



The Governance and Politics of HIV AIDS

A space to share research, ideas and experiences co-hosted by HIV Policy Action and the AIDS Foundation of South Africa

Venue: Diakonia Centre, Diakonia Avenue, Durban

July 19, 2016

Background Note

Purpose of the event

This event is being organised by **HIV Policy Action** and the **AIDS Foundation of South Africa** to explore some of the broader public policy dimensions of efforts to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These issues are often inadequately addressed in much of the public debate and research on HIV/AIDS. The Durban event follows on from similar fora which took place during June 2016 in Dar es Salaam and Kampala.

Background to the organisers

The event is a collaboration between HIV Policy Action and the AIDS Foundation of South Africa (AFSA). AFSA provides grant-making, technical and capacity building support to community-based and non-government organisations engaged in service delivery, research and advocacy related to HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and development, nationally and in Southern Africa.

HIV Policy Action is collaboration between three African universities – the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Makerere University in Uganda and the Centre for Civil Society at UKZN in South Africa – and the University of Limerick in Ireland. It was developed to explore the role of public administration in the particular context of people living with HIV/AIDS. It does so because those living with HIV/AIDS clearly face particular challenges, not least the challenge to maintain life, often experienced alongside considerable social exclusion, stigmatisation and discrimination. This project starts from the point that **how** public institutions engage with those living with HIV/AIDS not only has an impact on their life chances but also on how they positively or negatively experience day to day living. It also has an impact on how broader society supports those living with HIV/AIDS by ensuring that stigmatisation and discrimination are not only more consciously avoided in the design and delivery of public policy but that they are actively challenged.

The project is supporting four PhD students (one each in Uganda and Tanzania and two in South Africa) who are approaching these questions from a variety of different perspectives. It is also supporting the undertaking of a number of collaborative research projects involving staff in the different partner universities.



Focus of the event

Amongst the questions to be explored by this event are:

- How are policies that address HIV/AIDS implemented in local settings?
- How do public sector actors interact with the people who use the services they are there to provide?
- What kinds of relationships and social networks bring together officials – such as health workers, bureaucrats and teachers – and citizens?
- How is policy made at different levels in politics, government and institutions?
- Does stigma directed at HIV/AIDS patients affect policy and policy implementation?
- Does policy take account of stigma directed at people affected by HIV/AIDS, including stigma outside health care settings and towards carers/ family members?

Structure of the event

Described as a space to share research, ideas and experiences, this event has a number of components. It will:

- i. introduce the relevance and importance of a stronger focus on public policy and public administration in public fora on HIV/AIDS;
- ii. examine different approaches to service delivery and the implications for public administration.
- iii. reflect on issues of citizen / civil society engagement and the implications of these for public administration.
- iv. consider the issue of stigma and its consequences for how public policy is made and communicated.
- v. explore issues of accountability and how sometimes abstract rights can be made real.

Having examined these various issues the final session of the workshop will seek to reveal and share collective wisdom and ideas for how public institutions centrally involved in addressing HIV/AIDS can be enhanced.

A more detailed outline of the event programme follows below. The programme will enable HIV Policy Action research to be presented alongside South African activist experiences.