



The National Partnership Platform Initiative (NPPI)

August 2008

Background

It is now generally accepted that civil society (CS) and civil society organizations (CSOs) are vital partners in national responses to HIV and TB. However, all too often civil society lacks the political influence to engage with governments, and there are few opportunities for real dialogue. There is a pressing need to create and facilitate substantial and constructive national dialogue between policy-makers and civil society, and to engage communities and foster transparency and accountability within both civil society and governments.

Strategy and Goals

The National Partnership Platform Initiative (NPPI) is a unique approach that creates the space for an effective dialogue between civil society, government, and other stakeholders built upon *equal exchange* and grounded in transparency and accountability. The platform includes a broad variety of partner organizations and addresses two of the most fundamental and neglected aspects of the response to AIDS and TB: Genuine coordination, dialogue and collaboration between local civil society stakeholders, as well as improved accountability and ownership of national AIDS/TB policies and programmes.

The NPPI aims to create an effective mechanism for the exchange of information and experience on AIDS and TB among all stakeholders, increase unity and solidarity among civil society actors and provide a hub for critical advocacy activities and campaigns. Importantly, the NPP will also facilitate meaningful engagement between governments and civil society, including the monitoring of national AIDS and TB targets and milestones.

Activities

The NPP initiative is grounded in efforts to document and analyze local AIDS and TB epidemics and the responses to those epidemics, to effectively advocate for stronger national and international responses, and to facilitate genuine discussion and dialogue around key issues related to HIV and TB both locally and globally. The initiative facilitates South-South dialogue through learning and sharing as well as cross country, regional and global linkages of issues and information flow.

While each country is different, some of the key activities of the NPP are:

- Healthdev.net (interactive information website/social networking tool) and eForums;
- Support for team of Key Correspondents (“citizen journalists”), including training, issues analysis, editing and media outreach;
- Dialogue and community consultation using a variety of tools, including both online and face-to-face dialogue;
- Creation (or expansion) of NPP Website (“Country Information Dashboard”) to disseminate information, engage communities and raise level of dialogue/understanding;
- Capacity building support and tools (also creating linkages with TA providers);
- Advocacy support and tools to conduct effective advocacy, including publications, advocacy campaigns, and other tools.

Outputs

The long-term output of the NPPI is a strong, self-sustaining, nationally-owned information, dialogue and advocacy platform that can place CS at the centre of the epidemic response, and in doing so greatly improve the quality of that response. In addition to raising overall awareness and engagement among civil society and affected communities, a number of specific short and mid-term products and outputs can be identified.

NPP Products

Those produced by partners and disseminated via the platform:

- Country-specific Advocacy agenda
- Partnership building toolkit
- Capacity building tools adapted to local situation and needs
- Fact sheets and Issue Briefs
- Website (Country Information Dashboard)
- Maps (online and searchable, including a wide variety of data, links and information)
- Documentation databases (GFATM, PEPFAR, epidemic data, donors, populations, service delivery)
- GFATM drafting website with country background info
- Local language versions of Healthdev.net
- Treatment Info (FAQs, reference sheets, other local products)
- NGO database (online, searchable) – link to existing sites/databases

Examples of actual work of NPPs

Dialogue: In Uganda, the NPP works through the Uganda Civil Society Inter-constituency Coordinating Committee (CICC) to facilitate information exchange, dialogue and advocacy on HIV and TB through the use of electronic discussion forums and the Key Correspondents (KC) team. The CICC is a broad-based civil society body that feeds into the Uganda AIDS Commission. In this way, Information gathered through the NPP is used to inform government and policymakers about grassroots reality, and also keeps communities updated about government policies and decisions.

Documentation: In Zimbabwe, Key Correspondents worked to investigate and document the conditions on the ground regarding home-based care, and produced a book and CD entitled “Caring from Within” in July 2008 that summarized those conditions and key policy recommendations.

Community Consultation: In Vietnam, the NPP has been enlisted as the key mechanism to solicit civil society feedback regarding UNGASS, which will both engage communities and keep the government accountable to the targets set in the UNGASS plan.

Fundraising: In Zambia, Vietnam and Cambodia, HDN has worked with the NPP to apply for external funding, including writing the NPP as part of the national Global Fund proposal. In Namibia and Vietnam, NPPs have successfully applied for in-country funds.

Advocacy: In Thailand, HDN has been supporting a network of NGOs to work in an information “platform”. This network has been active in high-profile advocacy campaigns addressing issues such as compulsory licensing of ARVs and the rights of IDU in Thailand.

Information Technology: HDN has initiated a number of innovative uses of technology, especially internet, to support community mobilization.

- The website “www.healthdev.net” is a prime example of using new technology to spark dialogue and information exchange.
- HDN is also planning “Country Information Dashboards” for each NPP that will become “local one-stop shops” for information about HIV and TB in each country, including everything from news to fundraising to VCT service-provision sites.

Global Feedback and Consultation Mechanisms: The NPP model is an ideal means of conducting community consultations, to ensure that local voices and issues reach the global level. HDN is currently working with the World AIDS Campaign to run a “Communications Facility” for the NGO delegation of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board. HDN and other partners are working to use NPPs to engage civil society and support delegations to other bodies such as the Global Fund, IHP+, UNITAID, etc.

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