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PSO capacity building in developing countries

VSO

educaids

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Impressions of the PSO Learning Carousel
on HIV/AIDS and Capacity Building
June 9, 2005
Theatre Concordia, The Hague

KIT

SNV

Cordaid

Hogeschool
Larenstein

n(o)vib
OXFAM NETHERLANDS

MAIN*line*

AIDS Foundation East West
СПИД Фонд Восток Запад

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Introduction

On June 9th 2005 PSO invited the Dutch development sector to experience, reflect, build concepts, test and experiment in a one day learning event on HIV/AIDS and capacity building with their colleagues.

Thanks to the active engagement of Cordaid, Novib, VSO, KIT, AIDS Foundation East West, Mainline, Share-Net, SNV, Educaids, Hogeschool Larenstein, Afroneth and ICCO we succeeded in designing an exciting programme. Click here to get an overview of the full programme.

The Learning Carousel was inspired by the outcomes of earlier PSO research and exchange on the topic of HIV/AIDS and capacity building. You can download the outcomes from the PSO website or download a copy of the PSO newsletter special on the topic.

On the day all the co-organisers opened up to share their own experience and challenge participants to pick their brains, give critical feedback, practice new tools, and strategise for the future.

With this report we share the main outcomes of the event and provide readers with an overview of learnings, critical comments and ideas. The report includes:

☺   An overview of the process
☺   A reflection on the day's outcomes
☺   Links to presentations and resources
☺   A list of participants (click on any of the fotos below)

The process: on the merry-go-round

We kick off at ten in the morning with a plenary session in which participants get acquainted with each other and the programme. The day's chairman, Roel Snelder, from the PSO Knowledge and Learning Centre, starts by asking some personal questions:

'Have you ever had a personal experience with HIV/AIDS. For instance with a colleague, friend, family-member?'
About three quarters of the audience rises to its feet, comfirming they have a serious stake in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
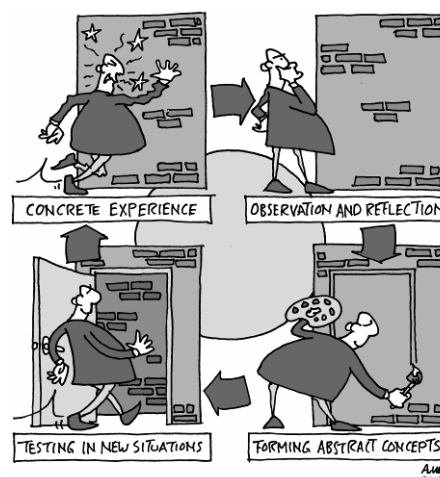A considerably lower percentage however recognises the statement: *'I know how to raise the relationship between HIV/AIDS and sexual behaviour in conversation with partners.'*

In preparation for the event everybody was asked to bring an item with a special meaning in relation to his or her struggle against HIV/AIDS. Some have brought personal mementos of friends in Africa or elsewhere. Interestingly, one participant carries a Zambian HIV/AIDS brochure dating back to 1990, wondering if there has been any progress over the last 15 years. To get a bit more acquainted with each other, participants are asked to talk to their neighbours, by using their special item as a trigger.

Learning carousel philosophy
After these preliminaries the chairman gives a bit of background to the idea behind the learning Carousel. The day will feature 8 workshops for participants to pick and choose from, some of which run twice during the day as in a carousel. The concept of a carousel of learning is not only reflected in a great variation in content, but also in method. The workshops are inspired by the learning cycle of doing, reflecting, analysing and designing an experiment. This gives participants the opportunity to actively experiment with real life situations, debate on issues and design appropriate solutions to a variety of issues.

For more info on the philosophy behind the learning carousel please click on the cartoon.

As to the content background for the event, the presentation focusses on the outcomes of earlier PSO research and exchange in 2004.

For a full overview of the presentation click on the image, save to disk and open.

Earlier conclusions on content

- **Our strategies will be defined by what others do -** We need to cooperate!
- **HIV/AIDS invades all spaces of human development -** It concerns all of us working in development.
- **The impact on capacity in high prevalence areas cannot be ignored -** In low prevalence areas we need to be more pro-active and innovative
- **The impact of HIV/AIDS on organisations capacities has many dimensions -** There are various ways to tackle the issues, e.g. direct Aids-work, internal and external mainstreaming, etc.
- **Dialogue on HIV/AIDS between 'nort and south' is essential but difficult -** We are not good at it!

