

FOCUS ON HIV/AIDS II/2005

Dear colleagues,

This is FOCUS ON HIV/AIDS, the former "SDC's HIV/AIDS newsletter". This medium lives through interaction. You are invited to send us your suggestions, requests and information flashes. Please mail to: claudia.kessler@unibas.ch or ricarda.merkle@unibas.ch, who have developed this issue in collaboration with Sandra Bernasconi, from SDC SoDev /health desk sandra.bernasconi@deza.admin.ch. The editors are grateful for any contribution received!

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News in brief

SDC internal

✘ The IV. Regional Workshop on HIV/AIDS of SDC's East and Southern Africa Division

From May 2-6, 2005 the 4th regional SOSA workshop on HIV/AIDS was held in Tanga, Tanzania. Some twenty participants from 9 countries and SDC headquarters attended this workshop. As a major achievement, the collaboration of more experienced colleagues and others who will only start around the topic of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS proved successful in promoting cross fertilisation and creating commitment for this process. Other highlights were the insight gained into the scaling up of the introduction of antiretroviral treatment and care into the public health system of Tanzania and the discussions and field trip to the Tanga Aids Working Group, a local initiative which collaborates with traditional healers in the treatment and care of people living with HIV/AIDS (*see also under Africa: RFE*). A workshop report will be available soon from Sandra.Bernasconi@deza.admin.ch.

✘ Swiss Cooperation Office in Pakistan (SCO-P): Kick off of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS

In the current process of the development of a new SDC Cooperation Strategy for Pakistan, 2006-2010, HIV/AIDS has been declared as a transversal theme. SDC Pakistan intends to apply a rights based approach and mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender into programmes.

According to latest findings Pakistan has shifted from an emerging epidemic with low HIV prevalence to a concentrated epidemic, due to a high prevalence among injecting drug users (IDUs), and other vulnerable groups, such as commercial sex workers, men having sex with men and highly mobile population groups (e.g. refugees or workers "men on the move"). Public Health experts estimate that the **country is "on the brink" with the risk of a rapid development of the epidemic**. Expert opinion estimates a **window of opportunity** of only 2 years to prevent a significant spread of the virus from the present concentration in groups with high risk behavior into the general population.

In May SCO-P has organized a one day kick-off workshop for staff and its partners. After an input of the National AIDS Control Programme, the presentation of the importance of AIDS for SDC and the introduction of SDC's mainstreaming toolkit, participants worked on steps 3-5. Concept, terminology and approach of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS were clarified. The case study of Nepal provided very useful insights from another Cooperation Office in Asia. This kick-off workshop contributed to intensive discussions, helped to identify entry points and opportunities for mainstreaming and created the basis for SCO-P's plan of action. For further details, please contact Islamabad@sdc.net or Sandra.Bernasconi@deza.admin.ch

✘ "Mainstreaming du VIH/SIDA" : intégrer la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA dans la coopération internationale disponible en Français

La version Française du "toolkit" est maintenant disponible. Le manuel peu être téléchargé http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/deza_product_fr_1280.pdf. Pour des version imprimées avec le CD Rom, veuillez vous adresser à: info@ddc.admin.ch



Africa

TANZANIA: Moving the Money – The Rapid Funding Envelope for HIV/AIDS

Although the HIV/AIDS pandemic has partly contributed to a rise in international funding, access to this additional funding often takes months if not years and considerable expertise – a particular problem for the hardest-hit countries. Tanzania is one example where, even though the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been declared a national crisis, civil society organizations active in the field of HIV/AIDS were often not able to receive the necessary funding in time. They proceeded to implement small-scale HIV/AIDS projects, lacking the necessary funds for scale-up or expansion. The Tanzanian Commission for HIV/AIDS (TACAIDS) and donors recognized the need for a more rapid process to fund these organizations. In 2002 TACAIDS together with eight donor partners including **SDC** established the **Rapid Funding Envelope for HIV/AIDS (RFE)**. Since then, the fund managed to attract two additional donors (Dfid, a Dutch private foundation). As one of the very positive outcomes of a recent evaluation, the RFE contributed to improved donor coordination and therefore an increase in donor commitment. Providing management support from Management Sciences for Health and Deloitte & Touche, it serves as an autonomous civil society fund that stimulates partnership between government and civil society in the national response to HIV/AIDS. Its main objective is to enable civil society organizations and partnerships to implement short-term HIV/AIDS projects that contribute to the long-term national strategy by making funds on a small scale more easily available. The intention is to directly facilitate capacity for a stronger, faster, and more committed response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as to promote donor coordination.

