
HIV/AIDS Study Series

THE ZAMBIA HIV/AIDS PROJECT

A Brief Study of Participatory Design

**THE ZAMBIA HIV/AIDS PROJECT
A BRIEF STUDY OF
PARTICIPATORY DESIGN**

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Abstract

In June 1996, the U S Agency for International Development Mission in Zambia (USAID/Z) undertook to design a second five-year phase of its HIV/AIDS prevention and control program for Zambia. The Mission decided to use a combination of innovative and powerful planning tools, including USAID's "Universal Framework of Objectives" (UFO), which attempts to describe a wide range of possible HIV/AIDS interventions, as well as people-centered planning methods that directly involved relevant stakeholders.

The design process was successful in producing a responsive, high-quality project design that fits within the framework of the Zambian National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan and the Zambian Health Reform Process. The process also generated strong participation and commitment among the participants and created a more favorable perception of USAID. The process was cost-effective and efficient, and it resulted in a \$25 million project that was readily approved by both USAID and the Zambian MOH. This project design process is an excellent model that can be adapted for a variety of planning situations for USAID and other development agencies.

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCI	behavior change interventions
COAG	cooperative agreement
CPSP	Country Program Strategic Plan
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPN	Population, Health & Nutrition
HRIT	Health Reform Impact Team
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCR	Malaria Control Research Project
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSM/A	Morehouse School of Medicine of Atlanta, Georgia
MTP	medium term plan
NAPCP	National AIDS Prevention and Control Programme
NASTLP	Zambia National AIDS/STD/TB and Leprosy Programme
NGO	nongovernmental organization
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PACD	Project Assistance Completion Date
PALS	Positive and Living Squad (Zambian AIDS awareness and education organization)
PHN	Office of Population, Health & Nutrition (USAID)
PIP	Performance Improvement Programming
ProAg	Project Grant Agreement
PVO	private voluntary organization
RF	Results Framework
SOAG	Strategic Objective Agreement
STD	sexually transmitted disease
STP	short term plan

UFO	Universal Framework of Objectives
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on AIDS
USAID	U S Agency for International Development
USAID/Z	U S Agency for International Development/Zambia
WBS	work breakdown structure
ZOPP	Zielorientierte Programm Planung (Objectives-Oriented Program Planning)

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I. Introduction

The design process used by USAID is exactly what we've been asking for in terms of working as partners. It is the better way of designing projects and programs. The process minimizes misunderstanding, creates responsive programs, builds commitment, and makes it more likely we'll achieve our common goals.

—Director of the Zambian National AIDS Control Program

In June 1996, the U.S. Agency for International Development Mission in Zambia (USAID/Z) undertook to design a second, five-year phase of its HIV/AIDS prevention and control program for Zambia. The Mission decided to use a combination of innovative and powerful planning tools and approaches designed to produce the most responsive and appropriate project design.

- The recently-developed USAID "Universal Framework of Objectives" (UFO) was used. This tool attempts to describe a wide range of possible HIV/AIDS interventions in the broader context of the epidemic.
- The other approach was a unique blend of people-centered planning methods that directly involved relevant stakeholders in the Zambian HIV/AIDS crisis, in the analysis of the AIDS problem and the project design.

The Zambia HIV/AIDS project design process suggests innovative methods by which USAID can transform its traditional ways of doing business in order to fulfill its mission more efficiently and effectively. Over a period of four weeks, a

six-member core design team and two outside facilitators worked with about 150 stakeholders to collaboratively design a high-quality, responsive HIV/AIDS program that was approved by the U S and Zambian governments within weeks. The result was a \$25 million project design that was described by the planning participants as

- of very high quality
- extremely responsive to stakeholder needs
- complementary to the Zambian National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan and the national Health Reform Process
- well adapted to local conditions and therefore efficient in using local resources
- critical in building stakeholders' commitment to the project design and implementation
- responsible for creating a more favorable impression of USAID

This document briefly analyzes the participatory or collaborative approach used in the Zambia HIV/AIDS project in order to generate lessons learned for improving USAID's project design processes and offers one effective model that can be modified to fit various opportunities and constraints for project planning within USAID. This particular process was designed by Social Impact, Inc.¹ A more detailed case study exists and is available upon request from USAID/Washington. A follow-on publication² is being prepared which will offer practical steps for utilizing participatory planning methodologies.

A THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC IN ZAMBIA

In Zambia as of 1996 there are a cumulative total of between 800,000 to 1 million HIV-positive people. By the year 2000 there will be over 150,000 new cases occurring per year. In Zambia, as elsewhere in the region, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has had serious negative consequences across numerous sectors and threatens to cause societal and political instability.

¹Social Impact, Inc. 7215 Holly Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Phone (301) 563-6390. Fax (301) 573-6391. e-mail: info@socialimpact.com

²Health Technical Services Project: The HIV/AIDS Program Management Tool Kit

B THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

USAID/Zambia's decision to employ a collaborative design process reflects its understanding of the value of participatory methodologies. Experience has shown that the use of people-centered methodologies produces projects and programs that

- are more responsive to the needs of customers and beneficiaries
- have greater impact on the problem
- use human and financial resources more efficiently
- are more sustainable
- employ local resources more effectively
- achieve greater stakeholder commitment ³

The steps and tools involved in this process were designed to foster an atmosphere of openness, transparency, empowerment, involvement, partnership, learning, trust, and consensus- building. The variety of techniques used helped to keep participants active, engaged, and focused during a very intense several weeks. The process followed several carefully constructed, iterative steps:

- **Stakeholder interviews** with more than 30 people to prepare the environment for the participatory planning process and to develop initial plans for involvement of stakeholders in the process
- A **design team orientation and team-building session**, to orient the team to key stakeholder and design issues and to begin building team relationships
- **Analysis of the Universal Framework of Objectives** in the Zambian context to provide an organizing framework for the team's thinking on design issues
- **Field visits**, to get a firsthand view of what was and wasn't working as far as HIV/AIDS interventions

³World Bank. "Participatory Development and the World Bank: Potential Directions for Change," Discussion Paper No. 183 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank).

- **Focus group discussions** with two groups of stakeholders in order to collect deep, rich data quickly and cost-effectively
- A **Stakeholder Strategic Planning Workshop** with more than 50 participants
- A **Synthesis Planning Workshop** with more than 50 participants to review and refine the initial project design with stakeholders

C THE PEOPLE OR STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Stakeholders are defined by USAID as individuals who have an interest in the activity under consideration, as contributors, benefactors, or opponents. To produce the most responsive, effective, and sustainable project designs, stakeholder groups must be brought into the design process in a thoughtful and productive way.

In Zambia a wide range of people and groups were identified as stakeholders in the HIV/AIDS prevention project, and they are listed in Figure 1. Three stakeholder groups were identified as particularly important: 1) officials within the MOH because of their knowledge of Zambian health reforms and the national HIV/AIDS programs, 2) the donor community because of their large presence in Zambia, and 3) people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

**FIGURE 1 STAKEHOLDERS IN THE ZAMBIAN HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROJECT**

- People living with or affected by HIV/AIDS
- Orphans and widow(er)s
- Government officials
- The medical community, including traditional healers
- Churches
- Local and international NGOs
- Implementing and technical assistance agencies
- Bilateral and multilateral donors
- Private businesses

D THE DESIGN TEAM

The composition of a design team is critical to the success of the project design. In the Zambia case, the team was comprised of six experts: two staffers from USAID headquarters in Washington, one Zambian national working at the United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), one consultant from the United States, one consultant from Liberia, and one USAID/Z staff member.

