

**25 years of fight against HIV &  
AIDS, a critical analysis of  
more than two decades of  
action in Sub-Saharan Africa**

**by**

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# Introduction

- **HIV/AIDS is an emergency and long term development issue**
- **Info on epidemiology of the disease and behaviours growing**
- **Data on the coverage, reach and quality of HIV/AIDS services limited**
- **Women and girls account for the majority of new infections – but not reflected adequately in policies and materials**

# **Background**

## **1980s**

- **In 1980s AIDS discussed as disease of homosexuality and/or promiscuity**
- **Epidemiological data suppressed for fear of discouraging tourist visits**
- **When evidence about pandemic became more available donor driven awareness programmes started**
- **National leaders remained silent or undermined prevention programmes**

# **Brief Background 1980s...**

- **From mid-1980s international community started fund raising, design and implement interventions, and engage in research**
- **Responses were fragmented, piecemeal and vastly under resourced**
- **The Global Programme on AIDS created – succeeded by UNAIDS in 1996**
- **Programme provided technical assistance to countries to build formal structures to lead national prevention efforts**

# **Background**

## **1980s...**

- **Plans were identical and lacked country relevance**
- **HIV/AIDS programmes initiated by donor agencies in late 80s were mainly modeled on public health programmes in North America**
- **Combination of national denial and donor driven framing of responses hampered effective response**

# **Background**

## **1990s - present**

- **In 1990s pandemic accelerated**
- **Talk on incorporation of new partners and new resources into prevention and care**
- **Donor strings attached to funding led to lack of ownership by all partners**
- **Repetition of interventions, overlapping of efforts, ignorance of initiatives on addressing underlying issues**

# **Background**

## **1990s - present**

- **Partners decided to have a broadened response, i.e a multi-sectoral approach**
- **Leaders of Government, businesses, faith-based organisation and cultural institutions are taking action**

# **Outcomes of Action taken in the past 25 years**

- **Have learned a great deal in the last 2 decades**
- **Consensus that HIV is a problem impacting health as well as social and economic development**
- **Most countries elevated HIV/AIDS to national priority status**
- **Prevention and treatment efforts have grown manifold**
- **Basic structures in place to guide national response to HIV/AIDS**

# **Outcomes of Action taken in the past 25 years...**

- **Governments committed to international treaties on women and children's rights**
- **Governments elevating women's rights**
- **Discriminating laws being scrapped**
- **Policymaking processes streamlined**
- **National health care and education systems more flexible**
- **HIV/AIDS elevated to the forefront of public debate and discussion**

# **Outcomes of Action taken in the past 25 years...**

- **Access to ARVs as a result of  
High level commitment  
Reduction in prices**
- **More resources available  
National Governments, Global Fund,  
PEPFAR, Bill and Melinda Gates,  
Bilateral Donors, etc.**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges**

- **Response need to remain flexible, creative, energetic and vigilant**
- **Collaborative response necessary**
- **Need to bridge gap that prevents resources from reaching levels of leadership where they can be used more effectively**
- **Messages developed at grassroots more effective**
- **Prevention efforts need to be consistently reviewed**
- **Necessary to uphold human rights of people living with HIV & AIDS**
- **Programmes must address the social and cultural factors**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges**

## **Gender**

- **Need for fundamental shifts in relationships between men and women**
- **Women need to play a greater role in programmes and strategies**
- **Women rights to economic independence**
- **Life-skills and other school based programmes good, especially for girls**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges**

- **Girls need to be given access to credit, business and marketing skills**
- **Community-based education challenge social norms and values on gender inequality**
- **VCT services need to be friendly to women and girls**
- **Zero tolerance of rape and abuse of women and girls**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges**

- **Support women who provide care to family members**
- **Reproductive health info must be provided to both married and single adolescents**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges...**

- Gender sensitive program approaches for reproductive health is necessary**
- Special strategies needed for providing info. for adolescent women**
- AIDS education efforts need to emphasize risk factors**
- Increase in the use of professional delivery care services among adolescents needed**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges...**

## **Capacity**

- **AIDS eroding national capacities**
- **Limited human and technical capacity**
- **Need to support establishment of systems, incentives and mechanisms to manage robust AIDS response**
- **Need to budget & cost AIDS plans**
- **National info. systems need to track, monitor and evaluate national responses**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges...**

## **Treatment**

- **Since 1996 ARVs reduced AIDS related illnesses and deaths**
- **Millions remain deprived**
- **80% accessing through private sector**
- **95% paying out of pocket – well off individuals**
- **Need sustainable financing to scale up**
- **Strengthening of health systems needed**

# **Lessons Learned/Remaining Challenges...**

## **Resources**

- **National governments committed to funding**
- **International spending increased**
- **Spending not keep pace with need**
- **Unmet needs for 2005 about US\$5 billion**
- **From 2008 US\$22 billion minimum needed**

# **Recommendations for the future**

**Need to address the pandemic in accordance with the UNAIDS “Three Ones”**

- **One national authority for HIV/AIDS**
- **One strategic framework**
- **One M&E system**

# **Conclusion**

**“The cost whether measured in human misery today, or in loss of hope for tomorrow, is simply too high. We have to turn and face [HIV/AIDS] head on.”**

**UN Secretary - General Kofi Annan**