



Promoting Evidence-Based Responses to HIV in the Asia Region

Although much is known about Asian epidemics, their evolution, and prevention, this knowledge remains peripheral to program planning and policy implementation. Moreover, enduring stigma and marginalization are making it difficult to build political commitment for prevention and care services for most-at-risk populations, including sex workers and their clients, injecting drug users, and men who have sex with men. As a result, prevention coverage of these populations is extremely limited in many Asian countries.

In response to this challenge, the Analysis and Advocacy (A²) Project seeks to bridge the divide between knowledge and program implementation through a synergy of analysis and advocacy. The project's goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the HIV epidemics in the region and translate this understanding into effective policies and appropriately targeted and resourced programs.

Data Analysis

The A² Project uses two modeling tools to generate evidence to inform advocacy. The Asian Epidemic Model (AEM), designed by the East-West Center, replicates the dynamics of HIV epidemics in Asian settings to project future epidemiological trends. The Goals Model, designed by Constella Futures, supports strategic planning by linking program goals to the resources needed to achieve them. Combining

the use of both models enables planners to evaluate the effectiveness of past and current responses, project future epidemiological trends and resource needs, and assess the cost and impact of alternative responses on the epidemic.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a core component of all the A² Project processes—from decisions regarding data collection and analysis to dialogue with policymakers. The synergy of analysis and advocacy fosters better use of local evidence, improved surveillance systems

leading to increased understanding of epidemic dynamics, improved evaluation and direction of national responses, and increased and more efficiently used resources. As a result, this synergy can enhance political commitment and improve decisionmaking.

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The A² Advocacy Training Manual

To promote effective advocacy in support of evidence-based responses to HIV in Asian countries, Task Order 1 of the USAID | Health Policy Initiative prepared the *A² Advocacy Training Manual*, with input from Family Health International and the East-West Center. The manual, adapted from the POLICY Project's *Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual*, is designed to build both core advocacy skills and more specialized skills in data use to identify advocacy issues, goals, and objectives.



What's inside?

The manual covers topics such as analyzing data, understanding the policy process, targeting audiences, developing advocacy messages and plans, and working with the media and people living with HIV. It has four components:

1. A curriculum for trainers and workshop facilitators
2. PowerPoint presentations to accompany various training sessions
3. Resources for trainers, including sample agendas, overviews of the topic, learning objectives, time and material requirements, and pre- and post-training questionnaires
4. Resources for participants, including background notes, handouts and worksheets on key concepts, planning tools, a collection of policy briefs, and "Advocacy in Action" cards

Who should use the manual?

This manual is intended for use by experienced advocacy trainers in a five-day training workshop; more than five days might be needed if all the sessions are used. Each trainer should decide how much of the material to cover based on participants' capacity and the time available for training. The overall aim should be to deliver a training package that is most effective in building the participants' evidence-based advocacy skills. Advocates can also use the manual as a reference for various advocacy resources (e.g., materials on how to identify advocacy goals and objectives and on how to write a policy brief and advocacy action plan).

The manual also illustrates how results from the AEM and Goals Model provide useful sources of "evidence" for advocacy. Information was gathered about epidemics regionwide and in individual Asian countries—from epidemiological and behavioral data in the public domain to the experiences of people living with and affected by HIV and the organizations that work with them.

Where can I find the A² Advocacy Training Manual?

The manual is available in PDF format on the website of the USAID | Health Policy Initiative at www.healthpolicyinitiative.com.



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Photo Credit: At a booth in the exhibition hall of the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, delegates express their hopes, prayers, and identities on pieces of paper stuck on a globe. Courtesy of Paul Jeffrey/Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

For more information, please contact:
Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1
Constella Futures
One Thomas Circle, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005 USA
<http://www.healthpolicyinitiative.com>; <http://ghiqc.usaid.gov>

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