

FINAL REPORT

“Challenging Faith Based Communities”

a workshop held from 12 to 15 November,
Kopanong Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa.

A capacity building workshop for faith and religious
leaders in HIV and Aids and project management.

A project of the Regional HIV and Aids program for Southern Africa
and funded by USAID.

Facilitated by the Christian AIDS Bureau in collaboration
with the Policy Project



Introduction

“Challenging Faith Based Communities” was the appropriate theme of a workshop that took place from 12 to 15 November 2001 at Kopanong Hotel and Conference Centre, Johannesburg. A group of 28 religious leaders from 8 Southern African countries, representing 25 faith based organisations, were challenged to rethink the role faith communities can play to address HIV and AIDS which is having devastating effects on the lives of millions of people in Southern Africa. The workshop was organized by the Policy Project for the Regional HIV/AIDS Program for Southern Africa, and funded by USAID. It was facilitated by the Christian AIDS Bureau.

Background

The reason for workshops such as this one is accurately described by a resolution that was taken at a world conference of faith communities that took place in June 2001, facilitated by the World Council of Churches for the UN Special General Assembly on HIV/AIDS:

“Right from the beginning of the HIV/AIDS crisis, local communities have been at the very forefront of caring for those affected by HIV/AIDS. FBOs are rooted in local structures and are therefore in an excellent position to mobilize communities to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis, More often than not, the capacity of FBOs has not been maximized because we have not received adequate levels of training or resources to address the impact of the disease”

Many FBOs have not yet been mobilized, and the funding from USAID for workshops such as this one makes it possible for faith communities to become active partners.

Aim and outcomes

The aim of the workshop was to enhance awareness and sensitivity about the pressing needs the pandemic of HIV and AIDS poses to faith communities, empowering them towards project development and management within this field. According to the evaluation done by participants, and the observance of the facilitators and organizers, this aim materialized to a large extent, although some improvements are suggested at the end of this report. (See “Recommendations”)

The following outcomes were envisaged. (See Evaluation notes throughout the report)

After the workshop, participants would:

- (1) have a comprehensive knowledge about HIV and AIDS, including the medical and social facts, as well as relevant statistics. (Evaluation comment 1)
- (2) have a positive attitude towards church involvement to curb the spread of HIV, as well as towards caring and support initiatives. (Evaluation comment 2)
- (3) be motivated to pass the knowledge on, but especially to become actively involved in the organizing of programs and projects, (Evaluation comment 3)
- (4) have a clear picture of the steps of organizing and managing a project or projects. (Evaluation comment 4)

Evaluation Comment 1:

The extent of the change in knowledge will only be comprehensively apparent when the pre- and post workshop questionnaires are thoroughly evaluated, and will be presented to the organizers in February 2002. According to a preliminary glance at the questionnaires and the comments noted by participants, this outcome was very successfully achieved. Most of the participants noted that this section “HIV and AIDS – more than the basics” was a highlight, which not only emphasizes the need for this thorough input, but also the appropriate approach

the specific presenter had. Dr Francois Cilliers, a medical doctor/lecturer/senior advisor at the University of Stellenbosch were excellent. See recommendation number 2

Evaluation Comment 2:

Attitudes were challenged throughout the workshop, but special attention was given to this aspect on day one. The result of the “Hypothetical Scenario” exercise was very informative, and gave the facilitators an idea on which areas to concentrate during the rest of the workshop. Many of the other topics addressed issues such as prejudice, limited vision, judgmental attitudes, and various presenters added value challenging preconceived ideas about the role faith communities could play. Once again the extent to which outcomes no 2 and 3 materialized will only be apparent when the comprehensive evaluation of the pre- and post workshop questionnaires is completed. Many of the participants commented that the site visits and the section “Living with HIV and AIDS – especially the story of Toni Zimmerman and her father, changed their attitudes. At the closing ceremony many participants verbalized their commitment to be actively involved in this field, and according to the observance of the facilitators outcome no 2 and 3 were successfully achieved. The materialization of the commitments made will be evaluated in the suggested follow-up process, and will eventually be the ultimate evaluation of the success.

