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The number of people and families living with HIV and AIDS who need care and support services is continuously increasing. The provision of appropriate care at all levels is hampered by the lack of human, technical, and financial resources; continuing high levels of stigma; and the fact that most People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA) today do not know that they are infected. This poses tremendous challenges to the health care and community systems that are coping with and responding to the pandemic.

The needs of PLHA and their families can be categorized in four interrelated domains: medical needs, such as treatment and treatment information; psychological needs, such as emotional support; socioeconomic needs, such as welfare provisions; and human rights and legal needs, including access to care and protection against violence and discrimination. Over the years, relevant responses have been developed in these domains, resulting in comprehensive care and support services.

Until recently, most HIV and AIDS programmes in developed countries have neglected care and support for People Living with HIV, their families, and communities. Many governments and donor agencies supporting HIV and AIDS programmes chose to focus solely on prevention because of its relative low cost and the belief that preventing HIV infection would obviate the need for care and support. However, innovative community-based projects early in the AIDS pandemic have shown that improving access to HIV and AIDS care and support services helps de-stigmatize HIV, improves demand for voluntary counselling and HIV testing services, and allows for early management and prevention of infectious diseases (such as TB) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), among both HIV positive and negative people.

Providing these services likewise creates opportunities for HIV prevention. For these reasons, national and local strategic plans in many countries increasingly include synergistic programming that links prevention with care and support. Therefore, it is recommended that each community, region, and country needs to strengthen some level of HIV care and support according to their own context. However, the importance of the prevention strategies cannot be ignored. As in Pakistan the AIDS patients who need care and support are not more than a fraction of the total population. Whereas, the rest of the population falls under the category of high risk population or general population which can still be protected by introducing a comprehensive policy framework against HIV and AIDS.

PNAC 10th Board Meeting

10th Board Meeting of PNAC Board of Trustees (BoT) was held at Islamabad from July 31 to August 01, 2006. Besides the Board members PNAC and IWW staff participated in the Board meeting.

The agenda of the meeting was to review the progress and work plan, institutional assessment results, approval of PNAC policies, draft sustainability plan, review of resource mobilization strategy and establishment of endowment fund for PNAC. During the meeting the BoT emphasized on the importance of increasing the coverage of vulnerable population to control the epidemic. It was stressed that government and civil society institutions are partner in efforts towards achieving the goal of moving towards Universal Access.



Board Member during the Meeting

On invitation, Mr. Arshad Rasheed, Programme Officer European Commission (EC) had a brief session with BoT and shared his views on creating an enabling environment that would allow the civil society to participate meaningfully in developing national plans and setting targets at the country level. He also discussed the future partnership of EC and PNAC for common cause of prevention and control of HIV and AIDS in Pakistan.

The President PNAC while appreciating the EC support to PNAC noted that strengthening the capacity of civil society is a long-term process that will require sufficient allocation of resources and technical support on an ongoing basis. BoT members advised the PNAC and partner consortia management to focus on further improving the quality and pace of activities to meet the work plan 2006 targets. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to BoT members and staff.

PNAC Elected to Represent Civil Society in CCM

PNAC scored a convincing victory in elections conducted to elect the civil society representatives for the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) of Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). CCM includes representatives from both the public and the private sectors, including governments, multilateral or bilateral agencies, NGOs organizations, academic institutions, private businesses, and people living with the diseases.

An Election Commission had been constituted to conduct and coordinate the elections. The Election Commission comprised of UNAIDS, Greenstar, National AIDS Control Program (NACP), and DFID. The Election Commission ensured that elections were conducted in transparent and fair manner.

The Civil Society (CS) Election Committee has for the first time organized the election of CS members to the CCM. In this regard, the CCM of Pakistan sought to instate an open and transparent process of electing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to the CCM to represent the constituency of CSOs working in health sector, particularly AIDS, TB and Malaria.

It is also for the first time in the history of Pakistan that the election of CSO to the CCM has been conducted through a web-based portal and PNAC IT department supported the CCM Election Committee. The UNAIDS Pakistan hosted the CSO election website to facilitate objective monitoring of the election process and results.

The CCM in Pakistan has reserved one seat for each, i.e., HIV and AIDS, TB, Malaria, and International NGO. During the process 149 votes were polled, out of which 118 votes are secured by PNAC qualifying for the seat reserved for HIV and AIDS sector. Association for Social Development has qualified for the seat for TB with 41 votes, HealthNet Institute for malaria with 43 votes, and Mercy Corps for INGO with 66 votes.