The team exhibited many of the characteristics of a successful design team (see figure 2). The team leader was highly experienced in HIV/AIDS work and had strong group process skills. Another team member was a Zambian national who was a past director of the Zambian National AIDS Program at the MOH. His familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of Zambian policies and access to and influence with a broad range of stakeholders was a tremendous asset. Several team members were acquainted with the UFO. Others had experience working with HIV/AIDS in Africa and/or familiarity with the Zambian health programs.

Two professional facilitators were hired from Social Impact who had extensive experience in participatory project design in Zambia. The facilitators were hired to

- develop a participatory process for design of the project
- facilitate planning sessions
- build a cooperative team environment
- analyze and develop stakeholder relationships
- help develop a clear and feasible project design to which key stakeholders were committed

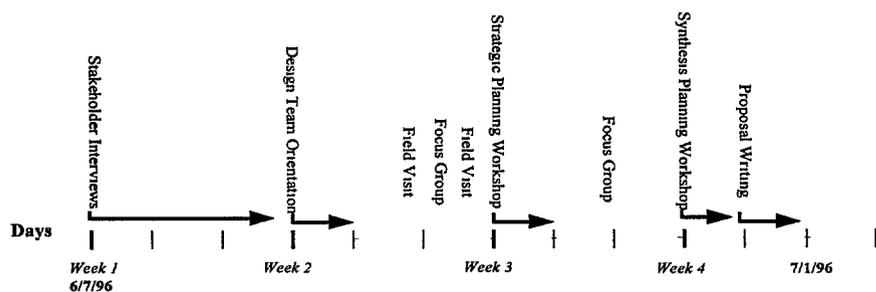
FIGURE 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE DESIGN TEAM

- Strong and broad technical knowledge
- Strong group process skills, particularly for the team leader
- Familiarity with USAID requirements, particularly the Results Framework
- Inclusion of host-country nationals
- Knowledge of the local environment
- Experienced facilitators, preferably with local experience

II. The Participatory Design Process

The project design process was comprised of a set of interlinked phases and events that each had a specific purpose and rationale. The process lasted four weeks and encompassed two broad phases. The preparatory phase included interviews with stakeholders and orientation for the members of the design team. The planning phase included an analysis of the UFO in the Zambian context, field visits, focus group discussions, a Stakeholder Strategic Planning Workshop, a Synthesis Planning Workshop, and the writing of the final project proposal. Figure 3 outlines the time line for the process. A description of the steps is outlined below along with a brief rationale and presentation of lessons learned.

FIGURE 3 THE DESIGN PROCESS TIMELINE



A PREPARATORY PHASE

1 Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews and analysis were extremely useful and efficient, enabling the team to save several weeks of work

—Design Team Member

The facilitators arrived in Lusaka a week before the design team in order to prepare and develop initial plans for stakeholder involvement in the process. Over five days the facilitators identified and interviewed roughly 30 key stakeholders, including government representatives, NGO representatives, people living with HIV/AIDS, donors, and implementing agencies. The purpose of the interviews was to explain and get stakeholder buy-in to the participatory process and to ascertain key issues that would need to be addressed by the design team. Stakeholder interviews are a critical step in developing a participation strategy and in launching a participatory process (see Figure 4).

When the team arrived, the facilitators presented them with the results of the interviews. The data was used throughout the design process to check hypotheses and design interventions.

FIGURE 4 BENEFITS OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Informs stakeholders about the upcoming design process and the collaborative approach
- Builds stakeholder support for and involvement in the participatory process
- Identifies additional stakeholders to bring into the process
- Identifies “voiceless” or vulnerable stakeholders who may need special attention
- Determines key issues and themes to be addressed in the design process
- Develops detailed plans, agendas, and strategies for involving stakeholders in the process
- Orients the design team to stakeholder themes that are likely to emerge during the design process
- Orients participants and establishes common ground from which to work

2 Design Team Orientation

The Team Orientation quickly gave us a solid base to work from and a picture of the facts and the personalities with which we would be dealing for the next several weeks