The fund was implemented to complement the lengthy procedures of the World Bank Multi Country HIV-AIDS Program (MAP) aiming at capacity building of small organizations. Consequently, the RFE only targets national organisations with a minimum capacity and grants range between US \$ 50.000 and 200.000 for 12 months, to be renewed once. Since 2002, the initiative has resulted in a response to more than 1,000 expressions of interest, 880 concept letters and US \$3.5 million being awarded to 23 organizations in all regions of Tanzania. There have been 4 funding rounds including two special rounds for projects working in Zanzibar and projects targeting CABA (Children affected by HIV/AIDS).

One of the funded organizations has been the Tanga AIDS Working Group. It initiated a research study to monitor the efficacy and identify pharmaco-active ingredients of traditional herbal medicines in treating opportunistic infections in HIV-positive patients. This project primarily targets traditional healers which serve as primary health care providers in the region and addresses their difficulties resulting from the significant increase in the number of HIV positive patients. Building on existing partnerships between traditional healers and clinical practitioners, the study has become a model for how to use local knowledge to offer cost-effective support for HIV-positive patients.

Further information: <http://www.msh.org/projects/mandl/3.5.4.html>

DAKAR – BRESIL : Coopération pour la fabrication de médicaments antirétroviraux

Le Brésil et le Sénégal se sont engagés à collaborer dans le domaine de la fabrication de médicaments antirétroviraux génériques contre le VIH/SIDA comme annoncé à la veille de la visite à Dakar du président brésilien Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. La délégation brésilienne, devrait discuter des modalités de la fabrication des génériques.

Au Sénégal, grâce à l'initiative nationale d'accès aux antirétroviraux (ISAARV) mise en place en 1998, 2 700 personnes reçoivent des traitements gratuits. Pourtant, l'OMS estime à 12 000 le nombre de personnes qui devraient bénéficier d'un traitement antirétroviral au Sénégal mais pour qui le coût des examens de laboratoire, qui détermine l'accès au traitement, est trop élevé. Le coût des dépenses médicales par patient et par jour est de 5 200 francs CFA (10,5 dollars), dans un pays où 50 pour cent de la population vit avec moins de 600 dollars par an.

Source: Irin News Service, le 13 avril

[http://www.irinnews.org/FrenchReport.asp?ReportID=5918&SelectRegion=Afrique de l'ouest&SelectCountry=DAKAR - BRESIL](http://www.irinnews.org/FrenchReport.asp?ReportID=5918&SelectRegion=Afrique_de_l'ouest&SelectCountry=DAKAR - BRESIL)



Asia

AFGHANISTAN: HIV/AIDS awareness through “infotainment”

HIV/AIDS is not a public topic yet in Afghanistan and it appears not (yet) as a disease in the epidemic form. However, there are three factors that call for caution: high number of returnees from Pakistan, where HIV/AIDS is on the increase; high rates of injecting drug users especially in the urban areas of Afghanistan. and an extremely low level of health service facilities all over Afghanistan.

The BBC Afghan Education Project (BBC AEP) is a radio program that reaches about half of the people in Afghanistan. It aims at rising awareness and knowledge on various social issues such as health as well as public politics as for example constitutional matters and elections. Program formats include educational features, drama and soap opera. The station is airing in Dari and Pashto, the two major languages in Afghanistan. **SDC and BBC AEP are now entering a cooperation for two years, with a focus on the topics of HIV/AIDS and reconciliation.** HIV/AIDS will be addressed through different formats to increase effectiveness through a combined approach of education and entertainment and reaching different age groups both in Afghanistan and abroad.

Source: SDC Internal, Cooperation Office Kabul

INDIA and NEPAL: Games for HIV/AIDS Training

In its community- and school-based training sessions, the International Services Association (INSA) India approaches HIV/AIDS as a developmental issue. This calls for spaced facilitation covering aspects of life skills development, HIV/AIDS prevention, life choices, assertive skills building, communication, self-esteem building, social and emotional development, and gender sensitization. The idea is to enable participants to gain not just knowledge but skills to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. With interventions for rural communities in 15 states in India and 3 regions of Nepal, the association uses a positive approach - games, puzzles, jokes, simulation, stories, role playing, dances, cultural music - to create a non-threatening training atmosphere. This strategy is designed to encourage participants to really participate in a process of experiential learning and to facilitate the communities to develop HIV/AIDS prevention and care plans of their own.

For example, students from 36 schools and colleges in Bangalore participated in an inter-school quiz and debate on “Positive living is possible after HIV infection”. Another intervention was to place anonymous question boxes for students to gain feedback on the programme and their needs. For local implementation and capacity building, INSA identified a group of 33 “core group members” who are spread over 14 states. They implement HIV prevention programs with adolescents, both through the formal school structure as well as the non-formal schools. Amongst others, these have trained 65 other community-based organisations, such as youth clubs, women’s groups, and Self Help Groups to strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention in their ongoing work.

