

COORDINATING FUNDING FOR HIV/AIDS

A study of global initiatives and their effects on national and sub-national coordination in seven countries

The Global HIV/AIDS Initiatives Network (GHIN) is a network of studies evaluating the effects of three major global health initiatives (GHIs) for HIV/AIDS on country health systems: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United States' President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the World Bank Global HIV/AIDS Programme. This briefing paper is based on findings from seven of these country studies: China, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Peru, Ukraine and Zambia.

Key findings

- ➔ Global HIV/AIDS Initiatives Network studies show that at national and sub-national levels, many HIV/AIDS coordination structures have been established, and that global health initiatives (GHIs) for HIV/AIDS, especially the Global Fund, have promoted these developments. However, in some countries this has resulted in the creation of parallel coordination structures with poorly-defined roles and responsibilities.
- ➔ GHIs have had some positive impacts on national and sub-national coordination structures including widening stakeholder participation and engagement, in particular among civil society organisations.
- ➔ Many coordination structures have limited decision-making powers or control over the allocation of resources and are unable to hold donors, including GHIs, to account. Low capacity of secretariats and lack of clarity about roles undermines the effectiveness of coordinating structures at all levels.
- ➔ Sub-national coordination structures are particularly weak and problems experienced at the national level are often replicated at lower levels. This impairs local oversight of programmes, monitoring and evaluation and coordinated service delivery.
- ➔ The Global Fund, PEPFAR and the World Bank have made an immense contribution to reducing the burden of illness and death from AIDS, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. However, these GHIs as well as other donors and national governments, need to acknowledge and address ongoing problems in national level coordination and focus more attention and resources on strengthening sub-national coordination.

Context

Over the past decades, global funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support services in low and middle income countries has grown immensely. By 2008, the three largest donors, the Global Fund, PEPFAR and the World Bank's Multi-country HIV/AIDS Program (MAP) had committed over US \$38 billion.

Evidence from GHIN country studies shows that these GHIs have contributed substantially towards scaling up HIV/AIDS services, enhancing political commitment to HIV/AIDS control and engendering broad multi-sectoral involvement.

However, the increase and diversity of actors and the unprecedented levels of aid flowing to recipient countries

has created new challenges for these countries to coordinate and manage multiple aid flows and align activities with national health systems and priorities. Concerns about coordination are not new, and have stimulated attempts to improve it. Since the 1980s several HIV/AIDS coordination structures have been established to promote multi-sectoral decision making within countries including National Aids Commissions (NACs) and Global Fund Country Coordination Mechanisms (CCMs).

This briefing paper shows how the three largest GHIs have had positive and negative effects on country coordination of HIV/AIDS programmes, and have revealed multiple health systems weaknesses.

Proliferation of coordination structures

- Multiple HIV/AIDS coordination structures exist at national and sub-national levels in most countries. In Mozambique, China and Ukraine the multiplicity of parallel coordination structures has challenged the effective governance of HIV/AIDS programmes. Specific challenges stem from poorly-defined objectives, functions and responsibilities of the structures (Ukraine), and individuals being members of several coordination committees (Mozambique).

- Global Fund CCMs are diverse and integrated to greater or lesser extents with other country structures: in Peru and Georgia the CCM is the principal national HIV/AIDS coordination structure; in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan it forms a sub-group of the NAC; and in Mozambique it is integrated within the SWAp. In Zambia it is a separate structure with secretarial support from the National AIDS Council.

- The Global Fund has strengthened national HIV/AIDS coordination structures and stimulated the establishment of sub-national level structures.

Membership and participation in coordination structures

- GHIs have widened stakeholder participation and engagement. All three GHIs have created opportunities for civil society organisations (CSOs) to be involved in HIV/AIDS programmes through funding their activities, or insisting on their inclusion in CCMs.

- However, CSOs and vulnerable groups continue to have relatively limited roles in some coordination structures. They are often absent from meetings and when present their engagement is limited. Key barriers to their participation include: lack of experience and time; transport costs; lack of financial incentives; and being given insufficient time to contribute to funding proposals.

- With the exception of Mozambique and Zambia, non-health government departments are either absent or marginal participants of coordination mechanisms, and HIV/AIDS is viewed as the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

Country ownership of coordination structures

- In Peru and China, NACs are able to make decisions and are empowered to allocate GHI resources for HIV/AIDS programmes. However, national and/or sub-national structures in other countries have much more limited control.

- In Zambia and Mozambique national coordination structures find it difficult to hold GHIs and other donors to account for their programmes, including those CSOs that receive external funding. In Ukraine the NAC has the status of an advisory rather than a decision making body and meets only to discuss funding proposals.

- Donor interests and attachment to their own procedures continue to make coordinating multiple aid programmes difficult for countries. In Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Zambia donors do not fully engage in coordination structures, especially those at the sub-national level, in order to maintain institutional visibility and attribute impacts to their inputs.

Leadership of and political commitment to coordination bodies

- In China, Georgia, Mozambique and Zambia, there is evidence of strong leadership in national, and in some cases sub-national coordination structures. In Georgia, this has led to improved attendance at coordination meetings, better coordination between ministries and expedited decision-making.

- Commitment to coordinated working is evident in China, where central government has supported ministries and local government departments to establish coordination structures and engage with issues of HIV/AIDS. In Zambia and Kyrgyzstan, government policies and strategies explicitly embrace multi-sectoral and CSO engagement in HIV/AIDS control.

- The introduction of HIV/AIDS coordinators at sub-national levels in Ukraine and Zambia has facilitated more effective coordination between GHIs and other donors and government actors.

Capacity, roles and communication

- Low capacity of secretariats and lack of clarity about roles undermines the effectiveness of coordinating bodies. Poorly defined roles among NAC members in Peru delayed the implementation of the Global Fund grant.

- Mozambique is the only country where roles are clearly defined among members of national coordination structures, and this may have been the result of streamlining the SWAp structure in 2007.

- In most countries, there are limited information flows within and between coordination structures. In Zambia, PEPFAR remains unwilling to share information with district coordination mechanisms; in Kyrgyzstan limited formal coordination exists at all levels; and in Ukraine working practices are neither transparent nor accountable.

- Competition for resources at national and sub-national level creates distrust and limits communication between country organisations including government departments and nongovernmental implementers.

- World Bank HIV/AIDS programmes in Zambia and Mozambique have provided capacity support to the NAC secretariats, and are credited with improving transparency and communications. This was also the case at the sub-national level in Zambia.

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