Evaluation Comment 3:

Project planning was the ultimate end to which the program was designed. Although this focus was also stressed throughout the program by various presenters, and formed the basis of the design, it was apparent that participants grappled with the technical side of project planning. Once again the extent to which this outcome successfully materialized will only be apparent when the questionnaires have been processed, and individual growth in knowledge and understanding could be evaluated. According to the observation of the presenters and facilitators, attendees really struggled to put their thoughts and vision on paper. The group exercise was a success to the extent that the steps of project planning was addressed, but some of the groups struggled to conceptualize the terminology. The pace of some groups were hampered by one or two members in the group that did not understand the concepts.

The participants:

Religious leaders from eight countries, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, RSA, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mosambique and Malawi were invited to attend. Preference was given to representatives of organizations that were also represented at a faith based workshop that was presented earlier this year in Uganda, and also part of the USAID Regional HIV/AIDS Program. Three leaders from each country were invited, which materialized, apart from two additional representative from South Africa, and one additional representative from Botswana.

Evaluation Comment 4:

A prerequisite was the ability to understand and speak English. Only one participant had a problem with this, and the facilitators tried to accommodate him. Another representative of his country acted as interpreter. This sometimes hampered the speed of the group he worked in, but apart from this, he took part in all the activities. His commitment at the closing ceremony was translated by one of the facilitators, and according to this, he gained knowledge, and was motivated towards action.

Other suggestions that was proposed was:

- religious leaders from churches that have not yet been actively involved in HIV and AIDS programs and projects.
- leaders who will have the influence and a managerial role in their specific churches or faith communities.
- leaders who could make an impact, and will be able to pass the skills on to others within their own communities.

It was also suggested that participants be selected well in advance, so that identifying and basic information could become available. The registration form for the workshop would then include questions that would help the facilitators to adjust the program according to this. This was not possible, and should still be considered as a good option to determine the level of input within each section of the program.

Evaluation Comment 5:

Many of the participants have been previously involved in HIV and AIDS to a lesser extent. Some have been extensively involved, and four have never been involved before. All of them reported that they were motivated to go back and become more deeply involved. The extent of this will also be evaluated according to recommendation no 1.

Methods:

Various training methods were used throughout the program, with a special focus on participative learning:

- Lectures – (electronic presentations and overhead projector slides were used)
- Group discussions and presentations
- “Story telling” – by participants, but also by guests living with HIV and AIDS
- Practical exercises – working in groups.
- Site visits to church initiated or supported projects
- “Participlan” facilitated group work

Methods to evaluate progress and participation :

- (1) Each participant completed a pre-workshop questionnaire on the first evening, and an post-workshop questionnaire on the last day. This indicates the growth in knowledge, the change of attitudes, as well as the motivation to put into practice what they have learnt.
- (2) Observations
- (3) Feedback after specific events, such as field visits.

Evaluation Comment 6:

The training methods used were very appropriate. Each one of the presenters added flavor to the workshop, and because of the diversity of the methodology, the workshop never really lost momentum. In the evaluation section of the post- workshop questionnaire participants highlighted the input of Dr Cilliers, Logy Murray (Fundraising) and Rev Ted Karpf, as well as the site visits, apart from the input of the people living with HIV.

Because of the pre-workshop questionnaire the facilitators could assess before day one that, according to the level of knowledge and attitudes of participants, the design and input planned for the workshop was accurate. Dr Cilliers tried to accommodate specific issues that came forward.

Workshop facilitators and presenters:**(1) Facilitators:**

The workshop was mainly be facilitated by Logy Murray, assisted by Motseki Matlatla.
(As this report is compiled by one of the facilitators, no evaluatory comments are included. According to the evaluation questions on the post-workshop questionnaire the facilitators succeeded in guiding the participants appropriately. I thoroughly enjoyed to be part of this exciting process.)

(2) Other presenters:

See program attached for the names of the other presenters.