Organizers feel that addressing stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS within the context of other community health and development is more effective if the community as a whole has had discussions and debated these issues. Linking HIV/AIDS within the cultural context and the community history, they say, helps the community to reach out and create community “laws” or “codes of behavior”, which include care of HIV-positive people within the community. This is facilitated when such discussions begin with a recognized group of people, like self-help groups.

To develop follow-up support for the adolescents/students participating in this education program, interested teachers and key members selected ‘friendly advisors’ (FAs) to receive further training and support through school committees. The FAs integrate adolescent health education into their schools’ curricular and extracurricular activities. They provide information and support to students about HIV/AIDS, sexuality, cleanliness, and related topics, as well as arrange physician-led sessions for parents in schools about AIDS and infective diseases. FAs also hold meetings, one-on-one discussions, and seminars with outside resource persons for the benefit of other teachers. So far some 273 FAs have organized themselves into regional and national forums to share strategies.

Source: The Communication Initiative:

<http://www.comminit.com/experiences/pdskdv112003/experiences-972.html>



Eastern Europe and Central Asia

RUSSIA: Industry leaders up to confront HIV/AIDS

On 31 March 2005 at the Russian Business Summit on HIV/AIDS, industry leaders argued unequivocally that HIV/AIDS is an urgent economic and workplace issue that requires an expanded response, both from companies operating in Russia and from the Russian government. The Summit included presentations by a number of senior political and business leaders. The event was organized jointly by the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation, the Coordination Council of Unions of Entrepreneurs of Russia (CCUER), the international organization Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS (TPAA), and the World Bank Group, in partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). It was announced that HIV/AIDS will be a separate item on President Vladimir Putin's upcoming National Security Council meeting. These are important signs of high-level commitment to push ahead in battling the epidemic. Experts at the meeting shared lessons from Brazil and other countries that have successfully stemmed HIV/AIDS and discussed how coalitions for change and public-private partnerships should be drawn upon. Another point that was underlined was the importance of ensuring that young people have a say in decisions, yet alone as people under the age of 30 make up 80% of HIV cases in the region. To facilitate these initiatives on a global scale, the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS forms partnerships with international business associations, industry associations and corporate responsibility networks to increase the profile and understanding of business and HIV/AIDS, and to reach out to new companies.

Source: <http://www.businessfightsaids.org/site/pp.asp?c=nmK0LaP6E&b=202276>
<http://www.aidsmedia.org/content/news/detail/949?PHPSESSID=90432e5e0f706cb62029218884fe3c84>

Central Asia: First Multi-Country AIDS project

A \$27 million Regional AIDS Control Project was launched on May 2005 by public parties to the Central Asia Cooperation Organization. The project aims to minimize the human and economic impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in four Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Central Asian governments signed two grant agreements that will help fund the project. The first is an estimated US\$25 million International Development Association grant. The second is a £1 million grant from DfID. This is a first-ever multi-country AIDS project for the Europe and Central Asia region. It aims at closing the financial gap needed to provide prevention options for people most at risk, including migrants, prisoners, injecting drug users, sex workers and men who have sex with men. The approach of the project is to focus on strengthening capacities and improve and draw upon cooperation. Its three main goals include: reduce the growth rate of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Central Asia in the period 2005-10; establish a Regional AIDS Fund to finance HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities in the Region beyond the end of the project; and contribute to better regional cooperation in Central Asia.

Source: World Bank News, Almaty, May 12, 2005,
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/UKRAINEEXTN/0..contentMDK:20488295~menuPK:328539~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:328533,00.html>

UKRAINE: GFATM to support Network of PLWHA

HIV/AIDS is one of the most pressing issues for Ukraine. AIDS morbidity and mortality statistics are clear evidence of the rapid growth of the epidemic in this country. According to UNAIDS' Global Report published in 2004, the number of PLWHA in Ukraine may now exceed 400 000 (over 1% of all people aged between 15 and 49 years).

The Ukraine Network of PLWHA receives funding support from the Global Fund to provide information on recent HIV medical developments to participants from throughout Ukraine. The network can now host about 200 people in two months at its annual summer camp with the objective to strengthen the network of people living with HIV/AIDS. There is currently only one clinic in the Ukraine where patients can get antiretroviral treatments (ARVs) for HIV and AIDS and availability of ARVs is still very limited for the Ukraine's 250,000 HIV-positive individuals. In addition to drug therapy, a crucial factor in treatment is counselling by people living with HIV/AIDS. The summer camp is contributing to this, providing the kind of experience that sustains people and nourishes hope as they wait for treatment.