After this plenary introduction participants join the various workshops which run during the morning and the afternoon. Reflections on the outcomes are highlighted below. In between the workshops, especially during lunch, there is plenty of room for networking. The day is also livened up by a performance of the Senegalese musical group Keep'Art, who are in the Netherlands for the Festival Mundial. The band promote HIV/AIDS awareness in Senegal. They join the Carousel courtesy of ICCO.

To get hold of Keep'Art's music click on the image.

Focus on learning

Learning is key throughout the day - in groups during the workshop sessions, but also individually. A reporter and camera challenge participants to think about what they are learning. More fundamentally, at the end of each workshop each participant gets fifteen minutes to reflect on an individual basis on three questions, which are written down on large billboards.

☺ What have I learned from this workshop?
☺ What will I do with these learnings when I go back to work?
☺ And with whom would I like to link up for future support or cooperation?

As a wrap up of the day all the billboards are exhibited for everyone to peruse and to highlight what is most striking with a red HIV/AIDS ribbon.

Click on the foto to get an overview of all the reflections per workshop.

PSO's director Rosien Herweijer reflects on the exhibition and the day in her closing interview:

'We want to create an environment in which people feel free to share and connect. We must make sure that development organisations don't operate as independent islands, but cooperate intensely. There is much knowledge and expertise available and sharing it will be of benefit to everyone involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We at PSO realise that we have lot of work to do. Not only regarding human resources management within our own organisation, but also with regard to the human resources within the Health Sector, one of PSO's main intervention area.'

And adding to this, in response to the question what's next? *"I hope that the participants will simply pick up the phone and call each other when they need advice, or run into a problem. I will surely do so!'*

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Workshop outcomes

What has come out of the day in terms of content. We have used various observations, and reflections from the particpants to capture the highlights.

Dialogue is key!

One of the most popular workshops (it runs twice during the day!) at the event is about how to talk to each other - donor versus partner - on the sensitive issue of HIV/AIDS, how to put it on the agenda and deal with it. For that purpose Novib and Cordaid have designed a workshop in which professional actors played out real life situations. Participants are encouraged to actively step in and exercise an actual dialogue. This proves to be quite revealing. Some quotes of participants who are willing to bite the bullet centre stage.

'I went straight into my 'nursing' mode in the role play. This was not the appropriate setting" And in reflection on this: "*if you suspect your partner has HIV/AIDS, is it necessary to know/ discuss that he personally has HIV/AIDS? Not really… You are not a medical person! Respect if the partner does not want to discuss his personal illness; seek an institutional solution.'*

Although most agree the emotional perspective is the wrong road to take, the personal should not be avoided. Quote: *'You need trust and a relationship before you can bring up the issue.'* So *'don't mention the word condoms in the first sentence'*. Interestingly someone retorts: *'be also aware of your own prejudices: even if your partner is a catholic organization, this does not have to mean that the person you speak with is automatically against condoms!'*

A lot of suggestions come up in terms of the most feasible approach. In general most agree with the statement: *'there are no blueprints: it is about people and characters and relationships. Which approach you take depends on what you think you can do.'*

Concrete perspectives are also given: *'Make it policy (then you can show your partner that it is not hobbyism of a programme officer!). If we have a partnership, this is where we stand for'* And *'Start with the professional: what happens in the organization because of HIV/AIDS? How is the organization functioning and how can we help you? Make a list'* or '*Look for a local champion on the issue.'*

Novib, Cordaid and PSO will use the outcome of the workshop to develop training material on the topic, which is expected to be published on **DVD by December 2005.**
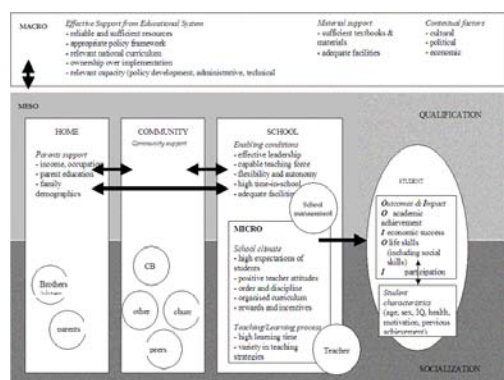

Actors playing out donor – partner dialogue. Click on the image to download the cases for dialogue

From models to practice?
Another approach to dialoguing between donors and partners comes up in the Educaids workshop. HIV/AIDS has impact on the demand for education, the quality of education and its content. So how to make the educational system less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, and use it for effective prevention at the same time?

