

Advocacy and Communication Strategy for the Learning Agenda of the Treatment Acceleration Program

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Background

The advocacy and communication strategy for the **Treatment Acceleration Program** will be built on the sharing and learning agenda of the initiative. Central to this strategy will be the identification of lessons from the ongoing pilot projects in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mozambique. For the purpose of this strategy, “lessons” will be those experiences which derive directly from the operationalization of TAP in the three pilot countries. Those experiences must have unique properties relative to the particular elements undertaken (eg drug resistance, dropouts, stockouts, adherence, etc.) They should not be general, peripheral or lessons that are conceivably true of any random project.

Lessons from TAP will be strengthened with lessons from other HIV/AIDS programs/initiatives in Africa and, where appropriate, the experiences and best practices from other regions and countries with documented successes in HIV treatment, prevention, care and support. The purpose of this is to afford policy makers who will eventually implement TAP lessons the opportunity of cross-referencing those lessons with experiences elsewhere.

Operationally, “lessons” will:

- Have unique properties relative to the particular elements understudied in TAP.
- Account for successes, challenges or outright failures.
- Address the question: “Can progress be made by either repeating or rejecting an experience”?

They should not:

- Be general or peripheral.
- Be “lessons” that will be conceivably true of any random project.

The TAP strategy will revolve around three main pillars:

1. Awareness creation (through the appropriate use of various media mixes and communication tools);
2. Packaging/targeting of outcome products (routine policy briefs, e-letters, etc);
3. Construction of sustainable goodwill through continuous stakeholder participation at subregional levels.

ECA's subregional offices will be key in the implementation of this strategy.

1. Awareness creation:

The overall communication and media goals are:

- To secure a routine positive **media** mention of key recommendations in targeted local and international media.
- To ensure adequate understanding of the key TAP lessons by end users, especially African policy makers, development partners, CSOs, NGOs, etc.
- To facilitate implementation of key TAP lessons by African countries

The strategy will have three components built around the key lessons of the projects: ***Penetration, Dissemination and Evaluation.***

Penetration

The key recommendations of the report will be introduced to key stakeholder groups at all subregional levels, using ECA's sub regional offices and carefully-developed database of key users (i.e. opinion formers/shapers, chiefs of staff of key ministers, CSOs, student activists, editorialists, union leaders) through traditional media channels and specifically designed strategic communication programmes.

We will continue to utilize major appropriate media and global/continental events. The media channels used will include press conferences, specially arranged interview with key news media, public service announcements (radio/TV), and so on.

Dissemination

1. A synthesis report will be published based on the key messages extracted from the three pilot projects.
2. An information kit will be prepared containing the following:
 - Fact Sheets on various component lessons of TAP will be prepared.
 - An "***How to Use***" manual (an advocacy tool for the use of policy makers at country level)
 - Press statements/other relevant backgrounders.
2. A short Video News Release (VNR) (3-5 minutes) will be produced (in appropriate international formats and local languages) on key messages targeted at key TV stations.
3. A 30-second public service advocacy announcement (PSAs) will be prepared for radio (in collaboration with carefully selected CSOs) in French, English and Arabic, using the voices of carefully selected influential persons (political, cultural or economic).
4. A monthly newsletter to be called **IMPACT: Accelerating HIV Treatment** will be published to track the implementation of recommendations at country level, and offer local media/press support as needed. Each edition will carry a reader feedback survey. It will be mailed to key targets and be available electronically.

Press statements (in English, French and Arabic) will be issued *rapidly* in response to commentaries, policies, declarations, publications, reports, etc on any material theme arising from the TAP projects, their recommendations or lessons.

Evaluation:

Will be on the basis of impact and attained objectives. The baseline elements will be *visibility, understanding of key lessons and actions (ie replication) taken in line with the key lessons*. Outcome mapping techniques, focus groups, audience surveys, etc will be appropriately used. There will be an in-built mechanism to respond to and accommodate change at every stage of implementation.

