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HIV and AIDS REPORTER: focus on strengthening linkages for sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS

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produced by the [IDS Health and Development Information](#) team in collaboration with [Eldis](#) and the [DFID Health Resource Centre](#)

This is our monthly email bulletin, bringing together research to inform policy debates on health in developing countries.

The HIV and AIDS Reporter aims to provide readers with a more in-depth look at a particular area of health policy. This month's theme is [strengthening linkages for sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS](#). The bulletin also features summaries of new documents and other additions to the [HIV and AIDS Resource Guide](#).

[HIV and AIDS Reporter archive](#) - an archive is now available on the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide. See previous issues of the HIV and AIDS Reporter at www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids/hiv-and-aids-reporter

All documents listed below are available free on the web. If you are unable to access any of these materials online and would like to receive a copy of a document as an email attachment, please contact m.jones@ids.ac.uk.

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Announcements

Feature: Strengthening linkages for sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS

There is increasing evidence that the integration of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services with HIV prevention and AIDS treatment and care, is an effective method of service delivery. Currently few effective, large scale programmes addressing linkage issues between these areas exist. This is because they can conflict with existing arrangements, are complex to set up, and there are few incentives to bring them together in the first place.

Over the last decade spending on SRH and family planning (FP) has remained static, whilst at the same time HIV/AIDS spending has almost tripled. To add to this inequity, increased HIV/AIDS funding is often earmarked for projects with a specific focus and similarly SRH budgets may not take HIV/AIDS into account.

The long standing policy and programming gap between SRH and HIV/AIDS is due to institutional divisions on policy, financing and programme implementation strategies. Bridging this gap is not easy, especially as increased, targeted HIV/AIDS resources have served to reduce both funding and visibility of SRH projects. This narrow financial focus gives few incentives for integration with SRH as budgets are ring fenced for HIV focused activities - well funded 'vertical' programmes of care deliver quick wins in disease specific areas, but may weaken horizontal health service provisions overall.

Increased funding for HIV and AIDS may also act as a perverse incentive and draw some staff from SRH programmes, as reported in Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Rwanda. These pressures are particularly heavy where governments are not able to robustly resist US Government policy or aren't well supported by international organizations. More progress from international agencies in leadership and technical support is needed.

There are several processes that can promote linkages between services including improved coordination and funding between governments, donors and other stakeholders. Better coordination requires the creation of cross programme working groups with the aim of developing a shared position. The case for investment in existing SRH services should be built and presented to interested donors. High level financial and technical support for SRH services should be promoted as well as increased support for National AIDS Commissions (NACs) for wider SRH issues such as gender inequality.

The role of high level advocates in promoting an evidence based position has great potential in building support and ownership of linkage building. The setting up of demonstration projects with scale up plans, targeted finance and expert technical assistance will further this aim.

This reporter is based on a literature review produced by the DFID Health Resource Centre. This is available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=24404&type=Document

For more information see:

- HIV and AIDS resource guide section on sexual and reproductive health
www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids/sexual-and-reproductive-health
- Health resource guide section on sexual and reproductive health
www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health/sexual-and-reproductive-health
- Resources for HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health Integration
www.hivandsrh.org/

Recommended readings strengthening linkages for sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS

Study of the integration of family planning and VCT/PMTCT/ART programs in Uganda

Authors: D. Asiimwe; R. Kibombo; J. Matsiko

Produced by: Makerere Institute of Social Research, Uganda, 2005

This paper examines the integration of family planning (FP) services with HIV and AIDS services (voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), prevention of mother-to-child-transmission (PMTCT) and anti-retroviral therapy (ART)) in Uganda. The paper finds that: FP service integration is more evident in VCT and PMTCT settings where counselling, provision of contraceptive methods other than condoms, and information is available in varying degrees. Implementation of integrated services remains a challenge because under the public healthcare system, FP and VCT services are controlled by different divisions within the Ministry of Health.

