countries, but they are still underused. AFR/SD also prepared a series of papers for the HIV/AIDS session at the AGOA (African Growth and Opportunities Act) Forum on how HIV/AIDS affects AGOA objectives and how trade and finance ministries are responding to HIV/AIDS. African ministers of planning, finance and trade attended this forum.

The AFR/SD education team has developed a wide-ranging strategy to address HIV/AIDS. This includes forming a mobile task team (made up of mostly Africans) that has helped eight countries to date address systemic HIV/AIDS impacts on the education sector in these countries.

At the mission level, about 15 countries now have more than one sector involved or interested in a multisectoral program. Several African countries have adopted multisectoral approaches (e.g. Senegal, Uganda), but only those countries supported in this effort by USAID (South Africa, Zambia) were discussed at this meeting. Highly committed mission directors facilitate the coordination of work of different sectors. Progress by different countries in multisectoral responses was summarized in a paper prepared for the meeting.

Challenges

Despite the progress made, formidable challenges remain as the situation grows ever more urgent.

- All sectors need strategies to strengthen their mitigation responses, with special attention to agriculture and health. The toolkits and briefs sponsored by Africa/SD for every sector of the

economy can be used to help develop these strategies. These concise, informative, and highly practical documents help stakeholders assess the HIV/AIDS impact, then prepare and implement an appropriate response.

- Every international development agency, including the World Bank, the UK's DFID, Sweden's SIDA, and others, has strategies and programs calling for multisectoral approaches, and yet hardly any donor coordination exists.
- Almost all high-prevalence countries have strategies and mechanisms established for multisectoral approaches. Yet, almost no country has fully implemented a multisectoral approach and reached the communities in a holistic way. The capacity to implement multisectoral programs and coordinate donors remains weak.

USAID has been at the forefront in promoting multisectoral strategies. USAID has a unique opportunity to continue and expand its leadership role by analyzing the issues, identifying promising methods, catalyzing actions and leveraging resources for implementing multisectoral approaches.

Recommendations

A. Advocate for and Adopt a Paradigm Shift in HIV/AIDS to Reflect the Urgency of the Situation

Current efforts need to be accelerated, because during the past 20 years few countries have brought the HIV/AIDS epidemic under control within their borders. This pandemic is a threat to global security and must be treated as a development and humanitarian crisis that requires both development and disaster expertise.

The prerequisites for addressing HIV/AIDS as a humanitarian and development crisis include:

- Rapid movements of human and financial resources to the communities in need; partnership between public and private, for-profit sectors to leverage new and existing resources and skills; and
- Strengthened sectoral management systems in countries to use financial and human resources effectively.

The countries' management processes and abilities to channel resources where they are needed will determine the success or failure of the HIV/AIDS program.

USAID has the experience of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in dealing with emergencies and can draw on that knowledge and skill base in its response to HIV/AIDS.

- **Use the successful Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) model to develop rapid-response HIV/AIDS teams comprising donors, countries, local civil society representatives, and organizational development experts in each country.**

B. Provide High-level Coordination of HIV/AIDS within USAID

To accelerate program implementation as mentioned, above all, the pillar and regional bureaus will have to agree that HIV/AIDS is a development crisis and act in a coordinated fashion. The following actions are essential.

- **Form a task team to coordinate sectoral efforts, review progress and undertake appropriate action.** The committee would include the Assistant Administrators of USAID's three Pillar Bureaus—Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EAT) and Global Health (GH)—with regional assistance as appropriate. The coordinator of this team could report directly to the administrator or the deputy administrator. The HIV/AIDS advisor to GH could provide the secretariat and could chair the Multisectoral Coordination Committee at the working level.
- **Encourage missions to form multisectoral task teams and appoint or designate a person in the director's office to help coordinate these efforts.** Zambia has already taken these steps.
- **Establish closer links with the field in each sector by including mission staff as virtual members of the USAID/Washington-based HIV/AIDS sectoral working groups.**

C. Strengthen Sectoral Capacity to Respond to HIV/AIDS

USAID can take a number of actions to accelerate the work of each sector in responding to the epidemic. Each sector has already identified the key activities they could undertake to respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS on that sector. The technical working groups in each sector should review the activities already identified and refer to the more comprehensive list of potential actions that each sector could take, presented in the draft paper *Implementing Multisectoral Approaches to HIV/AIDS: A Preliminary Review of USAID's Experiences*. This paper, which was one of the background materials that were distributed at the meeting, is available at www.aed.org/sara/multisectoral. A number of actions will facilitate the work of these sectoral groups.