—Design Team Member

Shortly after the design team arrived, the facilitators conducted a one-and-a-half-day orientation and team-building session. Most of the team members had not met one another before their arrival. The facilitators led the team through activities to help build team relationship, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and norms of behavior. The facilitators worked with the team to make sure they understood the participatory process which would guide their work. Stakeholder interview findings were presented to orient the team to key issues/themes, and key USAID/Z, MOH, and implementing agency officials were brought in to brief the team on the HIV/AIDS situation in Zambia. The facilitators also made suggestions for field trips and focus groups.

The value of a thorough orientation for design team members cannot be overestimated (see Figure 5). With only a few weeks to produce a major project design, many teams want to "hit the ground running" and are reluctant to spend time on an orientation. Despite some initial reservations, the team members found this step extremely helpful and time-saving.

The team then spent several days dividing up roles and responsibilities for design work, following up with the facilitators' key interviewees, collecting additional data, and reading background material.

FIGURE 5 BENEFITS OF A TEAM-BUILDING SESSION

- Begins to build team relationships and trust
- Begins to establish roles and responsibilities for the team members
- Establishes working norms
- Familiarizes the team with the collaborative design process
- Orients the team to the issues and overall environment (e.g., the extent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the status of the current USAID HIV/AIDS project)

B PLANNING PHASE

1 Applying the Universal Framework of Objectives

This process gave the team a skeleton or framework to help organize themselves and their thinking and to consider how various interventions corresponded with the state of the epidemic in Zambia

—Design Team Member

The Universal Framework of Objectives (UFO) was completed just days before this project design effort began and therefore had never been applied in a country setting. The team members realized its potential as a tool for

- conducting a broad situation analysis of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and current HIV/AIDS programs in Zambia, including the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan
- identifying opportunities and/or gaps in the National AIDS Program to be explored in stakeholder workshops
- providing an organizing framework for the design team's thinking

In preparation for the initial Stakeholder Strategic Planning Workshop, the team followed the four steps outlined in Figure 6. These steps were repeated in increasingly greater detail throughout the entire design process.

Reviewing and analyzing each intervention in the UFO gave the team a strong sense of the range of possible means to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Comparing the UFO interventions with the Zambian National HIV/AIDS Strategy was tedious, but was made easier by the fact that the Zambia Plan was recent, detailed, and well-reasoned. After critically analyzing what was missing from the national program, the team created a "Zambianized Tree" or "Framework of Objectives." This Zambianized Tree became a loose outline of the new project design. The final step was to determine from the Zambianized Tree which interventions were most appropriate for USAID—or where USAID's comparative advantage lay. This information was primarily used to help organize the design teams' thinking and to test initial hypotheses for project interventions.

FIGURE 6 APPLYING THE UNIVERSAL FRAMEWORK OF OBJECTIVES TO PROJECT DESIGN

- 1 Review and analyze each intervention in the UFO, particularly the project-level interventions
- 2 Compare the UFO interventions with the National Strategy for combating HIV/AIDS to identify areas of overlap
- 3 Critically analyze what is missing from the national program
- 4 Analyze USAID's comparative advantage—where USAID can make the greatest contribution

2 Conducting Field Visits

The field visits gave us clarity, helped create focus, and ultimately saved us time

—Design Team Member

The team conducted two field visits to districts to examine firsthand what was and wasn't working in HIV/AIDS interventions. The first field visit was to a nearby district to learn the perspectives of district health center staff and traditional healers on the effectiveness of decentralization in dealing with HIV/AIDS. On the second field visit several team members traveled to the Copper Belt and met with the district AIDS coordinator, two traditional healer groups, women who provided home care and orphan care, and hospital staff members. On both visits, the team collected rich, important data and enabled more remote stakeholders to have a voice in the design process. Figure 7 outlines the benefits of the field visits.

