PN-ABU-806

GENESYS

THE FUTURES GROUP

PN-ABU-806

AIDS AND GENDER: FROM ANALYSIS TO ACTION (ENTEBBE, UGANDA)

June 1993

GENESYS Project
Contract No. PDC-0100-A-00-9044-00

5832.204

USAID G/R&D/WID
U.S. Agency for International Development
Office of Women in Development
Department of State
Washington, DC 20523-1816

1

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Workshop Overview 2

Findings and Recommendations 3

Conclusion 6

Executive Summary:

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), HIV seropositivity is estimated at approximately 9 million adults worldwide, *with two-thirds in sub-Saharan Africa* - Uganda being one of the countries hardest hit by the epidemic. In December 1992, according to WHO, of the total adult cases diagnosed in Uganda, 48.36% were male and 51.64% were female, presenting a male to female sex ratio of approximately 1:1. Upon further analysis, after stratifying for age and sex and in the age group 15-19, 15.2% were males and 84.8% were females, representing a male to female sex ratio of 1:6. *It is evident that the impact of the AIDS epidemic is deeply differentiated by gender and exacerbated by historical and prevailing cultural, social, economic, religious, legal and political factors, as well as specific physiological vulnerabilities of both men and women.*

In the Spring of 1992, the GENESYS Project of the USAID/WID Office conducted a workshop entitled "Concepts, Tools and Applications for Considering Gender in Development" for over 75 people at the USAID Mission in Uganda. This initial workshop included special sessions for the people working on AIDS projects. In addition to identifying the need for more gender balance in ongoing USAID-funded programs, the participants pointed out that while they were vaguely aware of many of the socio-economic and cultural constraints faced by women in Uganda, they had not taken specific actions to address the relevance of these issues to the specific work they were doing. What was encouraging was the fact that the "Concepts, Tools and Applications for Considering Gender in Development" workshop was successful in getting them to recognize that more work was needed. It was decided, at this point, that a Uganda-specific gender training program relevant to all individuals working on HIV/AIDS programs should be conducted as a follow-on activity to the "GCID" workshop.

In January-February of 1993, GENESYS conducted an extensive preliminary needs assessment in Uganda in preparation for the AIDS and Gender workshop. An analysis of the AIDS epidemic in Uganda pointed to very serious repercussions due to women's lack of control and lack of alternatives for risk reduction, as well as their general health status. Ugandan professional women such as those involved in FDA, Safe Motherhood, and the Ugandan Women Medical Doctors Association, were collecting field experience in their educational and service delivery projects and reporting serious concerns about the ability of women and children to cope with the epidemic in the face of major demographic change and cultural expectations. In a UNDP article entitled "Young Women: Silence, Susceptibility and the HIV Epidemic", it is stated that "gender is formed in families but constructed by societies and changing accepted patterns of male behavior...expected patterns of female behavior requires community organizing and collective action."

Following the needs assessment, a training agenda was designed and validated through a round of meetings with selected representatives from the original interview list, members of the Ministry of Women In Development, Youth and Culture, the USAID/Uganda WID officer and AIDS project personnel. In-depth interviews with 65 individuals (representing various Ugandan government ministries and agencies, international non-governmental organizations Ugandan

women's projects, religious leaders, personnel from the Mission, researchers and funding sources) were conducted. Interviews with people affected by the AIDS epidemic provided 15 case studies.

The purpose of the "AIDS and Gender: From Analysis to Action" workshop, which was presented twice due to the large number of participants, was to develop knowledge and skills in considering gender as an integral variable in addressing the issues created by the AIDS/HIV epidemic in Uganda. Much of the focus of the workshop was on the increased vulnerability of females in relation to HIV due to physiological, legal, socio-cultural and economic differences from their current status in Uganda. The workshop began with an examination of the nature of behavioral change in sexual practices from each participant's perspective. This was followed by exercises designed to examine cultural norms in relation to gender roles and responsibilities.

The workshop included four educational sessions by Ugandan experts, which presented facts concerning current medical/physiological, legal, socio-cultural and economic realities. Another session provided the opportunity to use gender analysis tools in examining policy and program priorities, while still another allowed participants to assess service delivery systems from a gender-sensitive perspective. The final sessions reinforced skills for implementing change through communication, an introduction to social marketing, and planning for network-building and next step implementation. (See Annex 1 for detailed "Session Summary Sheets")

Workshop Overview:

Two three-day workshops were conducted by GENESYS during the week of June 21-26. A total of 53 participants (See Annex 2 for Participant Lists) attended the two trainings. Much care was taken to ensure that a representative group had been selected (i.e., balance between men and women, diversity in age, economic status and educational background, regional and ethnic representation, and participation by members and leaders from the three largest religious groups in the country: Protestants, Catholics and Muslims).

Workshop sessions were designed to systematically examine the physiological, legal, socio-cultural, and economic differences between males and females in various segments of Ugandan society. The formula for assisting women in preventing and managing HIV and AIDS is obviously different than the methods used to help men cope with the same problem. The workshop exercises and simulations took participants deeply into the process of identifying specific actions that organizations might take to address, more effectively, the differing needs of women.

The training agenda reflected the priorities expressed by the diverse communities involved. Eight objectives for the workshop had been identified:

1. To offer basic medical and legal information that pertains to the differential impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls;

2. To identify points of collaboration between various professions and agencies to increase the availability of HIV education by designing gender specific approaches;

3. To demonstrate active listening skills and positive personal negotiation skills through role plays to enhance personal communications;

4. To identify and demonstrate the necessary steps to increase networking capabilities for more effective identification, mobilization and the use of community-based information and resources;

5. To develop an awareness of the relationship between gender, cultural traditions, behavior and the importance of supporting practices which decrease HIV infection to ensure long-term survival;

6. To display increased awareness and sensitivity regarding gender and the complexities of behavior changes in self and the community;

7. To determine realistic and achievable expectations regarding sexual practice and responsibility; and

8. To identify the necessary strategies to increase the participation of under-served communities in the program design and implementation of HIV-related prevention efforts, through involvement in small work groups.