The paper also finds that overwhelmingly, people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) reported a need for FP but were reluctant to access these services outside HIV/AIDS centres because they fear stigma and discrimination. Policymakers and providers were also supportive of integration as a means to cut costs and reduce duplication of services. The authors make several recommendations for improving integration. These include: policymakers should be sensitised to the desire among PLWHA to access contraception; policy on and implementation of HIV/AIDS and FP services need to be harmonised to enhance joint planning and inter-service coordination; FP providers need to be sensitised to serving HIV-positive clients without judgement.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=24689&type=Document

Effects of the global fund on reproductive health in Ethiopia and Malawi: baseline findings

Authors: W. Schott; K. Stillman; S. Bennett

Produced by: Partners for Health Reformplus, 2005

This report by Partners for Health Reformplus assesses the effects of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria (GF), and the activities it supports on reproductive health and family planning programmes in Ethiopia and Malawi. The paper considers the effects of the GF on policy processes, human resources, the public/private mix, pharmaceutical and commodity procurement and management with relation to reproductive health and family planning services. It finds that reproductive health players have not participated extensively in GF planning processes, and GF activities are not integrated with reproductive health, family planning, or other preventative care services.

In Ethiopia, health workers are shifting out of the public sector in search of better working conditions at non-governmental organisations, and in Malawi, there is evidence of resource shifts away from community reproductive health programmes in favour of activities related to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The paper concludes that in order to bolster reproductive health and family planning services in future GF activities, reproductive health advocates and providers should make a case for integrating services for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria with reproductive health and family planning, and become more involved in the planning process of GF activities. [adapted from author]

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=24371&type=Document

The contribution of sexual and reproductive health services to the fight against HIV/AIDS: a review

Author(s): I. Askew; M. Berer; Population Council

Produced by: Reproductive Health Matters, 2003

This article looks at the major contribution of sexual and reproductive health programmes to the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It highlights the importance of sexually transmitted infection (STI) control for HIV/AIDS control as well as for reproductive and sexual health, and argues for more joining up of services in these areas to reach more people and achieve maximum impact. Its major recommendations are as follows:

- Continued provision of existing services
- Focus on approaches which have been most effective and feasible
- Shift in focus to dual protection approach and HIV prevention
- Expanded outreach to those most at risk of STIs/HIV
- Integrating condom promotion and sexual health education into family planning services
- Joint provision of services or joint referral for core groups, for example antenatal care for adolescents or core transmitters of HIV.

Obstacles to successful integration of these services include social stigma and the perception that services are targeted at married and fertile women. Change is required in these areas to build on the most effective approaches and improve uptake, alongside improved capacity and infrastructure.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids/prevention/voluntary-counselling-and-testing&id=14709&type=Document

An analysis of family planning content in HIV/AIDS, VCT, and PMTCT policies in 16 countries

Author(s): M. Strachan; A. Kwateng-Addo; K. Hardee; S. Subramaniam; N. Judice; K. Agarwal; USAID
Produced by: Policy Project, Futures Group, Washington, 2004

This working paper from the POLICY Project analyses how international guidelines and national policies on HIV/AIDS, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and prevention of mother-to-child-transmission (PMTCT) address family planning. Looking at 16 countries with high HIV prevalence, the study finds that more than three-quarters of the policies reviewed mention family planning. However, the primary focus tends to be on referral to family planning services, provision of information on contraceptives, or the equipping of family planning clinics with HIV/AIDS facilities.

The authors note that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has diverted international attention from family planning. However, they argue that family planning is closely related to the VCT and PMTCT components of HIV/AIDS services, and should be addressed as a key element in HIV prevention activities. The paper concludes by outlining strategies for achieving effective integration of family planning into VCT and PMTCT. Key recommendations include: stronger links between maternal and child health and family planning departments; greater emphasis on human and reproductive rights and gender; a sharper focus on fertility choices for HIV-positive women; more emphasis on dual protection and the inclusion of family planning issues in HIV counselling; and the recognition of adolescents as a specific target group. [adapted from author]

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=16054&type=Document

Sexual and reproductive health & HIV/AIDS: a framework for priority linkages

Author(s): IPPF; UNFPA; UNAIDS; WHO

Produced by: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2005

This document, produced jointly by IPPF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and the WHO, proposes a set of key policy and programme actions to strengthen linkages between SRH (sexual and reproductive health) and HIV and AIDS programmes. Key linkages include: learning HIV status, promoting safer sex, optimising connections between the two programmes, and integrating HIV and AIDS with maternal and infant health. The document highlights how stronger linkages between SRH and HIV programmes should lead to a number of public health benefits, including: improved access to and uptake of key HIV, AIDS and SRH services; better access of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) to SRH services; reduced HIV-related stigma and discrimination; and improved coverage of underserved and marginalised populations.

