

Global funding for HIV/AIDS has increased dramatically during the past five years. Three global HIV/AIDS initiatives are together contributing most of the direct external funding to scaling up HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care:

- The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Programme including the Multi-country AIDS Programme (MAP)
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM)
- The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

In the high HIV prevalence, low-income countries of southern and eastern Africa, the combined commitments from these initiatives can amount to over half of countries' total health budgets. In the context of the concentrated epidemics of middle-income countries the scale of funding is less, but the potential impacts on containment of the HIV epidemic are still significant.

A network of researchers was established in 2006 to track the effects of this scale-up. Members of the Global HIV/AIDS Initiatives Network (GHIN) are researching the country effects of these initiatives at national and sub-national levels.<sup>1</sup> This network builds on two earlier studies: the Tracking Study, led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (2003-2004) and the System-Wide Effects of the Fund (SWEF) Research Network (since 2003) coordinated by the Partners for Health Reformplus project.

Unlike earlier studies, which focused primarily on the Global Fund, the new Network is examining the effects and the inter-relationships of these three major global HIV/AIDS initiatives. National and sub-national data collection is taking place in 2006 and 2007; and in most cases follow-up studies are planned for 2008.

GHIN countries undertaking 2-4 year studies include: Angola, Benin, China, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mozambique, Peru, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam and Zambia.

The GHIN Network will provide added value to individual country studies by:

- Promoting comparability through common research protocols and tools
- Sharing expertise across country study teams and building research capacity
- Generating multi-country comparisons and context-specific policy lessons
- Coordinating dissemination of findings and recommendations and streamlining communication with global stakeholders

## RESEARCH THEMES

While the research protocols developed for individual country studies reflect the needs and contexts of these countries, there are several common themes across the Network, some or all of which individual country studies are addressing. The Network is facilitating comparative work and plans to synthesise findings around these themes, which include the effects of global HIV/AIDS initiatives on:-

### Sub-national scale-up

- *The levels and types of HIV/AIDS services delivered – including prevention, treatment and support services – demonstrating trends over time*
- *Quality of HIV/AIDS services*
- *Non-focal (non-HIV/AIDS) priority services*

### Health systems capacity

- *Human resources for health, including effects on the public-private mix*
- *National and sub-national coordination, harmonisation and alignment*
- *Supply of commodities and equipment*

### Equitable access

- *Accessibility and patterns of utilisation of HIV/AIDS services*
- *Institutional/programmatic factors and household/community factors that determine service accessibility*

## COMMUNICATING FINDINGS, INFLUENCING POLICY

The strategies employed by the global HIV/AIDS initiatives are constantly evolving, and the questions that the researchers within the Network are addressing are live ones. GHIN members recognise that findings from the studies need to be channelled into policy debates at the country and global levels on an ongoing basis.

Country research teams have been interacting with country stakeholders, including policymakers and civil society organisations, from an early stage to help ensure the policy-relevance of their studies. The GHIN coordinators have been interacting in the same way with global stakeholders, also taking steps to ensure that communication is established and coordination is promoted with other large, multi-country evaluations of the major global HIV/AIDS initiatives.

Regular ongoing interactions will both inform decision makers and continue to shape research questions. Findings from the individual studies will be synthesised across countries and packaged into short policy briefs that focus upon ongoing country and global debates of particular relevance to policy makers, representatives of multilateral (including UNAIDS) and donor agencies, and of global HIV/AIDS initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> Some countries may also research the effects of other global health initiatives

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# GLOBAL HIV/AIDS INITIATIVES NETWORK

Researching the national and sub-national effects of global HIV/AIDS initiatives at the country level