

Firelight Newsflash! 16 February 2009

HIV and AIDS: Home Truths: Facing the Facts on Children, AIDS, and Poverty [publication release]

The global response to HIV and AIDS must be significantly reoriented to address the unmet needs of millions of children and their families in the worst affected countries, according to a new report by the independent Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS (JLICA) at Harvard. The report, "Home Truths: Facing the Facts on Children, AIDS, and Poverty" summarises two years of research and analysis of AIDS-related policies, programmes and funding and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of children. It calls for change in global, regional and national responses to the epidemic, including greater emphasis on strengthening families and communities to enable them to give children the care and support they are uniquely suited to provide. The report also recommends new approaches to address the simultaneous impacts of HIV, poverty, food insecurity and social inequality that many countries confront today. "JLICA has focused on children, but the release of this report is an opportunity to refocus and greatly strengthen the entire AIDS response," noted Jim Yong Kim, Director of the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University and Co-Chair of the JLICA Learning Group on Expanding Access to Services and Protecting Human Rights. "Families are at the heart of the AIDS response," said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. "Policies, programmes and funding must focus on providing universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for the family as a unit to ensure that both children and the adults who care for them get the essential services they need." In its two-year programme of research and analysis, JLICA - an independent alliance of researchers, implementers, policy-makers, activists and people living with HIV - reviewed global policies and programmes in four key areas: Strengthening Families; Community Action; Expanding Access to Services and Protecting Human Rights; and Social and Economic Policies. "JLICA found that there is a lack of good data on children and HIV/AIDS and the information that is available is often not used. As a result, many well-intentioned efforts do not take account of key realities that must help shape an effective response to the impact of HIV children and their families. Extreme poverty in many of the regions most seriously affected by AIDS, for example, severely limits the uptake of HIV programmes and services. If we do not confront this reality, large-scale AIDS programmes in hard-hit countries cannot succeed," said Agnes Binagwaho, Permanent Secretary, Rwandan Minister of Health and JLICA Co-Chair.

To read the final report in English or French and other research papers, see: <http://www.jlica.org/resources/publications.php>

Mango's Top Ten Tips for Grant Management

1. Building trust

In all aspects of grant management, problems can be avoided with clear and regular communications with donors' officers. Put everything in writing!

2. Observe grant start and end dates for spending

Don't make payments or enter into commitments before the agreed grant contract start date. All invoices must be dated between the official start and end dates of a grant. It is OK to spend right up to the end of contract date as long as the invoice is dated before the end of the project or grant.

3. Meet targets within budget

Make sure the activities covered in the proposal match the activities carried out and the amount of money spent. It is no good putting ten workshops in the proposal, then only carrying out five once you know better the costs.

Tell key staff and board about who the donor is and what their conditions and restrictions are. Hold regular meetings with other staff and/or volunteers to discuss the donor's conditions, and to compare progress with the program plans agreed upon with the donor.

4. Avoid under-spending

This is as much, if not more, of a problem for many donors as over-spending is. Donors have budget and expenditure targets to meet too. If you do not use up all of their funds, the donors may then lose this money from their next year's allocation.

5. Monitor donor-by-donor expenditure

In multiple-donor funded programs, keep an eye on the individual expenditure allocated to each donor to make sure you do not under- or over-spend for each donor. The total expenditure might show you are on target overall but conceal the donor by donor position.

6. Spend capital equipment budgets early

Large purchases should be made in the first part of the grant period. Many donors do not generally allow this to take place in the closing months or to be the subject of a no-cost extension.

7. Make time to prepare donor financial reports

Putting a financial report together always takes longer than you think! This is especially true if you need to ask questions from busy program managers. Delayed reporting from the field and poor follow-up at the main office to chase reporting often leads to under- or over-spending going unnoticed for far too long. It is then too late to correct this.

8. Reports must be complete and accurate

Make sure all expenditures are reported in the correct period. For example:

- Do not allow staff advances to remain un-reconciled for longer than necessary.

- Do not change previously reported budget or actual figures.

If a previously reported figure is wrong, do not change the figures. It is better to make an adjustment to the current figures – and use notes to explain what you have done.

9. Keep clear grant contract files and budget notes

Put dates and notes on all papers relating to any grant. It will then always be

clear to whoever manages the program implementation (even two or three years after the initial proposal) which is the latest version of the contract and the final budget, and what changes have been requested and agreed upon by the donor.

10. Donors don't like surprises

If you cannot meet reporting deadlines or fulfil other conditions, warn the donor as soon as possible; don't ignore it. You may be able to negotiate unrealistic terms and conditions.

For example, reporting deadlines may not be realistic because a lot of spending takes place in remote areas of the field, where there is no internet access so reports have to be physically delivered when field staff return to the main office. It is better to explain this to donors in advance and they will often respond favourably. Similarly, if certain budget items are going to cost more than budgeted due to unforeseen changes, give the donor advance notice.

Want to learn more? For more information about Mango and their training courses and publications, see their website <http://mango.org.uk/> or email enquiries@mango.org.uk.

Mango's financial management training manual is available for free in English, French, Spanish (Latin American) and Russian.

See: www.mango.org.uk/guide/resources/manual.aspx

Grantee Profile, WEM Integrated Health Services (WEMIHS), Thika, Kenya

Started by three Kenyan women in 1998, WEMIHS is an excellent example of a group that started small as a direct service provider and has grown step-by-step into a dynamic organization with a nationwide impact. From their humble beginnings in 1998, WEMIHS now implements a referral and follow-up system for over 2,400 vulnerable children that tracks needs and services provided related to education, food security, shelter, access to legal services, counseling and anti-retroviral treatment. WEMIHS is now recognized as a key partner with the Government of Kenya because of their specialized skills and experience in providing holistic psychosocial care for HIV+ children.

