

# AFAO's International Strategy 2007- 2010

## Preamble

The global HIV epidemic continues to expand relentlessly. The Asia/Pacific region has experienced and continues to be the site of devastating consequences. Australia has moral, humanitarian, economic and political interests in reducing its impact. Our nation's cultural and economic ties with the Asia/Pacific region provide strong incentives to reduce the epidemic's potential for severe economic degradation and/or political destabilisation within this region.

The Australian government, through its development agency, AusAID, has developed an international HIV/AIDS strategy and supports a wide range of HIV activities in the region. Australia's assistance will be increased through additional funds and improved through stronger strategic planning and policy development. AusAID acknowledges the high-level of HIV/AIDS expertise in Australia's peak community and professional organisations, and recognises the value of their increased involvement in regional responses. AusAID's strategy indicates they will seek opportunities to develop and strengthen community leadership that builds a vital bridge between governments and vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV/AIDS, and that enables their participation in developing responses.

The Australian community based sector has extensive expertise and practical experience to offer, including in the areas of:

- ◆ Strategic planning for HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ HIV/AIDS related policy.
- ◆ Advocacy.
- ◆ Service and program delivery in prevention, health promotion, treatment and care.
- ◆ Legal and regulatory responses to HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Effective and sustained community mobilisation

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) recognises it has a key role to play in the development of effective policy and programmatic responses to HIV/AIDS at regional and global levels, with an emphasis on community involvement and leadership. AFAO's role as a national organisation is primarily focused on policy, strategy and advocacy, yet we are able to draw on the direct and extensive program development and service delivery skills and experience of our member organisations. In recent years, these organisations have increased their involvement and engagement in regional and international work. We also have extensive links on which to draw outside of our membership, including among researchers, health professionals, government officials and politicians and through a range of regional and international contacts.

AFAO's expertise of greatest value to the international response lies in five areas:

- ◆ Strategic planning for HIV/AIDS at national, provincial and local levels.
- ◆ Policy development and advocacy, drawing on our foundation as a non-government organisation with a strong track record of effectively influencing and contributing to national policy and programs.
- ◆ Expertise in non-government/government relations, particularly the development and effective operation of partnerships between community organisations and government.
- ◆ Non-government organisation capacity building, institutional strengthening and management.
- ◆ Innovative community based prevention, health promotion and care programs and services, especially to marginalised communities.

## **Goal**

To contribute to the development of effective strategic planning, policy and programmatic responses to HIV/AIDS at regional and global levels, consistent with internationally agreed goals of:

- ◆ Eliminating transmission of HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Reducing HIV related mortality and morbidity.
- ◆ Minimising the individual and societal impact of HIV/AIDS.

## **Focus**

AFAO's work will primarily focus on policy development and strategic planning to support effective global and regional responses to HIV/AIDS. In particular we will foster and support advocacy related to this work among people living with HIV/AIDS, populations vulnerable to HIV infection, and other community based organisations.

AFAO's international policy and advocacy work will have a particular focus on emerging challenges where there are gaps in current policy and strategic planning at regional and international levels.

As part of this focus, AFAO will emphasise working in partnership with other community-based and non-government organisations, health professionals, governments, business, international agencies, and other members of civil society.

## **Guiding Principles**

1. To promote and strengthen responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic which incorporate full involvement of the communities and populations most at risk of HIV infection.
2. To promote, in partnership with our member organisations, the participation, visibility and central role of people living with HIV/AIDS in all aspects of the international and regional response to HIV/AIDS.
3. To promote approaches which recognise that treatment, care and prevention are inter-linked and indivisible.

## **Objectives**

### *Advocacy and networking at regional and international levels*

1. To advocate at regional and international levels for a strong community response to HIV/AIDS which addresses the impact of HIV and supports the human rights of key populations, and recognises the central role of people living with HIV in the global response.
2. To continue influencing the Australian Government's international response to HIV/AIDS towards effective and strategic contributions to the regional and international response that incorporate community participation as a basic operating principle; and monitoring the government's performance in this regard.
3. To support the strengthening and sustainability of Asia-Pacific regional HIV/AIDS organisations and networks and other key community-based organisations, their participation in key forums, their partnerships with key stakeholders, and their policy and advocacy capacity to respond to HIV.
4. To advocate strengthening the role of community organisations in monitoring national plans and Universal Access targets.
5. To promote community involvement in HIV research, including clinical, behavioural and epidemiological research, and in the development and implementation of biomedical prevention interventions.
6. To promote the implementation of effective responses to the escalation of HIV infections among gay and other men who have sex with men, regionally and internationally.

### *AFAO's international program and member organisations*

7. To identify key international HIV/AIDS issues to which AFAO can make effective contributions, to develop appropriate policy initiatives and responses, and to advocate their adoption and implementation.
8. To support and facilitate the active involvement of AFAO's member organisations and other Australian HIV partnership stakeholders to engage with the international and regional epidemic.
9. To strengthen and promote AFAO's international program and maintain a strategic and coordinated approach to our work in the region.
10. To develop and implement a long-term plan for diversifying AFAO's funding base to support AFAO's international work.
11. To identify, develop and maintain liaison with key international HIV/AIDS agencies and to effectively communicate with other key stakeholders and partners.

## **Outcomes from AFAO's International Program:**

We aim to achieve the following outcomes through our international program:

- ◆ AFAO's national voice influences decision makers and results in effective policy, research and action in the region and internationally.
- ◆ A strengthened contribution by AFAO and its members towards overcoming the epidemic internationally.
- ◆ Increased adoption of partnership arrangements between government and community sector as a cornerstone of effective responses.
- ◆ Creation of a strong enabling environment of appropriate policies, regulations and laws to maximise effectiveness of prevention, health promotion, treatment and care programs and services.
- ◆ Creation of tolerant and supportive attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS and those particularly vulnerable to HIV infection.
- ◆ An adequately funded community response to HIV in the region.

## **Major Challenges**

1. Achieving an adequate, on-going revenue stream to support AFAO's regional and international contributions.
2. Maintaining balance between AFAO's core role in the Australian epidemic and our responsibility to contribute to the regional and international response to HIV.

## **Action Plans**

Action Plans will be developed for each objective and implemented where our revenue streams permit.