



SWAZILAND COUNTRY REPORT

2008 ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM

INTRODUCTION

- Swaziland amongst countries hard hit by HIV/AIDS
- Since the first case was reported in 1986, disease has spread at alarming rate.
- Prevalence rates have ranged from 3.9% in 1992 to 42.9% in 2004
- In 2006 the infection rate stood at 39.2%
- HIV prevalence in 15-24 age group remained steady at 39.4% between 2002 and 2004

THE NATIONAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- In the past 7 years, SD has developed systems to drive and manage the national response to HIV/AIDS.
- The major achievement has been the institutionalisation of the Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA) as a body that lead and coordinate the response.
- Through this institution, Swaziland
 1. Formulated and launched an HIV and AIDS Policy (2006)
 2. A National Strategic Plan (NSP)(2006-2008)
 3. A National Action Plan
 - to guide the implementation of HIV and AIDS activities by various agencies.
 - Decrease vulnerability of individuals and communities

THE NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- No public health law to deal with HIV and AIDS
- National AIDS Policy
- National Action Plan for Children 2005 which seeks to protect children especially OVCs
- Women and Girls Protection Act 1920 seeks to address sexual violations of women and girls.

“Randy pastor charged with 5 years imprisonment for impregnating a 14 year old girl”- Times of Swaziland , 15 Oct.2008

- MOH/PLHIV Collaboration Framework- areas identified for collaboration are:
 - @ capacity building within PLHIV support groups;
 - @ service delivery to PLHIV in areas of prevention, care and support;
 - @advocacy and community mobilisation
- Employment Act /1980 s29 provides that an employer may not discriminate in any employment contract.
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences proposes to prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual offences.

CRITICAL HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES

- Mandatory testing disguised as essential for physical fitness in the military on going
- Same sex relationships not recognised “ungodly” and against biblical principles.
- No distribution of condoms in prisons
- Legal status of women turning for the worst- legal minors despite of the constitutional guarantee of equality , legal minors under customary and general law.
- Harmful cultural practices

PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND CARE PROGRAMMES

- HIV testing not widely utilised with only 15% of general population between 15-49 years old, having tested. And more women than men tested.
- Guidelines on HIV /AIDS Testing and Counselling are in place but not adhered to
- Confidentiality remains a constant challenge for health workers
- Patients accessing care and support services are required to queue @ specific places that are easily identifiable to users of institutions as queues for HIV/AIDS services
- Calls for patients coming to treat STI's common in health institutions
- The NSP, AIDS Policy and the Health Sector Response Plan 2006-2008 address areas of treatment, care and support
- Stock out- procurement and management system challenged "Hospital staff and nurses steal and sell medication" *Times of Swaziland* 4TH November 2008 .
- Treatment literacy low- cases of partners sharing medication prevalent
- PEP only available to survivors of sexual violence only when demanded from attending from health workers and only few health facilities offer PEP.

WLSA WORK AND CURRENT COLLABORATIONS

- Research oriented organisation- completed phase 5 on Gender, HIV/AIDS and the Law
- Findings : alarming numbers of young girls between 13-15 who due to high poverty levels especially in the Lavumisa border gate-Manzini ‘trucks’ route are forced by families into prostitution
- Also human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation is on the increase.
- Legal Rights Training and Services-two pronged, training and legal advice
- Challenge is that under the current system NGOs lawyers cannot represent clients in court (Legal Practitioners Act 1887) hence cannot conclude all cases but have to refer.
- UNDP “vote for a woman campaign” participation of women both as candidates and voters.
- UNFPA capacity building for women living with HIV/Aids-important component of this project is the documentation of HIV/AIDS and Human rights abuses
- Learner-teacher relationships dialogues with traditional leaders and communities.