The immediate response to the workshop by participants was overwhelmingly positive and all four trainers (two of whom were from Uganda and two from the U.S.) expressed their amazement at the consistently high level of enthusiasm demonstrated by participants.

Findings and Recommendations:

Following are the key conclusions drawn by the trainers upon completion of the two workshops:

1. While Uganda is clearly a multi-cultural society, there are several customs which are wide-spread among major ethnic groups and which influence sexual practices, putting men and women at different risk levels for HIV and AIDS. The practices most often mentioned are polygamy, bride price, giving marriage to the clan rather than the individual, and the customary female submission to the sexual demands of the male. In the context of the AIDS crisis the offering of daughters at an earlier age than is usual for a bride price seems to be on the increase. Unfortunately, the risk to these young girls is not immediately obvious to the parents. Low literacy rates and a tendency to focus on short-term objectives exacerbates the problem.

2. Women have very little recourse when it comes to thwarting unwanted sexual relations with their husbands and other members of the clan. Resistance usually results in a major threat to the woman's survival; the threat of a longer-term risk such as AIDS pales when compared to being repeatedly beaten or abandoned by one's family.

3. Myths about sexual activity and pregnancy abound. Some are linked to long-standing traditions while others have been created in response to the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Typical of the latter is the belief that having sex with an adolescent female is safer and might, in fact, cleanse a man who is concerned about his HIV status.

4. Family structures seem to be shifting rapidly with the increasing devastation of AIDS. Some traditional patterns, such as sex education being provided by a paternal aunt or adolescent females, are now breaking down. Moreover, elderly family members are becoming responsible for children who have been orphaned due to AIDS.

Recommendations/Comments made by workshop participants include the following:

1. The focus and sequence of the sessions presented were substantially on target to meet the needs of the participants.

2. Some of the sessions required more time than was allotted in order to fully meet the stated objective.

3. Having the participants arrive the evening before the first day would have allowed for logistical and orientation details to have been handled more efficiently.

4. The Ugandan trainers should contact workshop participants individually within the first month following the workshops to set up concrete plans for implementation and technical assistance.

5. A follow-up workshop should be organized to focus on gender issues in social marketing and behavioral change.

6. More time should have been spent on discussing the process of behavior change as related to gender, such as was begun in the fishbowl exercises.

7. More time should have been spent on helping participants plan the "action" component. Participants should leave with at least two concrete program actions which they can implement in the short-term.

8. Ideally the workshop should have been presented over four days. If this could not have been arranged, consideration should have been given to leaving out at least one of the sessions.

9. Three to six months after the completion of these workshops some effort should be made to assess the impact of this event on the work of the participants. Such an assessment should follow the guidelines for assessing gender indicators left with the Ugandan trainers.

10. Consideration should be given to constructing a training of trainers workshop so that more Ugandan facilitators can be used in disseminating this approach to AIDS work throughout various agencies working in Uganda.

(See Annex 3 for a complete summary of individual participant evaluations.)

Following are some testimonials from trainers/participants of the "Aids and Gender: From Analysis to Action" workshop:

Jackie Brookman - *Trainer*

"This workshop provided the venue for people to talk and think in ways that they were not accustomed to. There was an enormous willingness on the participants' part to go beyond their cultural norms because of the gravity of the problems they face on a daily basis."

Wanjiku Muhato - *WID Officer, REDSO/East*

"This workshop demonstrated the power of addressing the questions of why people do what they do and why programs, to date, have been ineffective in curbing the epidemic. Until the choices of women are expanded and alternatives are available, there will not be consistent/sustainable behavior change which breaks the social trap which the gender relations enforce."

Shirley Erves-Kore - *WID Officer, USAID/Uganda*

"A major benefit of the workshop was the ability to bring together 60 people to focus on women, gender, relationships and roles in a specifically Ugandan context. The workshop offered in-depth debate and discussion among Ugandan men and women that cannot be lost. While the results may not be immediately visible, there is now a cadre of 60 people who are more conscious and more able to look to the future with this new information."

Donald Spears - *Trainer*

"I valued the workshop mostly for its creation of a forum for men and women to speak openly about their own sexual strategies for managing sexual behavior. It made the point that condom use was only part of the picture and a pretty limited one at that. We all discussed other options in a mature and responsible manner without resorting to giggles and euphemisms and dealt with delicate topics within varied cultural contexts.

Conclusion:

The workshop provided a forum for extensive discussion of the conditions which bring about increased risk for both women and men. It also underlined the need for detailed analysis of these factors from the perspective of each community and service organization. ***The gender variable provided a clear point of departure for examining how different segments of the society respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis, and it invited examination of other critical variables such as differences among age groups, rural/urban dichotomies and differing religious beliefs and practices.***

GENESYS

TO: Wade DeWitt
FROM: Dawn Emling
DATE: 10/16/94
RE: GENESYS Publications

Wade, enclosed please find 2 copies of *AIDS and Gender: From Analysis to Action (Entebbe, Uganda)* for USAID's files. Thanks so much.

1050 SEVENTEENTH STREET, NW • SUITE 1000 • WASHINGTON, DC 20036-5503
TELEPHONE 202/775-9680 • FAX 202/775-9699 • TELEX 9102504173 FUTURESWASH