On the occasion President PNAC, Raja Khalid Mehmood, expressed gratitude for the CS members for their support. He appreciated the efforts made by the CS in order to accomplish the legendary task of CCM elections while emphasizing the importance of communication and coordination among CS members for successful achievement of their objectives. He also recognized that the CS had placed a great responsibility on PNAC and that PNAC would try its utmost to bring the core issues of HIV and AIDS forward and fight for the cause.

PNAC at XVI International AIDS Conference, Toronto - Canada

The XVI International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2006), organized by the International AIDS Society (IAS) and the AIDS 2006 Toronto Local Host, is the biennial gathering of the global AIDS community. Over 26,000 participants from more than 170 countries attended the Conference. There were about 30 participants from Pakistan including Federal and Provincial Health Secretaries, National and Provincial Managers of AIDS Control Programmes, NGOs and media representatives. NACP nominated the National Manager PNAC in the official delegation to represent Civil Society Organizations of Pakistan.



The AIDS Conference, Toronto, Canada

The keynote speakers at inauguration of the Conference included M/s Melinda and Bill Gates and former President USA Mr. Bill Clinton. This time the Conference was unable to attract political leadership from other developed and the developing countries.

The theme of the conference was *Time to Deliver* which underscored the continued urgency in bringing effective HIV prevention and treatment strategies to communities the world over. The growing impatience marked the end of the XVI International AIDS Conference, with scientists, clinicians, policymakers, People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA) and other community leaders and caregivers calling for an accelerated pace to scale up HIV prevention, care and treatment programmes in resource-limited settings.

SNNHA Board Meeting

A meeting of SNNHA Board of Directors was held in Karachi on August 19, 2006. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Shoukat Ali, Executive Director SNNHA. The Board discussed matters related to the progress of Tameer Project and also reviewed the requests for membership of SNNHA. Programme Officer Dr. Itikhar and Finance & Admin Manager M. Yahya gave presentations on capacity building component and SGP. A Two member committee comprising of Dr. Zahid Saddar and Dr. Mumtaz Qazi was formed to keep close liaison with Tameer Project staff.



SNNHA BOARD MEETING

Programme Officers Forum

The role of Programme Officers in the implementation of the Tameer Project and its Small Grants Programme (SGP) is of utmost importance. Not only are they required to provide technical support to their partners in the implementation of SGP projects but are also responsible for the capacity building of partner organizations. Therefore, PNAC organized a Learning Forum for enhancing the technical skills of the Programme Officers. The Forum was organized at Islamabad office from August 23 - 25, 2006.



Programme Officers during the Forum

The Forum started with the presentations of the Technical Advisor IWW, the National Programme Officer, and the M&E Officer, in which the technical needs of the programme section were identified and listed. Afterwards provincial and regional Programme Officers were requested to perform self-assessment and identify their technical needs.

The Programme Officers also visited Street Youth Project which is being run by Rawal AIDS Awareness Group (RAAG) in Rawalpindi. The objectives of the Forum were to improve the quality of SGP reporting, enhancing the understanding of service delivery packages and core indicators, enhancing report writing skills, skill development in budget review and analysis of SGP budget, follow up of provincial trainings, orientation in writing case studies, and developing analytical skills.

Enhancing Coordination and Staff Capacities - NAC

1. Training on Monitoring & Evaluation: Three days training on Monitoring & Evaluation under Enhanced Programme on HIV and AIDS was organized by Provincial AIDS Control Programme (PACP). The training was organized for its SGP grantees for feed back on Monitoring & Evaluation tools. The NAC availed of the opportunity and the PO and PA participated in the said activity.
2. Meeting of the NAC and UNHCR: UNHCR while stepping in to the domain of HIV and AIDS and considering the NAC as potential partner for coordination with civil society organizations at NWFPC conducted a meeting on July 05, 2006 with the NAC staff to explore possible avenues of collaboration between them. It was followed by Dr. Khizer's (PM NAC) participation in UNHCR reproductive health working group meeting on July 25, 2006.
4. Meeting of the NAC with PACP: NAC as part of its resource mobilization efforts with potential public and international organizations have been collaborating with Provincial AIDS Control Programme (PACP). In this connection PM meeting with PPM PACP on the financial assistance for the NAC was held on July 26, 2006.
5. A TOT Training Organized by the NAC's Member NGO: A TOT on communication in addition to VCT was organized by a NAC member NGO from July 25 to July 27, 2006. The NAC was represented by Programme Associate, NAC. It's a privilege for NAC that one of its members has built upon experience of the IPC training organized by the NAC.

