



Use of an innovative governance structure to successfully leverage private, public partnerships in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Botswana: the Madikwe forum

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Issues: National Coordinating Agencies (NCAs) have been established in many developing countries to strengthen the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, these institutions have long been victims of government bureaucratic procedures and systems in implementing HIV and AIDS interventions. Since 2001, the African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Programme (ACHAP) has been providing support to Botswana's National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA). Recognizing these challenges, the government and ACHAP established the Madikwe Forum to guide implementation of the overall ACHAP strategy in light of existing government policies and recommend changes in order to remove bottlenecks and bureaucratic challenges to implementation.

Description: ACHAP is a public/private sector initiative between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Merck Foundation/Merck & Co., Inc., working in partnership with the Government of Botswana (GoB). In 2004, the Madikwe Forum was established to foster transparency and facilitate ACHAP's contribution to the national HIV and AIDS strategic goals and to ensure the removal of project implementation bottlenecks. It consists of high-level representatives from Government, NACA, ACHAP Board of Directors (BOD) and ACHAP. The Forum meets frequently to review, assess and act on implementation issues arising out of ACHAP's support to the national HIV and AIDS response of the GOB.

Lessons learned: The Madikwe Forum has presented an opportunity to tap into public sector experience and knowledge of government systems to enhance support to the GoB by building consultative partnerships based on a clearly defined governance structure with interaction at policy and implementation levels.

Next steps: A public/private sector HIV/AIDS response initiative faced with bureaucratic policy and implementation challenges should consider setting up a governance structure similar to that of the Madikwe Forum. Such a forum creates an opportunity for members to bridge policy, planning and implementation differences, develop common understanding of issues and enhance the impact of HIV/AIDS response programmes.

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