To answer this participants explore how cooperation works in practice and which organisational lessons can be learned by using a model.

Click on the image above to enter the model

The use of the model leads to quite some debate. On the one hand it offers an interesting framework for analysis to position various actors, factors and contextual developments in view of prevention of HIV/AIDS. Quote: 'W*e should realise the importance of context mapping and analysis before planning educational interventions.'*

It proves difficult however to make it work on a micro-level. The reality is that in for instance African school teachers and pupils deal with very practical questions of care and support. It is therefore suggested to make the model more bottom-up to include practical

perspectives, *'especially with regards to the input from southern partners (which is insufficient).'* **Educaids will use the discussion to further strengthen its model and approach.**

Similar observations are heard in the Larenstein workshop on HIV/AIDS and livelihoods. Participants appreciate the emphasis on the need to get a clear picture of the total impact on communities. *'HIV/AIDS should be approached in an integrated, multisectoral way.'* To get to a common vision on how to get there proves to be a challenge however.
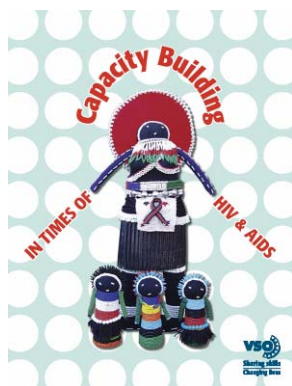
Participants conclude for instance*: 'We are still working from a large personal bias'* and *'As a next step we need to strengthen awareness about the intrinsic link between HIV/AIDS and poverty'*, very much so at the *'organisational level (beyond the target group)'*. Other suggestions made are *'a greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS'*, and *'to dig deeper for practices and experiences that work'.*

From practice towards models!
In a VSO workshop practices of partners are put more central. Using it's own experience in working with partners in Southern Africa, VSO challenges participants to develop assessment questions.
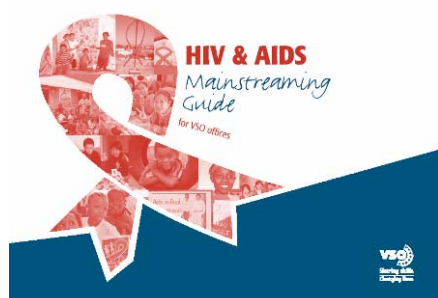
As an ingredient for discussion VSO introduces its learnings in looking at partners' capacity building needs areas. Interestingly participants very much appreciate the *'process approach and attitude'* taken by VSO in evaluating and learning from experience.

Click on the image to download the VSO-experience.

At the same time it is observed that such a way of working clearly brings out *'the gap between partner requests and donor needs',* which challenges to *'put yourself in the tight shoes of a southern civil society organisation'.* A conclusion which rings through is that donors need to *'take the context of HIV/AIDS in consideration when assessing partner capacity'*.

There is great interest in **VSO (and others) developing an assessment toolbox**, which would be shared for further feedback.

Click for VSO's experience on mainstreaming

On complex institutional set-ups?

The SNV workshop also seeks to work from concrete practices with local partners towards developing policy outcomes. Base of the workshop is SNV's draft strategy and a [case from Kenya](#) in which a local constituency based coordinating body has asked SNV for support in fighting HIV/AIDS.

The case points out the difficulty in dealing with numerous stakeholders. In general participants confirm that hybrid strategies and a more proactive long-term development oriented perspective are needed. Also the need to *"focus on meso level (civil society, government and private sector")* is* underlined.
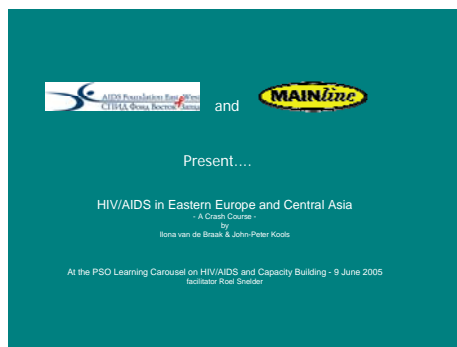
To get to an answer as to how to work at that level, with all these different stakeholders, proves to be elusive however. SNV's example of working at the meso-level brings out lots of questions on the whole institutional set up. '*Which stakeholders should be involved, who is in the driver's sea*t', and *'How to avoid creating parallel structures?'* In this respect participants mention they see a *'difficulty in reconciling local, national and MDG demands.'* Notwithstanding these issues **there is definite interest among the participants to keep exchanging on SNV's 'multisectoral approach'.**

Click on the logo to enter SNV's draft strategy on HIV/AIDS

Another interesting perspective of working in a complex institutional set up is given by Aids Foundation East West and Mainline. In giving participants a 'crash course' on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe/Central Asia, they challenge them to think about what type of capacity building is relevant in the dynamics of former communist structures.