2. Packaging/Targeting of Outcome Products

Various lessons extracted from the three pilot projects will be packaged and targeted to diverse audiences in appropriate implementable doses.

Among others, there will be five principal targets:

1. Ministries of Finance and related institutions.
2. Ministries of Health and related institutions.
3. The legislature (especially Legislative Committees on Health, Finance, etc)
4. The media, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other bodies that influence legislators and public opinions.
5. Women Groups
6. People Living with HIV/AIDS
7. Relevant private sector institutions (financial institutions, philanthropy, etc)
8. Research Institutions.

3. Construction of goodwill (Advocacy Strategy)

Objectives

- To clarify key TAP messages for policy makers at country level and assist in creating fertile grounds for implementation at country level.
- To strengthen CSO support of key lessons and messages
- To build and sustain stakeholder goodwill, participation and buy-in.

Ministries of Finance and Planning are the number one target. They will be engaged primarily on the basis of the key recommendations. Engaging with Ministries of Finance, Planning and Economic Development also entails engaging with their international partners, including the Bretton Woods Institutions and bilateral donors.

Ministries of Health and institutions such as National AIDS Councils, health sector international organisations and NGOs, will be primarily engaged through the advocacy of eminent persons with expertise and stature in this field and backed by the key messages of the Report.

The legislature, civil society and public opinion are essential to mobilizing Africa against HIV/AIDS and its impacts. The interests of these groups are highly diverse, and engaging with them is a time-consuming activity involving numerous meetings, conferences, work with the media, etc. The advocacy strategy will be based upon seizing opportunities as they arise, engaging with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, and raising TAP lessons at every opportunity.

Policy Engagement and Advocacy Strategies

African Governments are the principal constituency. Policy briefs will be distilled from the projects around the key recommendations. The main policy briefs will be aimed at African governments and specifically at ministries and departments such as Finance, Planning, and Health.

ECA's **conferencing strategy** will methodically insert the issue of HIV/AIDS treatment acceleration and long-term health financing into regional forums such as Roundtable, Conference of Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning, Conference of African Ministers of Health, the African Parliamentary Union, the Pan African Parliament process and national legislatures.

The African Union and other Regional and Sub-regional Organisations are important stakeholders. They each have relevant conferences and decision-making processes, including Ministers of Health, Ministers of Labour and Social Welfare, etc. There is also a wider strategy, with the aim of bringing the overall findings of TAP to the AU Summit using the AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) mechanism, so that African Heads of State are formally apprised of the issue and adopt an appropriate declaration.

The United Nations and its agencies and departments are important stakeholders.. We will forge meaningful partnerships with the following: UNAIDS, ILO, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, AfDB, WHO and the World Bank.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The CSO engagement strategy will have the following specific elements:

- (1) Opening contact and communication with CSOs. Events such as International Conference on AIDS and STI in Africa (ICASA). This will be followed by identification of potential focal points for CSO TAP activities on HIV/AIDS and accelerated treatment.
- (2) Convening or co-sponsoring one or more continental conferences including all stakeholders on key issues of HIV/AIDS, treatment and health financing to focus on a key theme (e.g. scaling up treatment, HIV/AIDS drug resistance, etc).

Because of the sheer number and diversity of CSOs, the engagement strategy will focus on working with a select number of CSOs that can serve as hubs for involving a range of others.

Tools

1. Reports, Newsletters, Policy Briefs
2. Dedicated websites
3. Stakeholders Forums
4. Electronic discussion forums
5. Direct marketing (CD roms, e-despatches, etc)
6. Strategic engagement
7. Eminent Persons/Interlocutors

Partial Key Events and Opportunities for TAP Advocacy and Communication

- World AIDS Day, Worldwide, December 1 2007
- 15th International Conference on AIDS/STIs in Africa (ICASA), 2007.
- AU Summit, Addis Ababa, January 2007.
- Conference of African Ministers of Health
- Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Addis Ababa, 2007
- Conference of the Governing Council of African Development Bank, Beijing 2007
- Meeting of AWA Heads of State