FIGURE 7 BENEFITS OF FIELD VISITS

- Deepens the team's understanding of design opportunities and constraints
- Provides a better understanding of local institutional capacities
- Tests the hypotheses generated in the stakeholder workshops
- Provides a better understanding of the needs of the project's beneficiaries
- Gives additional stakeholders a voice in the process

3 Holding Focus Group Discussions

The focus group provided us an opportunity to candidly share what was and wasn't working and to strengthen our collaboration and partnerships

—Donor Agency

Two focus groups were conducted with stakeholder groups that had been identified as having special needs or being particularly rich in information considered vital to the design process—people living with HIV/AIDS and donor agencies. Each session lasted about 1-2 hours and was attended by the entire design team. The focus groups served two important purposes. First, they provided an opportunity for these stakeholders to share their perspectives, concerns, and needs, which they might not have shared in the larger stakeholder workshop. Second, they offered an opportunity for the design team to probe these stakeholders more deeply about design issues. See Figure 8 for benefits of focus group discussions.

The donor agency focus group was attended by about ten multilateral and bilateral donors active in Zambian HIV/AIDS activities. Donors compared their respective HIV/AIDS activities, identified the strengths and weaknesses of the various programs, and helped the U.S. design team identify gaps in HIV/AIDS interventions. Team members described it as an "enormously useful and efficient" way to provide a safe forum for candid discussion and to draw out information from donors that they would not have offered in the larger stakeholder workshops. This was an essential forum to strengthen donor coordination.

The focus group for people living with HIV/AIDS was attended by about ten young people who were members of the local AIDS awareness and education organization, the Positive and Living Squad (PALS). This focus group was organized after the first stakeholder strategic planning workshop when the team recognized that a special process was needed to empower this "voiceless" beneficiary group. Several members of the PALS had attended the first workshop but had remained virtually silent. Both the design team and the PALS found this focus group enlightening. The PALS in particular were quite empowered by the meeting and attended the final, large stakeholder workshop in greater number and were vocal, strong participants.

FIGURE 8 BENEFITS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- Provides deep and rich information quickly and cost-effectively
- Draws out more realistic, honest data that may not be revealed in larger stakeholder workshops
- Brings new stakeholders into the process
- Empowers stigmatized or vulnerable stakeholder groups (e.g., people living with HIV/AIDS, women)
- Fosters greater participation among stakeholder groups, especially vulnerable groups, in larger meetings and workshops

4 Conducting a Stakeholder Strategic Planning Workshop

This process was the first of its kind in Zambia. There's always been much talk about involving people living with HIV/AIDS in program design but it has always been "jaw-jaw" and no action.

—Person Living with HIV/AIDS

The first stakeholder workshop was held at a local hotel and involved more than 50 people, including representatives of government ministries, private voluntary organizations, NGOs, local community groups, people living with HIV/AIDS, churches, media, and donors. The objectives of the workshop were to

- develop a broad overview of the HIV/AIDS situation in Zambia
- build consensus on major opportunities and gaps in HIV/AIDS programming
- identify areas where USAID assistance could make the best contribution to HIV/AIDS programming in Zambia
- provide a forum for public, private, and donor coordination and collaboration

In order to establish an environment of trust and openness, the facilitators opened the workshop by conducting activities around participant introductions, expectations, securing agreement on the agenda, presentation of key findings from the earlier interviews, and brief presentations from MOH officials on the status of health reforms and HIV/AIDS in Zambia.

Working in randomly-formed groups of five to eight people, the participants sought to identify, discuss, and define major gaps and opportunities in HIV/AIDS interventions. Each group posted its finding on flip charts and presented them to the plenary with discussion and synthesis following. As a next step, these groups developed several objectives in response to the gaps and opportunities. Again, findings were posted on flip charts and discussed in the plenary.

