



## Flyer 1: Overview of HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming

### Purpose

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa has reached such crisis proportions that it affects every aspect of life. The goal of “mainstreaming HIV/AIDS” in development and humanitarian work is to ensure that the impacts of HIV/AIDS are addressed and reduced in communities and within organizations, in all sectors. Many development and humanitarian organizations want to mainstream HIV/AIDS, but do not know what ‘mainstreaming’ could look like, where to start, or basic activities to undertake.

This flyer introduces a series that provides some lessons and ideas on how to mainstream HIV/AIDS, without changing an organisation’s core business. The first several flyers outline key aspects of how a group of organizations in Malawi, in close cooperation with Oxfam, developed and implemented a systemic approach to mainstream HIV/AIDS. Subsequent flyers document lessons from other countries.

The information comes from experiences that worked well for several organisations and could provide a starting point and guideline for others who are interested in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS. Anyone using these flyers is encouraged to modify and improve the process, and to share different approaches and new lessons.

### Oxfam and HIV/AIDS

One of 12 members of Oxfam International, Oxfam Great Britain is a development and humanitarian agency working in six countries in Southern Africa. These include Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe — please see the flags on map.

Oxfam GB’s major programme areas in the region



include supporting sustainable livelihoods, improving basic education, and humanitarian preparedness and response. All our work actively seeks to achieve equity between men and women, and to enable poor people to improve their own situations, and to influence the broader policies and practice that affect their lives.

Oxfam GB has no institutional focus on health issues in Southern Africa. However, it is one of many agencies that have come to realize that the impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic extend far beyond health issues.

As part of the Oxfam family, Oxfam GB has agreed that HIV/AIDS must be addressed in all programmes in the region, as well as within Oxfam and its partner organizations.

Oxfam Malawi is supported by Novib, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Hong Kong, and Oxfam Ireland, with management provided by Oxfam GB.

Oxfam International includes Oxfam America, Oxfam Belgium, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, Oxfam Germany, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Hong Kong, Intermon, Oxfam Ireland, Novib, Oxfam New Zealand, Oxfam Quebec.

*This is one of a series of flyers designed to assist organizations in mainstreaming the issue of HIV/AIDS into their core work and internal policies, without losing their primary focus. This is Flyer 1 (5 June 2002).*



## Overview of the HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming Process in Malawi

The initial flyers in this series outline some of the key activities and lessons in the systematic process used in Malawi. In addition to these core activities, Oxfam Malawi and partners implemented several others.

- **Flyer 2: Practical outcomes:** This illustrates what mainstreaming AIDS can look like in practice.
- **Flyer 3: Awareness raising with staff:** In August 2000, staff took part in a two-day workshop to discuss statistics and trends, medical aspects of HIV/AIDS, social and development implications, and how the pandemic affects them personally and professionally. This led to an internal action plan.
- **Flyer 4: Workplace policies on HIV/AIDS:** Staff of organisations are themselves infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Oxfam Malawi and several partner organisations held a two-day workshop in February 2001 to discuss good practice and the national legal framework on HIV/AIDS in the workplace. They examined a draft workplace policy, and case studies of realistic situations.
- **Flyer 5: Researching the local epidemic:** National statistics and general information on HIV/AIDS are important, but the reality varies from place to place. In March 2001, teams worked with communities in Mulanje, interviewed managers and staff of civil society organisations, district government, and private businesses in order to understand the local reality of HIV/AIDS, and how HIV/AIDS affects different people in communities, as well as the capacity of organisations.
- **Flyer 6: Research findings:** This outlines key lessons learned from the local research.
- **Flyer 7: Programme review and modification:** Based on their new understanding of HIV/AIDS at personal and professional levels in the workplace and in communities, Oxfam and partners reviewed existing Shire Highlands Sustainable Livelihoods Programmes objectives and work plan. They changed some interventions, identified new ways of working, and began to develop partnerships with HIV/AIDS specialist organisations. Though still a livelihoods programme, there is now more attention to reducing HIV transmission, improving care and treatment, and minimizing negative impacts on affected people.
- **Flyer 8: Internal vulnerability audit:** In July 2001, staff from the regional office, programmes and Oxford assessed how HIV/AIDS is likely to affect Oxfam. As with any organisation, main threats include reduced productivity, increased costs, higher staff turnover and reduced experience and quality. More flyers will be developed in future, documenting Oxfam's strategy on HIV/AIDS, indicators of success, the process of conducting an institutional vulnerability audit, and other issues.

## Key Points to Consider

- The systematic process involves a series of activities, but mainstreaming HIV/AIDS is not just a sequence of fixed events, but rather a process that must change attitudes and understanding of complex issues. Outside of events, at least fifteen organisations, including Oxfam Malawi, continue to learn and assess the situations in communities and the country, to identify new issues and interventions, and to develop new ways of working that are more appropriate to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- The activities listed above were run in sequence. It seems quite helpful to encourage staff to first address HIV/AIDS better on a personal level, and then to consider HIV/AIDS 'out there' with others. Partners who skipped this step seem to have less success in implementing other activities.
- Development and humanitarian organisations should focus on primary goals, and not drift into taking over work best done by AIDS-specialist organizations. The emphasis is on learning from others, and building partnerships among specialists, not on everyone being a "jack of all trades."
- Tensions may arise during the mainstreaming process, such as between the competing interests of employees and managers in creating a workplace policy for HIV/AIDS.
- It is important to address impacts of HIV/AIDS both in communities and within organisations.

### **OXFAM GB, SOUTHERN AFRICA HIV/AIDS MAINSTREAMING [WWW.OXFAM.ORG.UK](http://WWW.OXFAM.ORG.UK)**

Please contact us with your suggestions, comments and your own ideas concerning HIV/AIDS mainstreaming.

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