

THE EUROPEAN HIV/AIDS FUNDERS GROUP (EFG)

FILLING THE GAPS OR SHAPING THE AGENDA? MOBILISING PHILANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP FOR HIV/AIDS Brussels, 4 & 5 February 2010



European HIV/AIDS Funders Group meeting, February 4 & 5, 2010, Brussels

On February 4 and 5, 2010, in Brussels, the European HIV/AIDS Funders Group, supported by the King Baudouin Foundation, The Ford Foundation and The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, convened a meeting on the role of European philanthropy in tackling HIV/AIDS globally.

Over sixty participants, from European and U.S.-based Foundations, international NGOs and multilateral donors, took part in lively discussions on the state of funding and global public policy on HIV/AIDS and how shifts in priorities may impact both work on the ground and the ways in which multi-sectoral actors address the pandemic. In an interactive setting, attendees also took part in a future trends immersion exercise that looked forward to 2020 in order to better understand how global developments over the next decade might affect HIV/AIDS scenarios and responses. The event concluded with a discussion of the notion of European philanthropic leadership on global HIV/AIDS issues, examining what leadership has meant to date and ways in which European private funders could enhance their role in shaping a more effective the global response to HIV/AIDS.

PROCEEDINGS

FILLING THE GAPS OR SHAPING THE AGENDA? MOBILISING PHILANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP FOR HIV/AIDS



“... philanthropic funding in Europe is concentrated amongst ten funders, and the shift of priority by just one of them, would create a significant funding gaps for HIV/AIDS programming”, Astrid Bonfield, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, EFG

Astrid Bonfield, Chief Executive of The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and Chair of EFG, opened the meeting by highlighting some of the challenges that funders face in addressing HIV/AIDS. The ongoing financial crisis, competing global issues and static or decreasing funding for HIV/AIDS, require an understanding of the broader funding environment and global policy shifts to maximize impact on the ground. Referring to the most recent EFG resource tracking publication, Mrs Bonfield noted that European philanthropic spending on HIV/AIDS in 2008 decreased by € 5 million despite the increasing needs and demands.

The UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, **Elizabeth Mataka** in her keynote address, shared her thoughts on some of the key trends and opportunities in addressing HIV/AIDS. Mrs Mataka urged funders to consider opportunities that make HIV/AIDS funding more efficient in the current economic climate, emphasising the need for partnership between diverse actors from the private sector, civil society, governments and networks of people living with HIV/AIDS. Despite the remarkable resilience to the global financial turndown by African economies, the decline has already had a negative impact on HIV prevention and treatment services across the continent. Although some African countries are meeting, or close to meeting, the Abuja commitment of spending 15 % of their national budgets on health, they will continue to need sustained international investment especially in areas with high HIV/AIDS prevalence. She noted that despite the considerable resources flows from the global community, which reached their highest levels in 2008, a gap of more than \$6 billion remains between the needs and available funding.



“...Globally, more than 4 million children and adults were receiving treatment in 2008 in the low and middle income countries..., this is also undoubtedly a testament to the incredible work of civil society organisations and networks of people living with AIDS across the continent [Africa] who, in solidarity with their global counterparts, continue to push our governments to ensure that people’s fundamental right of access to treatment is not denied”, Elizabeth Mataka, UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa

Highlighting some of the challenges facing communities affected by HIV/AIDS, Mrs. Mataka drew particular attention to the disadvantaged position of women and girls in the most affected countries, the continued risks of vertical transmission, and human rights issues related to denial of access to information, treatment and prevention for certain groups and populations. She acknowledged the progress made towards achieving the universal access commitments even in sub-Saharan Africa but

noted that most countries still fall short of the target of universal access. Scaling-up treatment has to remain a priority because for every two new people entering into treatment, five others are newly infected.

Of particular importance are prevention efforts built on equality and human rights, on values of social inclusion designed to involve beneficiaries and that combat public hypocrisy on sexual matters stated Mrs Mataka. Two thirds of African countries criminalise homosexual acts, which essentially excludes men who have sex with men (MSM) from most HIV/AIDS programmes. Such stigmatising programming can lead to high percentages of people being unaware of their HIV status.

Mrs Mataka urged funders to continue their commitment to HIV/AIDS funding, ensuring that HIV/AIDS programmes are targeted to most affected populations and based on evidence and the experience gained over the last 25 years. Funders were encouraged to address political barriers as well as operational ones which hinder progress in fighting HIV/AIDS.

Donors need to be ready for long term investment in access to treatment and prevention, reducing vertical transmission, woman's empowerment, increased advocacy to reduce stigma as well as to hold governments accountable for meeting their commitments.

THE STATE OF PUBLIC HIV/AIDS FUNDING



Moderated by Paul Di Donato, former Executive Director of Funders Concerned About AIDS and global philanthropic consultant, this panel explored bilateral and multilateral resources flows for global HIV/AIDS initiatives including trends and likely funding streams over the next few years. This information is critical for private funders to set meaningful priorities and engage in comprehensive planning for the use of their own funds and

leadership assets. Discussion also focused on how public donors can and should explore ways to achieve greater efficiency and impact on the ground at a time of economic and financial crisis and what lessons private funders could draw upon.