On the second day the facilitators posted the 20 plus objectives on the wall. The participants worked to group the objectives into broad categories. Consensus emerged on five categories: 1) testing and counseling, 2) mechanisms for care, 3) institutional capacity-building, 4) policy support, and 5) education and behavior change. Participants were asked to form teams around the objective that interested them most and develop four to five key activities to support it. Proposed activities were posted on flip charts and presented to the plenary with discussion following. The workshop closed with a brief discussion of next steps in the design process and an overview of the second workshop, the Synthesis Planning Workshop.

The Strategic Planning Workshop was successful in establishing consensus on the HIV/AIDS situation in Zambia and identifying critical gaps and opportunities. By building consensus around preliminary project objectives and activities the participants and design team had crafted an emerging project design. Strong relationships and trust had been established amongst the stakeholders and between the stakeholders and the design team as well. The design team had participated actively in all the small group work and had gained valuable insights into the HIV/AIDS needs on the ground. Figure 9 summarizes the benefits of a Stakeholder Strategic Planning Workshop.

FIGURE 9 BENEFITS OF A STAKEHOLDER STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

- Develops a broad overview of the national HIV/AIDS situation
- Identifies major opportunities and gaps in HIV/AIDS programming
- Identifies areas where USAID assistance could make the best contribution to HIV/AIDS programming
- Fosters public, private, and donor coordination and collaboration

After the workshop, the design team "wallpapered" their work room with the workshop's flip chart notes to which they referred constantly during their design work. The team spent the next week conducting interviews to test and verify the preliminary design information from the workshop and to deepen their

knowledge. In fulfilling the USAID requirement to put the project design into a Results Framework format, the team synthesized the workshop output into a preliminary design comprised of three key results and corresponding activities. As the project was to be a bilateral U.S.-Zambian agreement and in order to continue to build the collaborative relationship with the MOH, the team presented and cross-checked its project design with several key MOH officials.

5 Conducting a Synthesis Planning Workshop

The Zambian people have been a part of this process. The process has not been imposed on us. Rather you have shown respect for our ideas and shown that we can think and plan too.

—Workshop Participant

A week after the initial workshop, the team conducted a one-day Stakeholder Synthesis Planning Workshop. About 50 people attended, the majority of whom had attended the initial workshop. The key objective was to allow the design team to test its preliminary design with the stakeholders and to rework and refine the results and activities accordingly. Other workshop objectives were to

- discuss implementing mechanisms and/or agencies (both local and international)
- identify some practical indicators for tracking project performance
- identify critical assumptions (risks) underlying the project and strategies for minimizing the risks
- discuss next steps for preparation and approval of the project design

The team leader opened the session with an overview of the preliminary project design they had developed as a result of the first workshop, the focus groups, field visits, and other interviews. The project was presented in the form of three Results Packages. Each results package and the corresponding activities were posted on the walls of the room. Participants were asked to roam through the room, visiting different Results Packages and discuss them with the design team members stationed at each one. The goal was to increase participants' understanding of the proposed design elements, to allow them to question the team members, and to identify gaps and questions about feasibility. The session

produced a lively and solid exchange of ideas particularly because the participants saw that their views they had expressed from the earlier workshop had been incorporated into the draft design

Breaking into groups around the Results Package that interested them most, participants were asked to work with design team members to refine activities and develop practical indicators for the components. This work was presented on flip charts to the plenary and discussed. Finally, the participants went back into their small groups and identified assumptions and risks, possible contingency plans, and implementing mechanisms. Plenary presentation and discussion followed as usual. The rough project design was completed.