- **Identify and empower champions in each sector at Washington, regional and country levels to promote and implement multisectoral approaches to HIV/AIDS.**
- **Place AIDS advisors in the EGAT and DCHA pillars and sector-specific advisors in the AIDS Office of the Global Health pillar.**
- **Establish and implement a mechanism to collect and disseminate lessons learned/promising practices on a regular, ongoing basis** so that all sectors can learn from each other and not repeat the same mistakes. This may include encouraging mission efforts to bring CAs together to share experiences.

- **Add an AIDS impact statement to all program designs to ensure that all new procurements incorporate HIV/AIDS strategies into their program designs.**
- **Encourage existing programs to retrofit HIV/AIDS into existing program designs.** The approval process for such a retrofit should be delegated to the field and should be made without increasing funds. This may encourage creativity in finding ways to incorporate low-cost HIV/AIDS activities.
- **Encourage more mission directors to implement Administrator Natsios' directive (June 2001) to include HIV/AIDS activities in different sectors.** Use South Africa and Zambia as models/success stories.
- **Encourage the SO teams in each mission to work with their counterpart agencies in the country to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS and to develop appropriate responses.** Toolkits for doing so are currently available in most sectors.
- **Review USAID and country sectoral policies and programs to ensure a “do no harm” approach.** Each sector can assess how the business of the sector might be contributing to sustaining or increasing the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- **Hold a field-based, multisectoral follow-up meeting in Durban, South Africa, in October 2002.**

D. Strengthen Intersectoral Approaches

In addition to developing and implementing sectoral responses to HIV/AIDS, different sectors should work together to achieve common objectives. Synergies must be created across all these sectors so the approach is comprehensive and not piecemeal in addressing such issues as youth, orphans, and so on.

- **Develop a GIS-based spatial platform that will display education, health, and social welfare data (such a map is now being prepared for KwaZulu-Natal) and develop advocacy materials from this information for policy makers, donors, etc.**
- **As needed, relocate HIV/AIDS-relevant activities of SO teams in a particular area to be accessible to each other so that each can draw on the other's strengths and obtain maximum synergy. The GIS maps will help to pinpoint common locations where needs (and opportunities) are greatest.**

E. Sponsor Flexible Funding Mechanisms

The current restrictions by Congress on use of Child Survival and Disease (CSD) funds for HIV/AIDS, combined with the inadequate Development Assistance (DA) funds for key areas such as democracy/governance and economic growth, have hampered effective responses to HIV/AIDS.

- **Have each SO team, particularly at the field level, undertake HIV/AIDS activities that do not require additional funds, e.g., policy dialogue with countries, relocation of activities to high-prevalence areas.**
- **Have each SO use DA funds for HIV/AIDS because of its impact on each sector's core business.**
- **Interpret child survival (CSD) guidelines flexibly to ensure adequate funding for key multisectoral activities, e.g., impact assessments and helping stakeholders get and use toolkits.**
- **Establish a special fund for sectors to include HIV/AIDS in their work.** This would be an “incentive fund” based in Washington and would not be earmarked to any sector. It would not have to be large and might operate somewhat like the GDA. This would avoid many of the constraints on cross-sectoral work as USAID is presently structured. **Have USAID/ Washington discuss the need for this incentive fund with Congress.**
- **Encourage PVOs to engage in advocacy work with Congress on the need for multisectoral programs and flexible funding to support them.**

F. Strengthen Donor Coordination

The most serious obstacle to effective multisector HIV/AIDS efforts is weak coordination among the donors. Donor coordination has to improve both at Washington and country level.

- **Establish a USAID donor coordination unit to create a mechanism in Washington to coordinate closely with the World Bank,** as it has allocated substantial resources for HIV/AIDS under its Multi-country AIDS Project (MAP). **In addition, the unit could help to mobilize resources for different sectors through other donors and foundations.**

G. Support Private-Public Sector Collaboration

The private sector has a number of core competencies, such as management and marketing, that can be transferred to the public sector. Similarly, ongoing workplace policies and programs responding to HIV/AIDS have to be extended to the public sector. In addition, to have a well-coordinated program, greater collaboration is needed between the PVOs/NGOs and the private sector. USAID has been at the forefront in supporting NGOs and PVOs and has special responsibility to foster this collaboration.

- **Develop a mechanism in a couple of countries to strengthen collaboration among the public sector, the private sector, PVOs and NGOs in addressing HIV/AIDS.** GDA has a special role to play in this respect. Africa Bureau has launched an initiative in this regard that needs to be nurtured.