Panellists, **Marijke Wijnroks**, the AIDS Ambassador from the Netherlands, **Patterson Brown**, USAID representative speaking on behalf of PEPFAR, and **Joe Cerrel**, the Head of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation London office discussed concerns that the gap between available funds and the unmet needs will widen as a result of the current financial crisis. The world's strongest economies are facing significant budgetary restraints for the first time in many years. Meeting internationally agreed upon targets to spend 0.7 % of domestic GDP on development aid has become challenging for most developed countries. At the same time, low and middle income countries are also experiencing lower budgets revenues which will mean less domestic funding available for HIV/AIDS, with major negative impact on all forms of HIV/AIDS programming,

especially prevention efforts. Panellists noted that political expediency may dictate which prevention projects are cut - for example those targeted towards MSM. The consequences of such cuts will be rapidly felt at the level treatment programmes.

There is increasing interest by governments in holistic approaches - strengthening public health systems as a whole - rather than disease specific actions such as those targeted to HIV/AIDS. One such example is the new U.S. Global Health Initiative. What remains unclear is the impact of these broad approaches on the current delivery of HIV/AIDS programmes and services on the ground. The question is what private funders can or should do in light of this emerging public funding and programming trend.

As public funding for development aid is likely to plateau if not actually decline, and governments seek the best long term and sustainable way to invest in HIV/AIDS, foundations have a key role in taking risks with their funding choices, particularly targeting groups or issues which fall outside public funding priorities for political or religious reasons. This could include harm reduction, human rights dimensions of HIV/AIDS and increased advocacy efforts for populations at most risk. Prevention efforts need greater attention, specifically building more evidence on prevention models that work well. These are opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between public donors and European foundations.

THE CHANGING FACE OF GLOBAL POLICY RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS

Panellists **Robin Gorna**, Executive Director of International AIDS Society, **Jacqueline Wittebrood**, Communications Focal Point, Developed Country NGO Delegation, The Global Fund Board and **Karen Hoehn** Vice Executive Director, German Foundation for World Population (DSW) addressed the policy framework, reflecting on achievements and failures of the global response to HIV/AIDS, current policy trends, future challenges and opportunities. In a facilitated discussion by Tamsin Rose, Health Advocate, panellists also shared their views on how the HIV/AIDS policy response is evolving.

«...[HIV/AIDS] is not over! We've made this fabulous scale up in the last years...we're more than half way there.

It's important that foundations hold up to their knowledge, we need to finish what we have started in scaling up on HIV/AIDS. We know what works, we know that many lives have been saved... foundations have the luxury not to be driven by political cycles... so it's great to hold to your guns.

Fund the evidence and help to explore and articulate the synergies..." Robin Gorna, IAS



They noted that it is important to recognise the achievements by funders, governments, NGOs and civil society activists. The HIV/AIDS scale up in the last decade has been tremendous with significant progress. However, these successes have created new challenges that were not predicted and which now shape the policy environment - such as the anti-retroviral drug 'mortgage' and the challenges in treatment provision for people living with HIV and their families who can now expect a normal lifespan. The global policy community has not been able to establish robust mechanisms

to ensure aid effectiveness and coordination. This has become more urgent given the global financial crisis which necessitates more careful and effective spending. An increasing chorus of voices can be heard calling for greater focus on coordination of aid resources to achieve more impact with less resources.

Recent controversies about the priority for HIV/AIDS versus other health issues were highlighted. Mrs Wittebrood raised concerns about “creeping HIV/AIDS fatigue” and the focus shifting towards other worthy goals like child and maternal health. As the discussion referenced the Millennium Development Goals, panellists firmly rejected criticisms that HIV/AIDS programming has undermined other important health priorities. They highlighted the positive impact that the HIV/AIDS scale up has had on the global health, such as the direct reduction of maternal and child mortality rate in South Africa and Uganda.

In planning policy responses to HIV/AIDS, opportunities to reflect on lessons learned are needed so that more nuanced and well thought-through policies can be developed. As recipient countries become more engaged in ownership of HIV/AIDS funding and programming, there is an important role for European foundations to support domestic advocacy programmes as well as equipping civil society activists with the necessary tools for holding their own governments to account.

AIDS IN 2020 AND THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN FOUNDATIONS

An interactive future trends immersion session led by Kristin Shannon and Antonio Meza from PSI Communications looked forward to 2020 to better understand how global trends in the next decade might affect HIV/AIDS scenarios and responses. Participants explored patterns, constraints and opportunities that could impact philanthropic leadership options. This was an opportunity to think together about how foundations can continue to lead and stimulate effective responses to HIV/AIDS in a rapidly changing political and economic environment.

Four key trends were outlined that could impact on HIV/AIDS:

- Scientific progress, notably in neuroscience, revealing how to effectively stimulate behavioural change and thus revolutionise the prevention paradigm;
- The unprecedented economic uncertainty in the North and how will this impact economies in the South;
- the role of new players in Africa such as China
- The presence of powerful systems for creating and sharing knowledge through social media which allow people to collaborate in real time both individually and collectively.