Source: <http://www.theglobalfund.org/search/custom/ukraine.asp>



Latin America

ⓧ CARIBBEAN: Gender Relations and HIV/AIDS

An ongoing study commissioned by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC / CEPAL) explores the role of gender in the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. Conclusions by the study so far are that though gender inequality has severe implications for increasing HIV infection levels among females and for the spread of HIV/AIDS in general, gender does not appear to be a major focus of the various plans and policies for dealing with HIV/AIDS in the sub-region. In addition to the usual recommendation to mainstream gender, recommendations are to put more emphasis on a critical analysis of past and present responses to achieving gender equality and equity. The objective of highlighting these results is to more effectively address the deeply entrenched patriarchal culture of the Caribbean.

Accordingly, another paper by ECLAC names gender equality and HIV/AIDS as one of three areas with most pressing social problems in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with the other two being population dynamics and poverty reduction.

Source: Reproductive Health and Rights: HIV/AIDS and Gender Equity, Pargass, G. / United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/ CEPAL) , 2004, <http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC16261&Resource=f1hiv>

ⓧ BOLIVIA: HIV/AIDS and poverty- meeting the Millennium Development Goals

Although the millennium goals have been officially adopted by the Bolivian state, society as a whole is not yet well informed about them, which limits the level of collective commitment to achieving them. In recent years, Bolivians increasingly view national development plans and programs with mistrust, disbelief, frustration and scepticism. Bolivia's poor by now have 20 years' experience in the global economy, and the country has instituted some of the deepest structural reforms in the Americas. Yet it has not been able to achieve sustained economic growth, to significantly fight poverty or to overcome its deep social inequities. Today, marches and protests have become part of everyday life. For the millennium goals to be achieved, it appears crucial that the population sees an active public commitment to change.

The 6th goal of the MDGs is to "*Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*". Official data show 1,286 registered cases of people with HIV. The spread of the epidemic is a latent risk that could be realized unless more concerted, efficient measures are taken. The risk of transmission is currently increasing. Sexually transmitted infections affect 14 of every 1,000 Bolivians of reproductive age. Bolivia lacks the resources it needs to guarantee antiretroviral treatment to people living with HIV/AIDS. It remains to be seen whether the situation will improve in the coming months as the country receives financing for treatment from the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Recent data on these diseases show improving trends, but they will have to be sustained in the coming years if Bolivia is to halt the spread of these diseases and begin to reduce their incidence and prevalence. Many in the country's public health sector believe that the millennium targets associated with these diseases will not be met. Yet the results could be more encouraging if programs were strengthened and if greater attention were focused on primary health care for the country's neediest.

Source: Perspectives in Health - The magazine of the Pan American Health Organization Volume 9, Number 2, 2004, http://www.paho.org/English/DD/PIN/Number20_article04.htm



Useful resources

Scenarios for AIDS in Africa by 2025

A new report by UNAIDS presents three scenarios for AIDS in Africa by 2025. By 2025, Africa and the world could face three very different scenarios for AIDS. And depending on the actions taken today, up to 43 million HIV infections could be averted over the next 20 years. The scenarios set out to answer one central question: 'Over the next 20 years, what factors will drive Africa's and the world's responses to the AIDS epidemic, and what kind of future will there be for the next generation?'

<http://www.unaids.org/Unaid/EN/AIDS+in+Africa+Three+scenarios+to+2025.asp>

ILO/AIDS website

ILO/AIDS launched a new website. It includes a **step-by-step guide to workplace action** on HIV as one highlight. Tools provided on the Website include guidelines and training, the ILO Code of Practice, as well as leaflets and posters: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/aboutiloaids.htm>

The Health Manager's Electronic Resource Centre

The Resource Centre is an international network to share management experience of health workers: <http://erc.msh.org/> It includes The Health Manager's Toolkit which is an electronic compendium of tools designed to assist projects within health management in general and also with regard to HIV/AIDS issues specifically. It includes for example:

Human Resource Management (HRM) Assessment Tool for HIV/AIDS environments. The HRM Assessment Tool is a self-evaluation instrument designed to be used by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and public sector health institutions to assess the status of the Human Resource Management System and to facilitate the development of improvement strategies. <http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=7.41.htm&module=toolkit&language=English>

Mapping AIDS and uniformed services

A new [interactive map](#) provides an overview of AIDS programmes among uniformed services around the world. <http://uniformservices.unaids.org/>

Materials on HIV/AIDS prevention in Arabic language

This is a review and collection of materials on HIV/AIDS prevention in Arabic language. Most of the materials presented can be downloaded from the internet or ordered for free. The review can be ordered from SDC, Social Development Division: sodev@deza.admin.ch