



REGIONAL AIDS TRAINING NETWORK

Post Conference Communiqué

HIV Training and Capacity Development Trends and Challenges: Conference Recommendations

25 June 2009 – Laico Novotel Hotel, Kigali Rwanda – The Regional AIDS Training Network (RATN) in conjunction with the Kigali health Institute (KHI) has just concluded a conference under the theme “HIV and AIDS Training and Capacity Building: Trends and Challenges” at the Laico Novotel Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda, which was held from the 24th June to the 25th June 2009. It was attended by a cross section of stakeholders including government officials, regional economic bodies, regional and local civil society, International NGOs, National AIDS Councils, and the media.

This conference was of paramount importance, recognizing that the region is about eighteen (18) months away from the end line of the 2010 Universal Access targets and five (5) years before the 2015 MDGs targets, the time to engage and debate on the efficacy of the HIV training and capacity building initiatives in the region is now. The HIV capacity Building Conference aimed to provide an opportunity to share and exchange ideas and experiences among stakeholders engaged in capacity building and training for HIV and AIDS response in the Eastern and Southern African region. One of the challenges facing HIV training and capacity building initiatives is how to ensure that training impacts or leads to improved HIV service delivery. Through sharing of experiences and lessons learned, the conference provided a forum for consensus building on current gaps in HIV training and capacity building as well as innovative and practical approaches and strategies that can be adapted to address those gaps.

The participants to the conference came up with the following recommendations:

- There is need for the National AIDS Councils/Commissions (NACs) to coordinate HIV capacity building based on the three ones principle and ensure that HIV capacity building strategies at national level is based on specific priority needs with clear and well defined monitoring indicators.
- There is need for strengthening the strategies for retention of health staff in order to optimise returns on training and capacity development. The conference observed that there is an increase in people changing their jobs into areas where they do not apply the skills and knowledge acquired through training and capacity development.
- Governments and NACs in collaboration with regional partners involved in HIV capacity building should spearhead the setting up of accreditation and quality assurance processes for HIV training and capacity building programs to ensure relevance and standards. The conference observed that the market is increasingly flooded with training programmes of varying quality and some of which are very poor and therefore contributing negatively to the HIV response.

- There is need to invest in the identification and wide application of new and innovative training and capacity development approaches to ensure cost effectiveness. The emerging trends of application of Information Technology should be integrated into HIV training approaches.
- There is need to develop systematic approaches and frameworks for implementation of Training of Trainers (TOT) for HIV programmes. The conference observed that not everybody who is trained can be a Trainer to other Trainers and therefore there is the need to ensure systematic identification of trainees for TOT and quality follow up and support processes.
- There is need to strengthen collaboration and information sharing among training and capacity development institutions in development, delivery and evaluation of HIV training programs to ensure multiplier effects and minimize duplication of efforts.
- There is need for increased integration of traditional and community based methods into modern methods of HIV training and capacity development.
- There is need to strengthen action research and evidence-based programming for HIV capacity building to ensure that the minimal available resources for HIV capacity building are invested in priority and effective interventions.
- There is need to develop greater understanding of the effects of the current economic downturn on HIV training and capacity building vis-à-vis the achievement of the UNGASS and MDGs targets.
- There is need to develop and consolidate community systems strengthening approaches to ensure that local communities at grassroots have core competences to absorb and implement effective HIV initiatives.
- There is need to develop standardized and systematic tools and systems for Monitoring and evaluation of Training and capacity development programmes.
- There is need for Regional cooperation and coordination of Capacity Building in HIV and AIDS. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) could play a very important role in coordination of training, resource mobilisations, harmonisation of training modules and approaches and the training of a critical mass of TOTs for the regions they serve.

The conference was mindful of the fact that quality training and capacity building programmes and an environment conducive for application of new skills alone do not guarantee improved HIV service delivery. There is need for political will to be exercised in order to ensure that beyond credible and quality HIV training and capacity development programmes, a culture of results based management values is entrenched and consolidated at all levels of implementing HIV and AIDS programmes. **End//**

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