



**ADEA Biennial Meeting
(Arusha, Tanzania, October 7-11, 2001)**

Reaching Out, Reaching All –
Sustaining Effective Policy and Practice for Education in Africa

**Session 4:
Tackling HIV/AIDS: Mass-media and International conferences**

HIV/AIDS Impact on Education in Africa
An analysis of conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings and summits
focusing on HIV/AIDS impact on education in Africa - December 1999 to June 2001

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
ADF	African Development Forum
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFID	British Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
ESC	Education Sector Conference: Conference Type
EU	European Union
HEARD	Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division
HOS	Heads of State: Conference Type
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
MoE	Ministry of Education
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ORID	Other Related Infectious Diseases
PLWA	Persons living with HIV/AIDS
REC	Regional Education Conference: Conference Type
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAUVCA	Southern African Universities Vice Chancellors Association
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UND	University of Natal Durban
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Education Forum
WGTP/FS	Working Group on the Teaching Profession / Francophone Section
WHO	World Health Organisation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Of the 17 conferences analyzed, 14 (82%) took place in Africa and principally involved representatives from African countries; of these, 6 were located in Southern Africa, 4 in East Africa and 4 in West Africa. Only 1 of these was a Heads of State Conference, 8 were Education Sector Conferences, 5 were Regional Education Conferences and 3 were HIV/AIDS Conferences.
2. The average conference duration was 3,6 days; a key objective may be to reduce the length of conferences in future, through better prioritization and focus, in order to attract greater participation and reduce conference 'fatigue'.
3. The term "conference" has been used to refer collectively to any one of the following types of meeting: Seminars; Conferences; Workshops; Meetings; and/or Summits.
4. The analysis did not take into account the very many workshops, seminars and focus groups that have taken place *within* MOEs, for purposes of internal strategic planning, orientation, advocacy and training; a future analysis of this activity commends itself as a potentially rich source of information about practical application and best practice.
5. While the 17 conference reports analyzed contained an immense amount of valuable and often excellent material, this finding is sobered by recognition of how limited their audience and reach has been, an inherent flaw in traditional conference design.
6. In addition, there appear to be minimal links between the learning experiences of each of these conferences, and even a puzzling lack of relationship between conferences *within* sub-sectors and related organizations.
7. There is a self-evident need to carry forward the experience and outputs of each conference into some form of clearinghouse to inform, support and add value to future events; the establishment of such a clearinghouse should be considered.
8. Future conferences should begin by reviewing what has gone before and asking the questions: *Why* have another, and for *what* purpose? They should carefully consider *who* should attend and *why*, and *what* stake these participants have in the outcome. Finally, they should make certain that the anticipated outcomes have practical utility, that they are accessible to ALL interested parties and that their declarations and promises are *deliverable*.
9. While these conferences expressed a consistent demand for 'political commitment' there may be a need to re-examine this concept, given the fact that political blessings and support are in and of themselves no guarantee of action and may indeed excite an unrequited crisis of expectation.
10. In the context of this analysis, **Political Commitment** was defined as the expressed commitment and involvement of those leaders whose support was critical to the progress and empowerment of action, regardless of whether they were international, national, sectoral or institutional in stature.
11. **Level of Action** was deemed to represent the reasonable likelihood of action flowing from the conference concerned and the achievement of at least 50% of its stated objectives.

12. The predictable focus on ‘declarations’ in these conferences was probably due to the need to generate high profile statements of intent, the fact that many of these conferences were hosted and funded by agencies who see such declarations as a proxy for international and country commitment, and the repetitive involvement of the same organizers, agendas and participants.

13. There is an inherent danger in making ever more determined and ambitious conference pronouncements and global declarations if it is patently clear that these cannot, or will not, be realized; instead thought should be given to identifying deliverable outcomes in ‘bite-size’ pieces, within a principled framework, and tailoring declarations to this end.

14. It is necessary to recognize that participative, strategic development planning in conferences of this kind, can really only be done *by those who will be directly affected by its outcomes*; professional assistance may well be required to guide and technically support this process, but should not overwhelm it with subjective external agendas and views.

15. There is a huge opportunity to cascade the impact of a good conference downward and outward *if* the materials are made available for participants to easily replicate and disseminate; this too should constitute a conference objective as should the design of a template for this purpose.

16. HIV/AIDS impact in these conferences was largely demonstrated using qualitative comments and anecdotal information to create understanding and awareness; in a limited number, statistics and hard data were used to great effect to demonstrate impact on education, but these indicators were often limited, reconfirming the overriding need to develop, capture and analyze dependable data, on a regular basis.

17. Conferences generally demonstrated a good understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS; their records indicate that while the severity of the impact is influenced by economic, cultural, religious and social factors within a country, specific impact on the education sector involved demand for, and supply of education services, quality of education and availability of resources.