In closing the workshop, there was a discussion of next steps for completing the design and an invitation to participants to contact USAID to examine the final project document. Closing statements were made and participants filled out a detailed qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

The Synthesis Planning Workshop demonstrated to participants that the design team had listened and responded to stakeholders' input from the earlier workshop and activities. One participant commented that "the cooperative environment and common voice created among participants was quite unusual in Zambia." Equally important, the workshop helped the design team refine the draft design. One design team member said the workshop "helped me to work ideas out and even caused me to piece things together differently." Finally, participants were quite excited about the new relationships and partnerships they had established. (See Figure 10)

FIGURE 10 BENEFITS OF A SYNTHESIS PLANNING WORKSHOP

- Demonstrates to stakeholders that the project design reflects their input
- Builds stakeholder commitment to the design
- Shows openness and transparency
- Allows for review and refinement of the project design
- Provides an opportunity to discuss implementation mechanisms and/or agencies for both the local and the international levels
- Identifies practical indicators for tracking project performance
- Identifies critical assumptions and/or risks and strategies for minimizing the risks

6 Synthesizing the Design and Writing the Final Project Proposal

Over the next two days, the design team finalized the project in a Results Framework format and presented it to the Mission. The project was approved by USAID/Washington and the Zambian government within a few months.

III. Analysis of the Process and Results

The analysis in this section draws on findings from an evaluation distributed at the completion of the design process and on key interviews several months after the workshops—when the project design had been finalized and approved by the U S and Zambian governments. Both the evaluation and the interviews contained a range of qualitative and quantitative questions. Here are some highlights of stakeholder comments.

This process was the first of its kind in Zambia. There's always been much talk about involving people living with HIV/AIDS in program design, but it has always been "jaw-jaw" and no action.

—Person Living with HIV/AIDS

The fact that we have been involved from the beginning of the program makes us feel as equal partners in making the program a success.

—Local NGO Representative

This is the better way of designing. It is what we've been asking for in terms of partnership. The project design responds to our National Strategic Plan and fits well within our Health Reform Process.

—Senior MOH Official

Participants found the overall design process highly successful and energizing. The key factors that contributed to the success of this process included

- mix of participants
- structure of the design process
- combination of planning methodologies employed
- composition of the design team
- role of the facilitators

The project scored very highly for its technical quality. Factors contributing to the high quality of the project design included

- Responsiveness to the needs and interests of stakeholders, particularly people living with HIV/AIDS and the MOH
- Integration of AIDS prevention, control, and care
- Focus on community-based approaches
- Support for Zambia's goal to decentralize the health system
- Inclusion of concrete activities to strengthen and support the MOH
- Incorporation of lessons learned and expansion of successful activities
- Effectively utilizes local resources

The process produced a project design to which the stakeholders are very committed. This increased commitment and ownership has several beneficial effects. First, participants feel a heightened interest in ensuring successful implementation of the project. Participants indicated an intense interest in following through with a review of the final design and being involved in implementation. Second, the synergy from new partnerships formed during the design process enhances the environment for addressing the HIV/AIDS problem in Zambia. Many participants reported that new relationships and ideas from the

collaborative design process has led to ideas for other supporting projects, created an impetus to move forward with existing programs, and led to new partnerships, including better donor coordination

LESSON LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The design process for the Zambia HIV/AIDS project provided numerous lessons, general and specific. Among the general lessons, applicable to a broad range of USAID and donor-financed projects, are the following:

- The participatory design process used in Zambia is effective in producing a high-quality project that generates a high level of commitment among stakeholders. This process should be used much more widely by USAID and other donors.
- To ensure the best environment for the design process, the Mission should begin the initial planning process early, even several months in advance.
- The use of facilitators who remain outside the technical structure of the design team is recommended. Facilitators should be perceived as neutral by the stakeholders to foster trust and should determine appropriate techniques to be used at each stage of the process.
- The composition of the design team is critical to the success of the project. The ideal team has a mix of technical and group process skills.
- The success of the design process is largely dependent on getting key stakeholders to buy in. Their support and trust should be actively cultivated during the interview, preparatory, and planning stages.
- The participatory process increases stakeholders' commitment to the success of the project and raises their expectations for continued involvement. It is important to involve stakeholders in subsequent stages of the project, such as project launch, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.