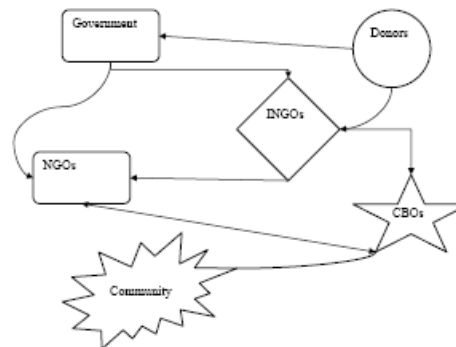*Click below to download AFEW's and Mainline's crashcourse.*

Central question here is, who (organisations, institutions, other stakeholders) should be involved when working on HIV/AIDS, more specifically in developing programmes in prisons.

Interestingly, by using a tool (institutiogramme) participants turn out to be well able to get in touch with this (quote) *'unknown region'. 'They even point out blind spots in the institutional analysis we prepared beforehand, i.e. putting prisoners at the centre of analysis',* as Mainline and AFEW observe.

Click on the image below to download the case and exercise used.

Example Institutiogramme

Some other quotes: *'joint cooperation between organisations with different goals is possible',* but *'it is of great importance to dialogue and bring on board all levels of government institutions when introducing new concepts, ideas and approaches'.* And in conclusion: *'professional skills and attitude enable one to work in different settings.'*

Link up and coordinate!
HIV/AIDS has a major impact on the type of service delivery and the workload of health workers. At the same time, the health sector itself is affected by the epidemic as health workers fall sick or have to look after sick family members.

In a KIT workshop, which runs twice during the day, participants are stimulated to look for opportunities for Dutch organizations to support sound strategies to help overcome these developments.
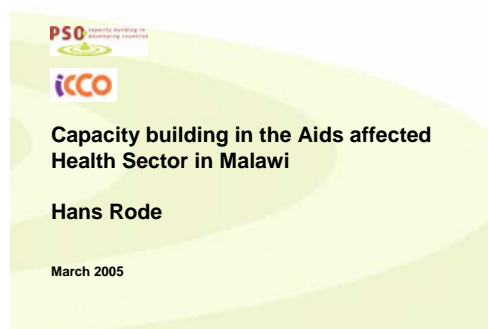
Click on the foto below for a powerpoint of some basic facts.

Participants seem to share a common understanding to *'address capacity building not only focussing on NGOs, but also on communities and government.'* To step over boundaries as it were.

However the *'importance of investing in home based care, should be balanced with being careful not to stretch the capacity at that level'.* And *'reflections are needed on the concept of sustainability in the context of AIDS affected health systems.'*

Tales from the field (Mulanje mission hospital) illustrate how health systems are affected. *For direct download to an experience from Malawi in print, click on the image below..*
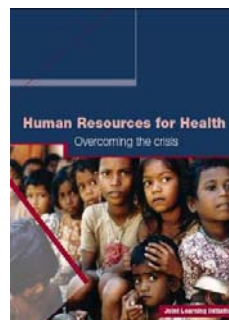

Some participants are of the opinion that a more fundamental shift as to the way we look at health systems and human resources is in order. Participants assert in this respect that *'there is an increase in competition on resources as opposed to a decrease in resources'.*

And *'we should not focus on obvious short term solutions, such as: let's send expat health staff, or let's block recruitment of southern health workers to the north. We need to look for linkages instead.'*

To name a few: '*Exchange and coordinate with other MFOs on content and fundraising for specific programmes'*, and *'Red Cross, PSO, Sharenet, Healthnet and others need to work together, also towards government and private sector, as an enabling entity.'*

Other reference material at KIT workshop (click on the images for direct download).

Linking up and coordination is also the key message coming from the Sharenet workshop on human resources management in the donor community. As a preparation Sharenet did extensive research into practices of Dutch NGO's as well as of foreign networks.