Key policy and programming actions must build upon addressing the structural determinants of HIV, AIDS and SRH health needs, such as reducing poverty, ensuring equity of access to key health services and improving access to information and education opportunities. Other essential elements include: focusing on human rights and gender; promoting a coordinated and coherent response; meaningful participation of PLWHA; fostering community participation; and reducing stigma and discrimination. [adapted from author].

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=21184&type=Document

Other recommended readings

Models for funding and coordinating community-level responses to HIV/AIDS

Authors: K Birdsall; P Ntlabati; K Kelly; P Banati

Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation, South Africa, 2007

This research report from the South African Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation (CADRE) examines how community organisations responding to HIV can be effectively supported. The report uses case studies to illustrate seven different models for supporting community organisations through a combination of funding, capacity building and networking. These models show the importance of tailoring funding and support according to an organisation's needs, size and stage of development. These case studies also highlight the importance of providing multi-year funding to allow organisations to grow and the usefulness of horizontal learning and networking. Each of the models has the potential to be replicated or scaled-up.

The report recommends integrated programmes for supporting community responses to HIV. These would combine funding, capacity building and networking and lead to a community programme framework of services. It also recommends that donors should not avoid supporting small and new organisations just because these require more input and support. Funding should be differentiated according to the type and size of the organisations, and it should be provided on a multi-year basis. Capacity-building should be thought of broadly to include issues of organisational development and strategy, and support for individual organisations should be linked to efforts to get them involved in networks.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=32687&type=Document

World Health Statistics 2007

Published by: World Health Organization, 2007

World health statistics 2007, published by the World Health Organization (WHO), presents the most recent health statistics for WHO's 193 Member States. The core set of indicators was selected on the basis of their relevance to global health, the availability and quality of the data, and the accuracy and comparability of estimates. The core indicators do not aim to capture all relevant aspects of health but to provide a comprehensive summary of the current status of a population's health and the health system at country level. These indicators include: mortality outcomes, morbidity outcomes, risk factors, coverage of selected health interventions, health systems, inequalities in health, and demographic and socioeconomic statistics.

This third edition includes a section with 10 highlights of global health statistics for the past year as well as an expanded set of 50 health statistics. In addition to national statistics, the publication presents statistics on the distribution of selected health outcomes and interventions within countries, disaggregated by gender, age, urban versus rural setting, wealth, and educational level.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=32886&type=Document

Sexuality, development and human rights

Author(s): Susie Jolly; Sonia Correa

Published by: Expert Group on Development Issues, Department for International Development Cooperation. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2006

This paper from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Expert Group on Development Issues calls for a new approach to sexuality and development. It argues that development policy has mainly concentrated on reproductive issues, or on the negative aspects of sexuality such as HIV infection and sexual violence. While these remain as significant challenges, it is also important to promote the right to sexual pleasure and fulfilment. There has been a tendency to ignore the connection between sexuality and poverty, and the paper argues that analysing this connection should be included in all policy and programmes tackling poverty.

The paper recommends that policymakers build on the existing positive sexual rights framework and support people's right to sexual fulfilment, pleasure and well-being. As well as being an important right in itself, a sexual rights approach can also play an important role in promoting safer sex and reducing HIV transmission. It is important to acknowledge the role of power relations based on gender, class and race in the construction of sexuality and to promote equality in all sexual relationships. The paper recommends a democratic, inclusive approach to developing policy and programmes on sexuality. Stigmatised groups such as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) communities and sex workers should be supported by finding out what they themselves want rather than having Western models imposed on them.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=32697&type=Document

Towards universal access: scaling up priority HIV/AIDS interventions in the health sector

Published by: World Health Organisation, 2007

This progress report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) shows a steady increase in the global levels of access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) for people living with HIV. However, it shows less improvement in other priority areas of HIV treatment. The coverage rate for access to prophylactic ART by pregnant women, to prevent mother to child transmission of the virus, continues to be low. Similarly, the coverage of HIV counselling services and of interventions directed at intravenous drug users (IDUs) also remain at a low level. The report shows some improvement in the effective monitoring of HIV prevalence.