In facilitated small-group discussions, participants identified some of the most important emerging issues, challenges and opportunities in the next decade. Insights shared from the table discussions:

- While social media and internet expansion provide revolutionary tools in terms of access and sharing of information, the overwhelming amount of information available as well as the quality of information and its effective use will influence and drive the change.
- Openness to partnership, bringing together groups and institutions from different continents will provide a fuller picture and more coordinated actions in addressing HIV/AIDS.

“...We know that condoms affect sexual pleasure, we could think of innovative ways to improve their quality ...think of investing tailor made condoms, biodegradable made from house waste, recyclable and invisible in terms of feel...”
Georgia Arnold, MTV Staying Alive Foundation

- The economic downturn, despite the limits and constraints it presents, can create opportunities for collaboration.
- Foundations continue to fund innovative programmes, including those dedicated to improving quality of life. Foundations should continue to take risks and fund innovation, celebrate their success and speak about their failures more openly than they do now.
- The importance of investing in human resources and thinking of better ways to prevent brain-drain in the Global South, especially of health care professionals.
- Seize opportunities to engage with new foundations that are emerging in Europe. EFG should have a catalytic role with emerging European philanthropy.
- Identify interlocutors that bring together voices from North and South, involving people from the South in the search for solution instead of major actors finding solutions for them.
- Going forward, the role of foundations beyond funding is to give voice, visibility and power to the heroes from the community, identifying voices who can advocate in their own communities about treatment, prevention and stigma.

MOBILISING GREATER EUROPEAN FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP ON THE GLOBAL AIDS CRISIS



The final panel featured leading philanthropic figures, **Jacob Gayle** Deputy Vice President, the Ford Foundation, **Gerry Salole** Chief Executive, European Foundation Centre, **Peter McDermott** Managing Director of the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, and facilitated by **Luc Tayart de Borms** Executive Director, The King Baudouin Foundation. The panel discussed and unpacked the topic of what leadership has meant to date in tackling HIV/AIDS and examined how European private

fundors could enhance their role in shaping the global response to HIV/AIDS.

While some strengths of the European Foundation community were noted, the need for the European philanthropy to be open to learning, collaboration and partnerships was emphasized. This

is critical because the concepts of “development”, “aid architecture”, “neo-colonialism” are being challenged and new ideas will emerge. European foundations should do more to showcase their successes, acknowledge their failures, increase the philanthropic visibility and voice in tackling HIV/AIDS.

“...there is difference in relationships built between countries, cultures and institutions, difference in paradigms and we need to partner together to respond to HIV/AIDS effectively”, Jacob Gayle, The Ford Foundation

Strengthening collaboration between foundations, engaging in conversations with other key players from across sectors and moving beyond geographic regions, were the main issues tackled during the conversation.

Jacob Gayle underlined the importance of leveraging resources from many sources and the need for working in partnership during this economic downturn. Gerry Salole put forward the need to maintain dialogue with all actors: the European Commission, foundations, multilaterals, NGOs, but noted that such conversations have to take place on the basis of mutual respect and go beyond the discourse of just “filling financial gaps”.

Peter McDermott suggested that foundations need to come to a common agreement of where we are now in terms of addressing HIV/AIDS. Warning that the HIV/AIDS community is in danger of becoming pessimistic and introspective, he urged foundations to get more actively involved in changing the debate, pointing out that political agendas feature global health and child health more prominent precisely because of efforts on HIV/AIDS. Panellists highlighted that HIV/AIDS money and thinking have already radically changed how diseases are treated and the concept of healthcare delivery, particularly the functions of healthcare workers and clinics. Efforts on HIV/AIDS will make other contributions to health and development processes in the future.

Recognising that mistakes have been made and there has been legitimate criticism about how some money was spent, foundations need to avoid the trap of thinking global health versus HIV/AIDS and instead focus on maximising the benefits of success while continuing to deliver. Foundations active on HIV/AIDS need to reach out to their peers in the philanthropy community that are not currently involved in HIV/AIDS funding and programming. More can be done by sharing knowledge with new foundation players and facilitate partnerships by providing a simplified environment and low threshold mechanisms for other foundations to join in efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS. New foundation faces need to be included in the conversation, and the dialogue between foundations on both sides of the Atlantic has to be further strengthened. Foundations should take an active role in shaping the HIV/AIDS global agenda by advocating on social, community and economic aspects of the pandemic.

* * *

The meeting was closed by **Robin Gorna** and **Astrid Bonfield**.

Robin Gorna previewed some of the highlights of the forthcoming International AIDS Society Conference “Rights Here, Right Now” in Vienna, in July 2010, and urged foundations to use the conference as an opportunity to extend the thought-provoking exchanges begun at this meeting.

Astrid Bonfield thanked participants for their attendance and warmly invited them to continue their conversation at EFG’s next gatherings in 2010 namely the cocktail reception at the EFC Foundation Week in Brussels (31 May - 4 June) and the joint hosting of a cocktail reception with Funders Concerned About AIDS in Vienna, at the International AIDS Conference in July 2010. She issued

an invitation for participants to engage with the EFG by joining the Steering Committee and helping to shape future EFG activities and events.