18. Of the ‘types’ of action plans developed at these conferences, it is disturbing to note that the lowest frequency (1) was accorded to developing research, followed by systemic management tools (3) and dissemination of conference outputs (3).

19. Conference proceedings and their records are ‘text-intensive’ and lack graphic and illustrative representations that would together have more effectively and economically focused the limited attention span of the reader; the development and dissemination of professional and comprehensive conference reports of what are very expensive meetings is critical, and should therefore be elevated in importance to become a key conference objective.

20. The conferences made clear that it is no longer ‘business as usual’ in education; by definition, this implies that **HIV/AIDS is making an already bad sectoral situation worse**; there was growing recognition that mitigation is dependent on better systemic management at all levels of the system and that policy change and prevention initiatives, however good, will be fundamentally inhibited by the comparative dysfunction of the school system and its management at district, regional and national levels.

21. While it is too early to claim a trend in the context of this analysis, conferences appear to be getting better at recognizing their inherent limitations and setting their sights on longer-term, developmentally-sound action, with the incremental delivery of visible short-term results.

2. INTRODUCTION

22. This analysis has been carried out in preparation for a conference of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

23. The purpose of the analysis is to provide a coherent and comprehensive picture of the outcomes of meetings on HIV/AIDS and education in Africa held over the period December 1999 – June 2001. A total of 17¹ such meetings were identified for analytical purposes and have been analyzed in this document. However it is acknowledged that there may have been others about which nothing is widely known. In addition, the scope of work did not take into account the very many workshops, seminars and focus groups which have taken place *within* MOEs over this period, for purposes of internal strategic planning, orientation, advocacy and training, albeit sometimes with the assistance of professional facilitators and other technical assistance.

24. It should also be noted that throughout the document, the term “conference” has been used to refer collectively to any one of the following types of meeting in the documentation that was studied for this analysis:

- Seminars;
- Conferences;
- Workshops;
- Meetings; and/or
- Summits.

¹ In fact 18 are listed in Annex A, but of these identified meetings, the Seminar for Ireland Aid Education Advisors and HIV/AIDS Focal Staff did not meet the criteria and was not included in the analysis.

3. ANALYSIS PROCESS

25. The following process of analysis was used to review and assess the available conference documentation and derive certain preliminary conclusions. The steps included:

- Compilation of a list of conferences that focused on HIV/AIDS in education during the specified period – **see Annex 1 for a detailed list of these conferences;**
- Obtaining copies of all conference documentation, including declarations, proceedings reports, strategies developed as a result of conference discussions/decisions and relevant press releases/web sites prepared subsequent to conferences;
- Study and review of all documentation, and establishment of evaluation criteria;
- Identification of key issues and pertinent areas to be used in drawing up a matrix;
- Conducting the analysis;
- Drafting and editing the analysis results and final report.

26. It should be noted that this analysis was carried out remote from the conference dynamics in most cases, and that individual follow-ups or interviews with conference hosts did not form part of this scope of work.

4. OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENT

“Is there anyone so wise as to learn by the experience of others?”

Voltaire (1694-1778)

27. Several observations flow from this analysis and these are offered in order to assist in discerning any apparent trends in this sequence of conferences, and to determine what might be usefully done in future events of this kind.

Rich Content, Limited Reach

28. The unexpected reaction to the experience of reading 17 conference reports in an extended sitting is the discovery of how much excellent material they contain; but more overwhelming than this is the realization of how limited has been their audience and impact. The fact is that everyone in the world of education, HIV/AIDS and development is busy beyond endurance and probably suffers from some degree of conference fatigue. Recognition that so many issues have been extensively covered in these conferences, and that in some cases groundbreaking work of real import is contained, is at once humbling and frustrating. This said, it is apparent that while conferences – of whatever kind – remain a viable means of communicating, training and motivating, they are somewhat inadequate as they stand.

29. The time has come to reconsider the way in which very large amounts of money are spent and time made available for such interactions, and define a better way of doing things. As will be seen below there are any number of ideas available but the key must be to conceive of each event as adding value to whatever has gone before, as part of a continuing non-duplicatory process; to managing agendas meticulously based on prioritized demand; to identifying achievable and measurable outcomes, captured in professionally written reports that provide a framework for replication and utilization; and ensuring dissemination and access to these reports for all interested parties. It is therefore suggested that thought is given to commissioning the development of a new paradigm for conferences, in order to realize these and other outcomes.

