



# HIV/AIDS NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER FROM THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS AND TB PROGRAMME, PRETORIA

31 August 2001

## EDITOR'S NOTES

For contributions, please submit contributions and suggestions to [serenc@health.gov.za](mailto:serenc@health.gov.za).

## STAFF MATTERS

Unfortunately the HIV/AIDS unit has lost 3 people. Alfred Mmoto accepted a promotion in the Department of Public Enterprises. His wit and hard work in the SANAC Technical Task Teams will be missed!

Dr. Kwame Amporah is now working in Namibia. Our gentle giant does, however, remain in e-mail contact with us, and is doing well.

Sonja Martin, the Deputy Director in the Youth Sub-Directorate is leaving the Department for a position as Country Coordinator in UNFPA. We will thus still have regular contact with Sonja. Good luck!

We do also have some good news. The TB Unit has a new addition in Mr. Phumlani Ximiya, who is the TB Advocacy Coordinator. Welcome!

## NEWS FROM THE INTEGRATED PLAN

A tender has been awarded to the Bureau for Market Research to collate data in the six Integrated Plan pilot sites.

The Bureau is required to do statistical analysis of what exists in terms of support facilities for PWAs and what is needed for an integrated provincial response. The terms of reference also

include the training of provincial officials on data gathering.

## NEWS FROM THE IPAA BULLETIN

The IPAA Bulletin has recently had some very interesting articles, which accounts for the considerable space dedicated to it in the newsletter today.

### *AMICAALL mission to Namibia*

The Alliance of Mayors' Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level (AMICAALL) was developed in collaboration with the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Africa, UNDP and UNAIDS and with financial support from USAID and the Netherlands. The Alliance was launched in 1998 with the key objective of promoting partnerships between local governments and civil society, including the private sector and community organisations, to support the national response to HIV/AIDS.

In June 2001, meetings were held in Windhoek, Namibia to formalize the agreement with the Government of Namibia to host the Alliance secretariat. The headquarters of the Alliance will be in Windhoek, with a sub-office in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme will provide short-term services of administrative and communications staff and assist with resource mobilisation. It is expected that the secretariat will be



inaugurated in October. *For more information, please contact Mina Mauerstein-Bail at [mina.mauerstein-bail@undp.org](mailto:mina.mauerstein-bail@undp.org)*

### ***Female Condom Study***

An evaluation is currently underway of the Female Condom Project that was undertaken in 23 communities in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. The project, which began in January 1999, has been perceived by organizations involved in the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS in the Province as a success story in creating awareness in access and use of female condoms.

The evaluation, which is being conducted by the KUM Research and Training Institute in collaboration with UNAIDS, aims to identify lessons learnt that can be replicated in implementing similar projects. The evaluation is intended to identify management, communication and negotiation strategies that were utilised used by trainers and peer educators in the creation of awareness and use of the female condom. *For more information contact Dr. Joseph Kivilu, Project Director:*  
[JMKivilu@beauty.hsrb.ac.za](mailto:JMKivilu@beauty.hsrb.ac.za)

### ***Studying local responses in Uganda***

The Uganda AIDS Commission, with technical support from UNAIDS and financial support from the Pfizer Foundation, have recently decided to carry out a study project that will develop a common understanding of the relevant factors that allowed the country to achieve significant successes in the fight against HIV/AIDS. With technical, policy and administrative support from the national level, appropriate Strategy Notes will be developed and provide further policy and strategy guidance.

The study duration is estimated to be 18 months with an indicative cost of US\$300,000. The study results could be applied not only in Uganda but also in other African countries, and even globally, to drastically curtail the epidemic through enhanced local actions. *For more information please contact Dr Luc Barriere-Constantin at [Barriere1@unaids.org](mailto:Barriere1@unaids.org)*

### ***HIV/AIDS website for Malawi***

Malawi's National AIDS Council (NAC) is developing a website. The site is still under construction, but already contains much useful data. The site can be visited at [www.aidsmalawi.org](http://www.aidsmalawi.org).

When the site is fully developed it will enable the users to identify any project at national, regional, district and TA (Traditional Authority) level. Maps are being posted on the website to visualise the finding. The site will also contain key material and information about the epidemic in Malawi, including names and addresses of stakeholders. The data will be updated on an annual basis, so that the flow of funds going into HIV/AIDS activities can be monitored. *For more information please contact Niels Sando at [nsando-unaids@sdp.org.mw](mailto:nsando-unaids@sdp.org.mw)*

### **GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS**

The HIV/AIDS Newsletter of 13 July 2001 reported of a project from the Interdepartmental Support Programme to employ eight persons living openly with HIV/AIDS and second these as HIV/AIDS coordinators to National Government Departments.

Now, six weeks later, it is time for first reflections on initial experiences. For Government this is essentially a



new project and the lessons learned in its early phase can help for future expansions or for replication at provincial level.

By now six of the eight persons are in employ. Due to a prolonged tender process unfortunately two of the successful candidates withdrew their applications.

An initial induction workshop was conducted and four further workshops have been lined up. The workshops focus in the following topics:

- A general knowledge about HIV/AIDS
- HIV/AIDS in the workplace
- Advocacy and presentation skills
- Drug literacy
- Psycho-Neuro-Immunology (psychological and nutritional methods to strengthen the immune system)
- Basic counselling awareness

The hosting departments are responsible for orientating "their" new HIV/AIDS coordinator to their respective departments.

Further developments include: The formation of a Project Steering Committee and the establishment of a PWA support group.

#### What have we observed so far:

The project started making a difference for the hosting departments and for the interdepartmental support programme almost from the day the PWA coordinators commenced work.

With the employment of the PWA coordinators the HIV/AIDS epidemic experiences an unanticipated sense of urgency. Many National Government Departments have trained HIV/AIDS councillors. Yet none of the ones I

have spoken to over the last three years ever counselled a single fellow staff member with HIV/AIDS. After less than a month of work, at least two of the six PWAs had already counselling experiences with fellow PWAs at work. At the last meeting of the national Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on HIV/AIDS for the first time in the history of the committee one of the IDC members revealed her HIV status.

Within days of starting in a new department, most of the PWAs were given access to their respective Heads of Departments and/or their respective Ministers. In accompanying the departmental leadership to relevant functions, the PWAs gave credibility to the HIV/AIDS commitment of their departments and at the same time were strong advocates for the active involvement of PWAs in government departments.

Whilst the project is unfolding very positively the more useful lessons can be learned from some of the problems we experience:

- Despite a long preparation period and many departments were actually not ready to host the PWA. Logistical arrangements such as access to office space and to Government transport were not sorted out. In some departments no decision was taken as to whom the PWA should be accountable.
- A further problem area was job descriptions: Whilst basic job descriptions were in place, they generally proved to be unrealistic or not in line with the priorities of the departments.
- In many departments the PWA was met with unrealistic expectations. PWAs were made

responsible for internal (workplace orientated) programmes whilst at the same time being expected to do extensive outreach work.

The PWA project is essentially a new project for all parties concerned. Some glitches can be expected and do not overshadow the larger positive impact. The Project Steering Committee and the departments concerned can easily address most of the identified problems. This newsletter will periodically carry an update on the development of the PWA Project.

*For more information please contact Niko Knigge on (012) 312-0022.*



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