

Bridging the Divide: Interdisciplinary Partnerships for HIV and Health Systems

HIV and Health Systems Implementers and Researchers
Vienna AIDS 2010 Pre-Conference Meeting
July 16 - 17, 2010

Background

The International AIDS Conference, AIDS 2010 in Vienna, coincides with an important year for assessment of progress towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the deadline that world leaders have set for the goal of providing 'universal access' to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support to those who are in need. In addition, the current pressure on global resources has brought into sharp focus the common goals underpinning the AIDS and MDG agendas - of improving health outcomes in resource-limited settings and of the need to make substantial progress in our ability to translate HIV scale-up into broader health systems benefits. There is growing realization that the way forward requires "bridging the gap" between HIV researchers and implementers and other sectors, including maternal and child health experts, chronic disease experts, health economists and health systems experts.

As follow-up to the ['Accelerating the Impact of HIV Programming on Health Systems Strengthening' Pre-Conference Meeting](#) held in advance of IAS 2009 AIDS Conference in Cape Town, the International AIDS Society, with the funding from [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) and in collaboration with the [International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs \(ICAP\)](#) at [Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health](#) and [The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#) (The Global Fund), will therefore convene [Bridging the Divide: Interdisciplinary Partnerships for HIV and Health Systems](#), a two-day invitation-only meeting for 150 experts, researchers, clinicians and implementers from a broad range of disciplines, institutions, and countries around the world.

The pre-conference will be an opportunity to highlight the links between HIV programs and health systems strengthening. The lessons learned from HIV scale-up are critical to informing new investments geared toward improving HIV outcomes, addressing other priority health conditions, strengthening health systems performance and advancing other health-related Millennium Development Goals. Partnerships will not only help generate evidence on how to leverage effective HIV programmes to build health systems capacity, but will also be critical in revitalizing and enhancing responses to other priority health conditions including chronic diseases, maternal and child health. The outcomes of such efforts will be important in building a strong analytical base to address emerging challenges and manage the evolving HIV response.

The critical next steps will include: ensuring continued scale-up while managing HIV as a chronic illness; building stronger systems to deliver primary health care for those with and without HIV; building a strong body of evidence including how to provide equitable, affordable, and high-quality services, cost-effective service delivery models, context-specific solutions, and operationalize health systems strengthening at scale; moving the agenda beyond 'universal access' for people living with HIV/AIDS to universal health coverage for all; leveraging the private sector; building synergies across health information systems; building interdisciplinary partnerships to assess efficiency of HIV investments, expenditure and value for money, and measure the financial impact of HIV scale-up and its interactions with health systems financing; fostering cross-country implementation research and learning on integrated service delivery; promoting a priority research agenda required to answer vital questions and enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration to define methodologies and conduct rigorous evaluation in order to assess the impact of our collective efforts and guide policy development.

Goals

The goal of the Pre-Conference is to contribute to health systems strengthening and universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment in low- and middle- income countries by:

- Accelerating understanding of the interactions between HIV programs and the broader health systems of which they are a part;
- Leveraging the experience and resources of HIV programs to enhance the prevention, care, and treatment of health conditions other than HIV/AIDS; and
- Minimizing the possible negative impact and/or health systems distortion caused by the rapid expansion of HIV prevention, care, and treatment services.

The Objectives of the *Bridging the Divide* Pre-Conference are to –

1. Foster interdisciplinary partnerships between HIV experts, experts from other health programs, health economists, and health systems experts;
2. Present data and evidence from implementation research, including rigorous evaluation and country case studies addressing vital questions on the impact of HIV programming on health systems;
3. Discuss options for the future with respect to leveraging HIV programming to improve health systems and other priority health conditions
4. Identify strategies to further an interdisciplinary research agenda on HIV and health systems;

Planned activities include –

- ✓ Reviewing new data and emerging evidence on the impact of HIV scale-up on health systems;
- ✓ Highlighting strategies required to improve the performance of selected health systems functions and for the delivery of HIV outcomes;
- ✓ Reviewing country case studies and health systems strengthening interventions that work;
- ✓ Showcasing the evidence on how to leverage the impact of HIV programming to improve non-targeted services;
- ✓ Looking to the future, facilitating discussion of what is envisioned over the next 5-10 years; and linking the pre-conference meeting to the larger International AIDS Conference - AIDS2010 Vienna.

A special feedback session at AIDS 2010 highlighting the key findings and outcomes will link the pre-conference meeting to the larger International AIDS Conference. Results from the pre-conference meeting will also be disseminated through a summary slide set highlighting key outcomes and publication of a review article in a peer-reviewed journal.

***Bridging the Divide*¹** will complement and expand the role of the International AIDS Conference in focusing attention on the evidence and advancing the science of HIV and broader health systems strengthening. For the first time, a conference track – Track E: Economics, Operations Research, Care and Health Systems – will examine how HIV programmes affect non-HIV outcomes, global health indicators, health systems functioning and financing, as well as economic growth and human development. In addition, the effect of health systems status on the design, implementation and effectiveness of HIV programmes will be reviewed.

¹ ***Bridging the Divide*** was organized with guidance from the steering committee, which includes leading experts from key stakeholder organizations including Columbia University, the Global Fund, the World Bank, WHO, UNAIDS, USAID/OGAC/CDC, Médecins sans Frontières, Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium; University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria; Ministry of Health of Kenya; African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST-Uganda); and the International AIDS Society