

## **OVERVIEW OF HIV/AIDS COORDINATION Uganda AIDS Commission 2002**

### **Defining Coordination**

Coordination with reference to HIV/AIDS alludes to a harmonised response of the HIV/AIDS programme in the country. The essence is to set a vision and resolve conflicts while having a unified flow of the country programme with diverse and numerous providers.

### **Why Co-ordinate?**

There are many players in Uganda, more than 1000 service centres, each uniquely mandated and positioned. It is common to have cross-cutting roles amongst them, making it difficult to have exclusive boundaries for every player. Visions have also to be continually reviewed, revised and emphasised. Some partners may be detractors. Continuous networking and development of partnerships is therefore a necessity.

Basing on these facts, some organ has to drive the coordination mission, supra sectoral, under the government and neutral in nature in order to build consensus on overall National strategies and resolve conflicts.

### **Levels of Co-ordination in Uganda**

These depend mainly on scope and function. They are categorised into:

- Policy
- International Partnerships
- National
- Sectors and NGOs
- Intra-Sectoral
- District and lower levels

### **Policy Level**

This level guides the overall national strategy on HIV/AIDS. It is classified into:

- Board for Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC)
- Advisory Committee, composed of Permanent Secretaries, gives technical advise to the Board.
- Forum for Development Partners, who meet occasionally to make programmatic decisions including resources flow.

## **International Partnerships**

The HIV epidemic has in many ways affected the world. Sectors like Trade and Security can in some cases fuel the spread of the HIV epidemic. To counter this, Uganda in partnership with other countries, has subscribed to programmes and initiatives that have influence beyond its borders. Examples include Great Lakes Initiative on HIV/AIDS (GLIA) among others. Programmes often cover among others advocacy for prevention, care, resource mobilisation and capacity building.

## **National Level**

The national level coordination mechanism is multi-faceted. It can be placed under the following categories:

- Standing committees e.g. National HIV/AIDS Research Committee (NARC)
- Partnerships
- Technical Resource Networks (TRNs)

## **Partnership structure**

New coordination structures have been developed and adopted at central level. The mechanism includes four components: the Partnership Committee, Partnership Forum, Self-Coordinating Entities (Constituencies) and Partnership Fund. Download full document. (Uganda HIV Partnership)

These are intended to provide formal and representative coordination and information sharing fora for all stakeholders in the national response with the goal of strengthening the overall coordination by Uganda AIDS Commission.

The Partnership Committee is the working group. It is made up of 13 representatives of self-coordinating entities (constituencies). The Partnership Committee meets monthly and feeds into both the Partnership Forum and the self-coordinating entities. Uganda AIDS Commission chairs it.

The Self-Coordinating Entities (SCEs) are fora for institutions clustered into: Government line ministries; Decentralised Governments; UN and Bilateral partners; Networks of PwHA; Private sector; International NGOs; National NGOs; Faith Based Organisations; Research Community; and Media.

The Partnership Forum is a bigger forum, comprising of all members of the self-coordinating entities. The Partnership Forum meets once annually. The first Partnership Forum met during the third National AIDS Conference, scheduled 28-30 October 2002.

The role of the Partnership Fund is to cover operational costs of the Partnership Committee, SCEs and Forum and any urgent and critical tasks that need quick national

response yet not budgeted for elsewhere. Contributions to it are from partners and managed by UAC.

### **Technical Resource Networks**

Technical Resource Networks (TRNs) are ad hoc fora, which handle thematic issues as they emerge. They guide the strategic planning and implementation processes of the identified needs. TRNs are composed of highly technical persons and institutions practising in specific thematic areas. Membership is limited to 15 people.

### **Sectoral and CSO levels**

These are units within sectors (Government Ministries, Departments and CSOs) called AIDS Control Programmes (ACPs) that oversee intra-sectoral planning, implementation and monitoring and ensure mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS in their programmes. Each is headed by an ACP Manager or Co-ordinator, who is picked among the core high-level technical staff of the sector. Membership is from various departments of the sector. It should be noted that mandates and core functions of these sectors are broader than addressing HIV/AIDS.

### **Intra-Sectoral Levels**

These are often stratified according to mandates or functions. Coordination is through an umbrella or network organisation e.g. UNASO, NACWOLA, NGEN+.

### **District and Lower Levels**

UAC continually works with Local Governments and Urban Authorities to develop coordination mechanisms at district and lower levels based on similar principles at the national level.

At district level, the coordination mechanism consists of an institutional framework of two components with distinct roles and composition for each component. The two components address the technical system and a political focus separately.

Technical System: The HIV/AIDS Committees, Chaired by the Chief Technical Executive at the respective level provides the technical coordination. Membership in each respective Local Government level include all Technical Executives, Technical representation from Religious and Cultural Institutions, NGOs, PHA Networks, Youth and Women. Meetings are scheduled four times annually.

The Technical coordination system ensures the effective management of HIV/AIDS programmes in the district through joint planning, implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Political Focus: Taskforces are established to provide focus for political leadership and mobilisation towards overseeing and advocating for the Local Government HIV/AIDS programme. The Local Government Chairperson chairs the Taskforce. Other membership includes Councils Executives, Council Speakers, Policy Heads from Religious Institutions, Cultural Institutions, NGOs, PHA Networks, Youth, Women, Chief Technical Executives and a Central Government overseer in the district (RDC). Meetings are held twice annually. The Chief Technical Executive serves as secretary to the Taskforce.

The reporting is from Technical to Political Committee(s) and then to the Council which serves as the Local Government Parliament. The Central Policy Institutions receive copies of the reports and workplan. Districts are encouraged to organise Partnership Forums.

### **Conclusion**

Increasing efforts to address HIV/AIDS in Uganda requires an overall supra coordination organ and mechanism. Though challenging, a strong and well-defined coordination mechanism complementing other strengths like good political will at all levels can make a positive notch on the trends and impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic