

AFAO's International Strategy 2003-2005

Preamble

The global HIV epidemic continues to expand exponentially. The Asia/Pacific region looms as a major site of potentially devastating effects. 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.

Australia's National HIV/AIDS Strategy calls for Australia to provide leadership, policy, planning and technical expertise to support regional and global responses to the epidemic. Increased international assistance and cooperation are identified as priorities.

The National HIV/AIDS Strategy also recognises that the involvement of Australia's community based sector must be an important part of Australia's international efforts on HIV/AIDS. The Australia 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.

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) also has a responsibility to provide and promote leadership in regional and global responses given our role as Australia's national community-sector body leading the response to the HIV epidemic in Australia and contributing to the international response.

AFAO's position and role make it unusual among AIDS organisations - as a national organisation, we are primarily focused on policy, strategy and advocacy, yet able to draw on the direct and extensive service delivery skills and experience of our varied Members. We also have extensive links to draw on outside of our membership, including among researchers, health professionals, government officials and politicians as well as 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, particularly from a non-government organisation foundation where we have a strong track record of being able to effectively influence and contribute 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.

Goals

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 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 an approach based on treatment, care and prevention being inter-linked and indivisible.

Objectives

1. To identify key international HIV/AIDS and development issues, develop appropriate policy initiatives and responses, and advocate their adoption and implementation regionally and internationally.
2. To reshape and influence the Australian Government's international response to HIV/AIDS towards a more effective strategic contribution to the regional and international response that incorporates community participation as a basic operating principle.
3. To advocate to United Nations agencies, donor organisations, and other relevant bodies for an appropriate focus on the Asia/Pacific region, commensurate with the threat of the epidemic to this region.

4. To further strengthen AFAO's partnerships with Asia-Pacific regional HIV/AIDS organisations and networks.
5. To identify, develop and maintain liaison with key international HIV/AIDS agencies.
6. To work with individuals, networks, community-based organisations and non-government organisations in the region to strengthen their policy and advocacy capacity and to assist their sustainability and participation in the response to HIV through partnerships with international agencies and through AFAO's international grants scheme.
7. To foster understanding of the international and regional epidemic among AFAO's member organisations and other partnership stakeholders and encourage their involvement.
8. To identify and analyse the range of funding sources available for AFAO's international work and negotiate satisfactory contracts to support it.
9. To promote AFAO's international program and activities.
10. To promote community involvement in HIV research, including clinical, vaccine development, behavioural and epidemiological research, including community preparedness for HIV vaccine trials and the scaling up of the provision of antiretroviral treatment.

Outcomes from AFAO's International Program:

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

- ◆ Adoption of effective policy and strategic planning at national, provincial and local levels, particularly those incorporating community participation.
- ◆ Fostering and promotion of the partnership approach to HIV/AIDS as a cornerstone of effective responses.
- ◆ Creation of a strong enabling environment of 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.

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 growing regional and international calls for involvement by AFAO and our membership.

Action Plans

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

Addendum: Priority Activity Areas for year 1: 2003

1. Objective 1: Identifying key policy issues
 - ◆ Treatments Access - Supporting scaling up access to HIV Treatment, particularly in the Asia/Pacific region, with a concomitant focus on strong prevention programs.
 - ◆ Asia Pacific Leadership Forum - As part of a consortium, assist to deliver HIV/AIDS policy and strategy training programs in Asia and the Pacific.
2. Objective 2: Re-shaping Australia's international response to a more strategic approach
 - ◆ Advocating and lobbying for significant change with Minister Downer and the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade.
3. Objective 6: Working with regional networks and CBO's - UNGASS Declaration Implementation.
 - ◆ Fostering understanding of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) Declaration and identifying and supporting actions to assist with its implementation.
4. Objective 7: Foster understanding and involvement of AFAO members.
 - ◆ Ensuring effective involvement of AFAO and our members in international conferences, particularly 7th ICAAP and Bangkok 2004.
5. Objective 8: Strengthen the financial basis for AFAO's international work
 - ◆ Investigating possible revenue streams and negotiating contracts.
6. Objective 9: AFAO's international grants scheme
 - ◆ Further development and implementation of AFAO's international grants scheme.
7. Objective 10: HIV Vaccine development and preparedness.
 - ◆ As a part of the Australian consortium, maintain AFAO's role and obligations to continue to advocate for strong community involvement and preparedness.