Evaluation Comment 7:

- *Sr Alison Munro, Chairperson of the Aids Subcommittee of the National Religious Association for Social Development (South Africa), and manager of the AIDS Desk of the Catholic Bishops Conference was the guest speaker at the opening ceremony. This set the scene for a very successful workshop.*
- *Dr Francois Cilliers – Medical doctor and lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch did “HIV and AIDS – more than the basics” – A super and very professional input – done in such a way that everybody could understand.*
- *Rev Ted Karpf – “Pondering on God’s will”: Although he could not attend any other part of the workshop, he succeeded in touching the heart of the participants. This section was, with his charismatic approach, very motivational. The only negative comment is that this part was very specifically aimed at*

the Christian majority of the group. There was one Muslim participant, and, although he commented afterwards that he had no problem with this approach, presenters should be more sensitive to accommodate all faith groups present. Motseki Matlatla accommodated this with the lighting of the symbolic candle of hope at the beginning of the conference.

- *Sunette Pienaar, Boti Kulwane and Jonathan Beesigomwe – Each presented a short input on a specific project, and participants had the opportunity to tap from their experiences. All three were excellent speakers. In hindsight, this input could have been scheduled differently, with more specific instructions to link to the theory of project planning. See recommendation no 3*
- *Toni and Wilhelm Zimmermann – Father and daughter team. (Toni is HIV positive.) The input of these two were very special, and touched the hearts of every participant, and the fact that Wilhelm is a minister of religion added value in this specific context. This team could be utilized at other workshops of this nature.*
- *Sylvia Abrahams – Project Planning – theory and practice: As experienced trainer Sylvia took the team through a very difficult stage of the program, and did an excellent job within the limited time. I already mentioned the fact that the participants struggled to bring this part into practice, and the following could be some of the reasons:*
 - *Not all religious leaders are involved at project level within their congregations, some even have had no exposure to the development and management of any projects.*
 - *The terminology could have been new to some of them – also because of the fact that English as the second language to most of the participants, and even a third language to others.*
 - *There was little time to understand the theory before putting it into practice.*
 - *The only common ground for group members were HIV and AIDS. Their backgrounds, needs to be involved, levels of involvement, and even the extent of the epidemic in their specific countries differed.*

(See recommendation no 4)

- *Logy Murray – Participan groupwork session: This gave participants an idea of a holistic response to HIV and AIDS, with a variety of projects and activities which could be part of a community program. If integrated with the theory of project planning, as well as the practical implementation, this session would have been more valuable. (See recommendation no 3) The group actively participated. See addendum for more detail.*
- *Logy Murray – Fundraising: Although this was the last session of the workshop, the participants were attentive, and recorded positively in the evaluation of the workshop. Limited time did not encourage participation, which could be taken into account in future workshops. This seems to be a topic participants wanted more time for.*

Program

See attachment for the detail of the workshop program

Apart from minor changes to the order in which some of the topics were presented, the program were followed as planned. The only part that were excluded were the group discussion on “Managing curve balls”. The facilitators and organizer assessed that the issues that were to be discussed, were dealt with in other session by other presenters, and because of an exhausting day, the group needed a breather.

The cultural evening provided a welcome deviation from a very emotional and tiring day. Although the Hotel had changed the previously arranged venue (an outside “Braai”) they did a wonderful job to change our work area into a friendly, warm and stylish restaurant – stage and all! Many participants reflected positively about this event.

The only other comment on the program was the fact that too much was put in too little time. Many participants mentioned this - Some wanted a longer workshop, others wanted less input in the time available.

Evaluation Comment 8:

The program design was good, and all relevant aspects were attended to. The fact that the group struggled with the practical session on project planning can be accommodated in a changed order in which the various aspects are put forward in the program, as mentioned in recommendation no 3 and 4.

Closing ceremony:

This was a very special occasion. Each participant had to:

- decide on a specific commitment they would undertake to do in the following three months.
- write a letter to themselves, reminding them of this commitment. (This was put in envelopes addressed to themselves, and will be posted six months after the workshop.)
- write a message of hope as part of the workshop commitment to the communities they come from.