PAC Staff Provides Technical Assistance to the SGP Partners

Punjab AIDS Consortium (PAC) is providing technical and financial support to 10 SGP partners in close collaboration with PNAC. All the partner consortia have been receiving Technical Assistance from PAC/PNAC whenever and wherever required. In this regard another step was taken and a two day meeting was arranged in connection with the Technical Assistance to the PAC office in reviewing SGP reports and also to discuss the SGP partners' budget, in terms of existing services utilization.



SGP Review Meeting

The objectives of this meeting was to know the status of SGP and the problems faced during their implementation, to review the technical reports submitted to the PAC and PNAC, to discuss the involvement of the PAC in the Technical Assistance to SGP partners, and to review the budget in the light of actual need.

Mr. Abid Atiq, Technical Advisor Interact Worldwide, was also present in the meeting along with the PAC staff. The project coordinators of the concerned projects were there to present their progress. In the meeting the sustainability plans of the projects were also discussed and the project coordinators were asked to further develop their proposals for different donors for the extension of their interventions.

Training Workshop on Interpersonal Communication - PAC

A Provincial Training Workshop on Inter Personal Communication (IPC) was organized by Punjab AIDS Consortium (PAC) on August 28 September 01, 2006 in Murree. A total of 26 participants attended the workshop out of which 7 participants were from Kashmir AIDS Consortium (KAC). The Training was facilitated by Ms. Nazish Naem. The opening ceremony was presided over by the Chairman, PAC. The Chairman KAC, Mr. Abid Ashraf especially attended the workshop representing KAC.



This Training was organized to enhance the communication skills of the organizations working in the field of HIV and AIDS. The topics covered in the Training were interpersonal communication, how to handle and distribute information, talking about sensitive issues, understanding behaviour change, ethics in counselling, and stigma and discrimination.

A Pre and Post self-assessment of the participants was also carried out during the Training. The analysis was tailored to evaluate different perspectives of the participants and their understanding of the importance of spreading information in a right way, their skills of adapting the information according to the requirements of any particular group, their understanding of the importance of using right language, and so on. The assessment reports were all indicating varying degrees of improvement in the communication skills of the participants.

Mr. Abid Ashraf, the Chairman KAC and the chief guest of the closing ceremony, appreciated the efforts of PAC for organizing such a successful workshop. He thanked PAC on behalf of the participants from KAC, for providing them with such an opportunity. In the end Mr. Abid Ashraf, Mr. Amjad Gardezi, and Mr. Mian Imran Hayat distributed certificates among the participants.

SGP Learning Forum - Sindh Office

The Small Grant Programmes (SGP) Forums are being conducted to assimilate major learnings from grass roots action programmes. Next of this series of forums was held at Karachi on July 24, 2006 with all SGP partners from Sindh. Lead staff of the respective projects and heads of the partner NGOs attended the forum.

This Forum was given a slightly new structure than the first one held at Quetta. This time a group exercise was undertaken at the end of the Forum which substantially helped in finalizing the major learnings. The Learning forum was facilitated by Mr. Irshad Junejo.



Participants of the Forum - Sindh Office

The objectives of the Forum were collective capacity building of the SGPs, and identification of available local resources and the major learnings from project implementation. A six-monthly performance review of SGPs-Sindh was presented by M&E Officer South. The President, Raja Khalid Mehmood in his address appreciated the interest of all the SGP representatives. He said similar activities will be held at national level in which all the SGPs of the country would participate. But for this, he added, enhanced preparation and practice is required to excellently advocate our cause and promote our action research projects.

Quarterly Board Meeting - BAN

Balochistan AIDS Network (BAN) Quarterly Board Meeting was held at Quetta on August 25, 2006 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Sirbuland Khan Jogezeai. All the members of the governing bodies of the BAN attended this meeting. The agenda of the meeting was to review the progress of the BAN of last two years, and the election of the BAN.

Chairman, BAN briefed all the participants about the progress of the BAN in last two years. It was discussed and decided that next election of the BAN, under the supervision of a five member independent election committee, will be held in Quetta in mid- September, 2006. The Governing body of the BAN was elected in 2004. Its tenure will be completed in September, 2006.

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