The report outlines a number of challenges hindering the expansion of access to HIV treatment globally. There needs to be a steep increase in the levels of access to ART if universal access is to be achieved by 2010. In particular, there is a need to ensure equity of access, particularly for IDUs and other marginalised groups. A sustained global effort is required to substantially increase the level of interventions to prevent mother to child transmission. The report also highlights the need for male circumcision to be recognised as an important HIV prevention measure, and warns about the threat posed by the emergence of drug-resistant tuberculosis in regions such as Southern Africa where HIV prevalence is high.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-

We want birth control: reproductive health findings in Northern Uganda

Author(s): Margaret R. Weeks, Maryann Abbott, Susu Liao, Wang Yu, Bin He, Yuejiang Zhou, Liu Wei, Jingmei Jiang

Published by: Journal of Sex Research (2007)

What does the reproductive health (RH) situation among the conflict-affected populations of northern Uganda look like? The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children and the United Nations Population Fund assessed this question in February 2007 and visited the districts of Kitgum and Pader and also a youth center and clinic in Gulu.

Specific findings include:

- there is a lack of adequate overall coordination for RH
- the overall environment for RH programming is made worse by a significant gap in the coverage of health facilities and a dearth of qualified health care workers resulting in fair to poor RH services in the settings visited
- overall antenatal care coverage was good, although supply gaps were found; most deliveries take place at home with traditional birth attendants (TBAs)
- gaps in health workers' knowledge and practice of universal precautions to prevent transmission of infections were significant
- many focus group participants appeared to have knowledge about HIV/AIDS and generally good access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care; however, female condoms were not available and some men wanted to use male condoms but did not know how to use them
- family planning services were very weak and women were desperate to access birth control
- sexual abuse and exploitation were reportedly very widespread and appeared to be accepted as a distressing outcome of the poverty associated with war; rape and domestic violence were also pervasive

Recommendations include that:

- donors should prioritise support to the Ministry of Health (MoH) for reproductive health when they provide support to the Ministry of Finance
- MoH should increase the health sector budget for reproductive health (RH) and support adequate funding at the district level
- MoH, UN agencies, national and international NGOs and donors should scale up support for information, education and communication about family planning and emergency contraception, particularly among internally displaced men, as well as the community-based distribution of contraceptives in all camps

Available online at: [www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids&id=32665&type=Document](#)

See the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide for a complete list of new additions at:
www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids

Announcements

Meeting: International Symposium on Meeting Children's Needs in a World with HIV/AIDS, September, 24, 2007, Boston MA, USA

On September 24, 2007, leaders in science, policymaking, advocacy and implementation will convene at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts, USA for a one-day international symposium to explore new directions in the global response to HIV/AIDS and children.

The Symposium will encourage discussion and debate on key issues such as how to target resources most effectively to families and communities; overcoming implementation obstacles in services for children affected by HIV/AIDS; and the macroeconomic feasibility of social welfare programs for children in low-income countries. Moderated by John Donnelly of the Boston Globe, Peter Piot, Executive Director, UNAIDS will provide keynote remarks, followed by four panels involving experts representing policy, research, advocacy and implementation perspectives.

For more information go to: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids/hiv-events-and-opportunities&id=33196&type=Item

Workshop: Africa Regional Workshop: Women's Leadership in HIV/AIDS, 28 January - 15 February 2008, Nairobi, Kenya

This workshop is part of a series of international, regional and country-level workshops under the new Advancing Women's Leadership and Advocacy for AIDS Action initiative. Funded by the Ford Foundation, partners include CEDPA, the UNAIDS/Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, International Center for Research on Women, International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS, and the National Minority AIDS Council. The initiative will:

- equip and empower a cadre of confident, skilled and respected women advocates to advance effective HIV/AIDS policies and resources
- enhance the technical and management capabilities of women managers working to prevent the spread and mitigate the effects of AIDS through gender sensitive, community-based HIV/AIDS programs.

The Africa Regional Workshop is designed for women working in HIV/AIDS in six priority countries (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia.)

For more information go to: www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids/hiv-events-and-opportunities&id=33079&type=Item

See the complete list of new additions, announcements, job adverts at: www.eldis.org/hiv aids

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- Health Resource Guide - <http://www.eldis.org/health/index.htm>
- Health Systems Resource Guide - <http://www.eldis.org/healthsystems/index.htm>
- HIV and AIDS Resource Guide - <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/hiv-and-aids>

The HRC provides access to technical assistance and information for the Department for International Development (DFID UK), and its partners, in support of pro-poor health policies as well as health systems, service delivery and public health topics and programmes.

Eldis currently includes descriptions and links to over 4,500 organisations and over 16,000 full-text online documents covering development and environmental issues. It can be searched or browsed free over the Internet.

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