WEMIHS' intimate knowledge of the challenges of treating HIV/AIDS in rural settings and the specific challenges facing families has greatly informed their programs over the years. For example, WEMIHS responded to a gap in youth access to services by increasing their access to voluntary counseling and testing, reproductive health, anti-retroviral treatment, and psychosocial support. When a survey indicated that grandparents in one region had the overwhelming burden of caring for increasing numbers of grandchildren they added material and psychosocial support services and income-generating activities for this group. After noting that the burden of caring for siblings often fell to girl children, they integrated childcare centers into certain schools to allow girls to go to school and

parents to attend clinic.

A key strength of WEMIHS is that they constantly ask questions to improve their programming. When they learned that children's perceptions of their own most important needs (protection, security, emotional support) were different from what adults priorities of children's need (material needs such as food and shelter), WEMIHS shifted their programming to reflect that new knowledge. Firelight funds were then directed into helping WEMIHS add programming such as psychosocial support services for 3-13 year olds into their holistic package of services to meet this need. Since our partnership began in 2001, Firelight grant funds have also supported WEMIHS in child rights awareness programs in schools and in early childhood development centers. Grant funds have also helped WEMIHS intensify its advocacy efforts on zero tolerance of child abuse and to expand upon income-generating activities for caregivers.

For more information, contact WEMIHS at: info@wemihs.org.

So You Want to Be a Father...? Start Planning Now!

This illustrated material is designed to address behaviours of young men who are about to be fathers or are planning in the future to have children. It briefly explains the effects of male smoking, alcohol use, and "easy sex" on family life, women, and children. It also focuses on alerting men to the advantage for future family life of marriage to a woman who has finished high school and is of adult age. It gives brief instructions for care of a wife before, during, and after pregnancy, with the goal of improving mother and infant health.

Upcoming Training Opportunities

1) Women Leadership and Governance Programme - Training Course (6-18 April 2009) Harare, Zimbabwe

The course is designed for women in management positions from all sectors. It seeks to develop their capacity in applying gender responsiveness and approaches to matters of leadership, management and governance. To take you through new exciting viewpoints in feminist theories, transformative leadership, gender issues in management and gender main-streaming are resource persons, speakers and panellists drawn from a resource base of experts from all over Africa and beyond. At the end of this two weeks training we hope to have provided women leaders and decision-makers with tools to manage gender-based diversity and apply gender responsive approaches and practices in

leadership and governance functions.

Deadline for applications: 20 February 2009. For more information email fiona@wlgi.org.zw

2) Advocacy for Reproductive Health and HIV & AIDS (8- 19 June 2009) Nairobi, Kenya

This two-week course provides hands-on experience in designing, developing and advocacy strategy; implementing effective advocacy initiatives and setting indicators for monitoring and evaluating advocacy campaigns.

For more information, see:

<http://www.cafs.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=104>

3) Sustaining Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools and in Communities: Promoting Sustainable Approaches (8-19 June 2009) Nairobi, Kenya

Organised by Network for Sanitation (Netwas) International, this course is designed to help participants create more effective WASH programmes. The focus will be on creating conducive student learning environments, as well as planning and implementing improvements in schools and communities. The course also seeks to bring about new awareness of the complex interaction between behavioural and technological elements in schools and communities.

For more information, see: <http://www.netwas.org/index.php/Training/Sustaining-Water-Sanitation-and-Hygiene-WASH.html>

4) Conflict Management & Conflict Sensitive Programming In Development Work (22-26 June 2009) Nairobi, Kenya

Organised by Regional Capacity Building Partners (RECABIP), this 5-day workshop is designed to enhance participants' skills and knowledge in conflict resolution and peace building, both in conflict and non-conflict settings. The objectives of the workshop include deepening participants' understanding of conflict resolution and peace building concepts, tools, and practices. For more information, see: <http://www.recabip.com/courses.htm>

5) Advances in Behaviour Change Communication for HIV & AIDS, TB and Malaria (20-31 July 2009) Nairobi, Kenya

This course, offered by the Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS), aims to equip programme managers working in Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) programmes with skills to design and implement effective behaviour change communication interventions for HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria programmes. For more information, see:

<http://www.cafs.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=105>

6) Promoting Gender and Rights in Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS (27 July - 14 August 2009) Nairobi, Kenya

The Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS) offers a three-week core curriculum in gender and rights in reproductive health and HIV and AIDS for senior programme managers, planners, and policy-makers. The course aims to use a format of core modules and regional case-material. The content has been adapted to highlight regional priorities and current controversies in diverse countries in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and Beijing Plans of Action in the context of HIV & AIDS. For more information, see: <http://www.cafs.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=118>

7) Advocacy Skills Course (12-16 Oct 2009) Nairobi, Kenya

The purpose of this course, offered by the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), is to empower participants with advocacy and lobbying skills in order to advocate better for health and health related issues. It is intended for senior and mid-level programme/projects managers, medical and health personnel, and government officers. For more information, see: <http://www.amref.org/info-centre/advocacy-skills-course-/>

8) Civic Education for Political Empowerment 2009 (16-27 Nov 2009) Arusha, Tanzania

Organised by MS Training centre for Development Co-operation (MS-TCDC), this course is designed for practitioners in development organisations; local government leaders and officials; women and youth community leaders; opinion leaders; and functional adult education community facilitators. According to the organisers, by the end of the course, participants will be able to facilitate and manage civic education processes, develop training programmes, and organise activities that help members of the public know and assert their rights, appreciate their responsibilities, and adhere to their civic obligations. For more information, see: <http://www.mstcdc.or.tz/sw105999.asp>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Monitoring, Evaluation and Technical Assistance (META) Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.