One of the participants took photographs of each participant, and this was displayed one by one on a screen. As their pictures were shown, they came forward and lit a candle from the conference candle of hope, read their commitments or message of hope, and put it on a table in the form of an AIDS ribbon. They each received their certificate, a poster and a video: "God's answer to AIDS."

Follow-up process:

- The participants will receive a list of all present at the workshop, as well as information of all the presenters and facilitators.
 - The participants will receive a report of the workshop.
 - The questionnaires will be processed, and a report presented to the organisers.
- (See also recommendation no 1)

Recommendations:

- (1) *If possible, this workshop should be followed up in one of the following ways:*
 - *Questionnaire sent to participants six months after the workshop, establishing possible sustaining of motivation and knowledge, as well as implementation activities, or*
 - *a follow-up visit to projects initiated by participants, or*
 - *a follow-up conference after one year.*
- (2) *The presentation of Dr Francois Cilliers is available on CD, and I recommend that this be duplicated and sent to those participants that have access to electronic media. Many participants suggested that they would appreciate this.*
- (3) *The theory of project planning should be presented earlier in the workshop program. This would enhance the focus, as well as build understanding of the practical implementation. Presenters of specific projects could then refer to this (aims, objectives, action plans, budgets, etc.) The person presenting this part of the program should be present throughout the workshop.*
- (4) *The sensitization part of the workshop could be presented at a separate workshop aimed at faith leaders, without expecting them to develop projects, and/or faith leaders could be accompanied by a representative of their congregation or organization, working in pairs when developing and planning real projects at the end of the workshop. Although this could be more expensive (more workshops) I believe it would have a more sustainable impact.*
- (5) *Less time could be spent on the reflection after the site visits, and the input "Living with HIV and AIDS" could be shortened.*

Logy Murray
Manager Christian AIDS Bureau
5 December 2001

CHALLENGING FAITH BASED COMMUNITIES
12-15 November 2001, Johannesburg, South Africa

Monday 12 November 2001

13h00-18h00 Registration
18h30 **Dinner**
19h45 Opening Ceremony
Guest Speaker: Sr Alison Munro
20h30 Pre-workshop questionnaire

Tuesday 13 November 2001

08h00 Welcoming remarks
Michele Russell : Coordinator,
Regional HIV and Aids Programme
08h20 Course orientation
09h10 " HIV and Aids – and me" (Session 1)
10h00 **Coffee/Tea**
10h30 " HIV and Aids - and me" (Session 2)
11h00 " HIV and Aids - more than the basics"
Dr Francois Cilliers (Session 1)
12h30 **Lunch**
13h30 " HIV and Aids – more than the basics"
(Session 2)
14:00 "HIV – to know or not to know"
14h30 Fielding the curved balls
15h3 " Living with HIV and Aids" (Session 1)
16h00 **Coffee/Tea**
16h30 " Living with HIV and Aids" (Session 2)
18h30 **Dinner**
19h30 " Pondering on God's will"
Rev Ted Karpf
20h30 Briefing for project visits

Wednesday 14 November

08h00 HIV and Aids Project visits
13h00 **Lunch**
14h00 Reflections from project visits
15h30 **Coffee/Tea**
16h00 " An holistic response to HIV and Aids – a challenge to faith based communities"
19h00 **Dinner & Cultural Evening**

Thursday 15 November 2001

08h00 Reflections
08h15 " Sharing experiences"
Community Based Care *Sunette Pienaar*

Home based care *Boti Kulwane*
Youth prevention programmes - *Jonathan Beesigomwe*

10h30

Coffee/Tea

11h00

" Project planning" – The theory & practice *Sylvia Abrahams* (Session 1)

13h00

Lunch

14h00

"Project planning" (Session 2)

15h00

"Basic Principals for Fundraising" *Logy Murray*

16h00

Coffee/Tea

17h00

The way forward, evaluation & closure

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