The discussion on June 9th clearly points out that *'the proces of how to implement these policies and the realisation that it is about more than costs'* should be at the fore of the debate. Issues such as how to achieve the commitment of senior management, as well as ownership must be addressed. '*A good process to develop policy goes through various stages: collect ideas, develop scenarios, and calculate, decide and implemen'''*, according to one participant.

It is also concluded that there is a *'huge difference in possible ambitions between profit- and not for profit sector'*. And that an *'indirect HIV/AIDS costing tool is neede"*. In that respect there is space for shared learning. *'Get more information about financing the related cost, and share info on available services per country'*, is suggested.

Also many participants underline the use and update of already available resources, such as *'link up PSO and Sharenet partners to Pharmaccess International supported AIDS programmes, database, factsheets, etc., and to Heineken, Guiness, BZ, SNV and CELTEL network.*

To read up on more ideas to tackle the issue of human resources management click on the image below.

Epilogue

So we have seen a lot of activity on June 9th: practicing with new tools and situations, critical feedback and debate and development of new ideas, insights, and even planning for the future. Feedback from participants throughout the day, and also after the event, proves the Learning Carousel is well appreciated.

Evaluation on the part of PSO and its fellow organisers leads to the conclusion that this was a unique opportunity for the Dutch development sector to get together and get an insight in each other's practice concerning HIV/AIDS and capacity building. From our perpspective an added value is the concrete cooperation between organisations in preparing and running the workshops.

Participants' personal reflections show that valuable lessons were learned. Nonetheless there remains also criticism as discussions at times only scratched the surface or could have been more participatory. We will certainly take this to heart for a next opportunity.

A number of issues / recommendations and ideas are still resounding. A quick recap:

☺ Be aware of using blueprint models. Rather work from and with partner's experiences!

☺ An open dialogue between stakeholders is essential. There is a need for further practice within the Dutch development sector in this respect.

☺ Joint cooperation and linking up with likeminded organisations and individuals is highlighted time and again within the workshops, but also as a product of participants' personal reflections.

☺ Also to that effect a number of follow-up actions are worth mentioning:
- VSO will further elaborate and share its assessment tools,
- Sharenet will elaborate the process issues and good practice on developing HRM policies;
- PSO will use these experiences to develop its own HRM policy with its members.
- Novib, Cordaid and PSO will develop a training DVD on donor – partner dialogue
- DGIS will use the dialogue experience to train embassy staff
- Also PSO is looking into the whole debate on human resources for health.

A final conclusion for PSO, and rather for the whole sector is that learning on the broader issue on HIV/AIDS and development is very much in its early stages. Knowledge and skills to effectively respond to the issues our southern partners deal with, needs to built among professionals within the Dutch development sector. In the months to come PSO will link up with a number of organisations, including its fellow organisers of the PSO-learning Carousel, to promote and to develop further exchange and training. We will keep you posted! Check our website regularly for an update.

Roel Snelder
PSO Knowledge and Learning Centre

Resources

You can click to download these resources or use the links provided!

Publications
VSO: HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming Guide, 2004
http://www.share-net.nl/assets/images/HRM_and_AIDS_study_report.pdf
VSO: Capacity buildng in times of HIV/AIDS, 2004
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=564
UN: The Impact of AIDS, 2004
http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/AIDSimpact/AIDSWebAnnounce.htm
JLI, Human Resources for Health, 2005
http://www.globalhealthtrust.org/Report.html
Sharenet, Taking Responsibility, Why, for whom, what and how?, 2005
http://www.share-net.nl/assets/images/HRM_and_AIDS_study_report.pdf
H. Rode, Capacity Building in the Aids affected Health Sector in Malawi, 2004
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=564
Fowler, Civil society capacity building and the HIV/AIDS pandemic: A development capital perspective, 2004
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=354
INTRAC, Rewriting the rules? capacity building in times of HIV/AIDS, 2004
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=353

Presentations and cases
AFEW / Mainline, HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe ad Central Asia, Crashcourse
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=595
SNV, A Development Response to HIV/AIDS
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=582
KIT, HIV/AIDS and Health Services
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=583
SNV, Draft strategy on HIV/AIDS
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=588
Novid, Cordaid, Case on donor – partner dialogue
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=594
PSO, opening presentation Learning Carousel
http://www.pso.nl/asp/documentsite.asp?document=586

For more resources on HIV/AIDS and capacity building you can visit PSO's website
http://www.pso.nl/knowledgecenter/dossier.asp?dossier=10