

Viet Nam HIV Technical Working Group Meeting

16 January 2007 Minutes

Venue:	Youth Union Guest House, 15B Ho Xuan Huong, Ha Noi
Time:	14.00 – 17.00
Chairperson:	Peter Barnard, Médecins du Monde
Vice Chairperson:	Dr. Vu Ngoc Bao, Family Health International
Secretary:	UNAIDS
Participants:	80 from LNGOs, INGOs, the Government of Viet Nam, the UN and bilateral agencies

1. Welcome – introductions

In order to save paper, presentations will not be handed out. They can be downloaded from www.unaids.org.vn.

2. Minutes and evaluations

a. Approval of the minutes of 16 May meeting: The minutes were approved without correction.

b. Evaluation of last meeting: Key comments from the evaluation of the last TWG meeting were highlighted. The low number of evaluations received was noted and participants were strongly urged to return their evaluations.

3. Brief reports from Subgroups

The meeting folder included written reports from the following subgroups. A brief verbal report was provided at the meeting

GIPA – *Trinh Thuy Ngan*

GIPA group was involved in many activities throughout December. In upcoming events, CARE has recently announced it will support the National Conference Centre event, and there will be greater care taken around confidentiality for PLHIV.

Gender and Sexuality- *Do Thi Thanh Nhan, VWU (WARMC)*

The topic of the last meeting was 'The Sexual and Reproductive Needs of Women Living With HIV'. Two women from White Dove shared their experiences and the group discussed the need to support reproductive health services and ensure safe sex among young female PLHIV. This year the subgroup will focus more on practical interventions and less on discussion.

MSM – *Pham Vu Thien*

There will be a meeting on 23rd January to discuss communication activities and hear from members who attended a BCC Training Course. The upcoming National MSM Workshop which is scheduled for March. Size estimation in HCMC and Ha Noi, supported by UNAIDS, is ongoing.

Care and Treatment-

The next meeting will be held in the last week of January. Discussion will focus on HIV drug resistance strategy. Information on an upcoming conference on ethical ARV supply and management will be sent out to TWG list.

05/06 Centres- Nina McCoy

The last meeting featured a presentation by FHI on case management, with a focus on the HCMC Centres for Comprehensive Care. These centres have been successful because different parties have taken the responsibility for different aspects of the program. Methadone substitution is to begin soon. Current needs are for good M&E, expansion with Women's Union and Youth Union support, and a harm reduction database. Presentation will be posted on the internet.

Communication – Peter Barnard

There is currently a vacancy for chairperson to lead the group. Please get in touch with group members or UNAIDS if you are interested in taking the position.

4. On-going Media Campaign: HIV Messages for Male Clients of Sex Workers

Presenter: Trinh Thu Hang, PSI

The presenter introduced PSI's 3-year program to use research-based interpersonal and mass media campaigns to raise awareness of HIV and risk among males in Viet Nam.

5. Discussion

The discussion focused on the efficacy of mass media messages, innovative media and "edutainment," the plausibility of interventions targeting men who are intoxicated, and the need to consider issues of stigma and discrimination within every program and project.

6. Health Insurance and Free Care Subsidies: Issues of use and access among PLHIV

Presenter: Nguyen Quang Ngoc, Population Council

Mr. Ngoc presented on the growth and limitations of health insurance and ARV access among people in resource-poor settings. Although the ARV program is expanding, it is still concentrated in a few, mostly urban settings. Mr. Ngoc spoke about the challenges facing healthcare in rural and ethnic minority areas and asked participants to consider and discuss these issues as they relate to PLHIV; i.e.: direct and indirect cost, sustainability, supply and demand, policy (especially Dec.139, Dec.63, Programme 135), commune v. central level health services, compulsory v. voluntary health insurance, access to information, stigma and discrimination, red tape, limited medicines and other medical supplies, exclusion of near-poor from health insurance.

In summary, Mr. Ngoc recommended applying lessons learned from Population Council's research on resource-poor settings to PLHIV – pro-PLHIV policies, target healthcare providers for anti-stigma and discrimination training, reinforce equity by providing for those who need help the most, organize some form of insurance. He emphasized that the most difficult issue to solve will be the conflict between needing to promote equity, whilst maintaining confidentiality and avoiding discrimination.

7. Updates

Leadership and HIV Workshop (Dr Vo Dinh Vinh, Party Commission for Education and Communication)

The Leadership and HIV Workshop aimed to improve the leadership role of the Party in regard to HIV. Dr. Vinh presented briefly on the workshop's objectives and key outcomes. Among these, the Party agreed they must reach consensus on leading the implementation of harm reduction and must push ahead with the methadone substitution programme. A conference on leadership in three regions will be held in the future to continue calling for leadership at the provincial level.

CSO participation in preparing the UNGASS report (Hoa Thuong Thich Thanh Huan and Vladanka Andreeva, UNAIDS)

On 1 November 27 people from different provinces attended a meeting to give inputs on the preparation of the UNGASS report; the need to involve civil society more was emphasized. UNAIDS and Ford Foundation supported the distribution and compilation of materials nationwide, as well as workshops in the north and south to prepare CSO for participation. Ten CSO representatives spent one day in discussion and then presented their issues in Ha Noi on 9 January. This is the first time wide CS participation has been engaged and it shows that they can mobilize resources and participate effectively. Questionnaires on progress made show a very different picture across sectors.

The UNGASS report has been updated with CS inputs, translated into Vietnamese and has begun the internal review process. Deadline is 31 January.

Reminder to donors to submit data on money spent to VAAC as soon as possible.

Global Fund Round 8 (Steve Mills, Country Director FHI)

Proposal from Global Fund Round 7 was not accepted. Round 8 is to be announced in early March and the Country Coordinating Mechanism will meet soon to discuss this. Once the call for Round 8 proposals has been made, the CCM will circulate a request for inputs..

9. AOB

New staff member at UNAIDS

Sylvia Smyth is the new Assistant Planning and Management Officer at UNAIDS Viet Nam. She will have the task of assisting Asia in coordinating the TWG meetings.

Quarterly Mass Mailing

In preparation for UNAIDS March Quarterly Mass Mailing, please send any new materials your organization has put out to UNAIDS by the end of February. If possible, please send 100 copies in Vietnamese and 50 in English.

Evaluation

Participants were reminded to fill in their evaluation forms.

The next meeting will take place on the 12th March 2008 at the Army Hotel.