Internal MOE Workshops and Seminars

30. It should be noted that this analysis does not cover the considerable number of internal workshops and seminars held by and within MOEs, principally for planning, training and management purposes. It is acknowledged that many such activities took place over the period and that these often involved external facilitators, experts and resource organizations; moreover it is probable that many of these achieved substantive outcomes and led to the establishment of strategic implementation plans and action not captured or recognized by larger national and regional conferences. It is suggested that a follow-up study to catalogue and capture these experiences and outputs should be considered, given that they are likely to yield a catalogue of best practice and provide deep comparative insights into practical application.

Trends

31. It is difficult to identify any coherent trend in this chronology of 17 conferences: In real terms there appear to be minimal links between the learning experiences of each, and even a puzzling lack of relationship between conferences *within* sub-sectors and related organizations. Notwithstanding competitive pressures between organizers and simple ignorance of what has gone before, the fact is that the geographic spread means that while Africa hosted 14 of the 17 conferences held over the 18 month period, Southern Africa had only 6, and West Africa and East Africa 4 each. Each region had its share of weighty declarations and one higher education meeting, while Southern Africa had a greater preponderance of action-oriented conferences. In short, there is little evidence of an evolving pattern of engagement but certainly a self-evident need to carry forward the experience and outputs of each conference into some form of clearing house to inform and support future events. The establishment of such a clearinghouse, with a comprehensive database and ease of access, should arguably constitute a priority activity for some appropriate agency with the capacity and resources to extend this service. However, such a development should be linked to a change in ‘conference culture’ and an understanding that the *first* step in future planning should be to review what has gone before as well as the material and lessons offered.

Political Endorsement

32. It has long been common cause that no sustainable response can be contemplated without political endorsement at the highest levels; this presumes that within the public sector little is possible without a nod from on high, for example. However there may be a need to re-examine this concept, given the fact that, conversely, ‘political blessings’ are no guarantee of action and may excite an unrequited crisis of expectation. A number of the conferences analyzed demonstrated remarkable levels of political support – in the form of physical presence, personal statements and formal declarations – yet had little prospect of realizing the anticipated, indeed demanded, outcome.

33. In short, it may be necessary to redefine this as the creation of a continuum in which Political leaders create a climate within which political heads and senior officials are empowered to attract and provide the resources required to enable a sustainable response. This would suggest that it is less a ‘blessing’ than a personal commitment on the part of the Political leader concerned to oversee the process to fruition. Given the constituency impact of HIV/AIDS, the sooner it is recognized that this would be politically astute as well as the right to do morally and developmentally, the better.

Pronouncements and Declarations

34. In a related sense there is an apparent danger in making ever more determined and ambitious pronouncements and declarations if it is patently clear that these will not be realized. Several of the conferences analyzed fell into this category and while there can be nothing but admiration for the sentiments expressed, it is quite clear that often the actions demanded are beyond the reach of those charged with implementation. This poses a quandary since there continues to be pressure on political leaders to pronounce and inevitably to promise solutions.

35. There is no simple answer but an approach might be to give considerably more thought to the nature of conference declarations and outcomes, and identify *achievable action* in ‘bite-size’ pieces; in other words, begin with the possible and deliverable and then tailor the declaration to this end. The continuous citing of previous conference declarations that are simply not realizable in an HIV/AIDS era reinforces this point.

36. The effect of issuing statements that few people really believe to be achievable, is to devalue the worth of the meeting and increase conference fatigue; it also places a question mark behind the process of disseminating these outcomes amongst those charged with implementation and may lead to cynicism and dismissal. Global *visions* are vital, but they can only be realized through the achievement of a set of prioritized goals and objectives within a capacitated and sustainable system of response, and the lesson may be to begin *delivering* on more limited targets within what is more correctly a *principled* framework.

Report Quality and Wider Impact

37. It is interesting to note how important the quality of the conference report itself appears to be: A mediocre encounter can be elevated to a position of prominence through excellent reporting while a really vital conference can be condemned to obscurity by poor written output. While it is unfair to point to any given conference analyzed in this report, there are certainly some outstanding and professional reports in comparison to some which are at best adequate.

38. Since the impact of any conference will be limited to those who attended it (dependent on their memories), the quality and extent of its action and output, and to those few who then read the conference report, it will be seen that dissemination of a professional and comprehensive report is critical. Ideally this should be a valuable piece of development literature in its own right, and should not fall prey to incorporating elements of little consequence to any but those who attended; for example the direct capture of all flip chart pages, or introductory speeches that have little value outside the context of the conference.

39. This output of what are very expensive meetings should therefore be elevated in importance, certainly requiring interpretative and writing skills, and understood to be the legacy and measure of the meeting as well as the development of a freestanding development document in its own right. Extensive dissemination of the latter should therefore become a key conference objective.

Increased Conference Utility

40. Certain of the conference reports were little short of excellent in translating their content and proceedings into effective checklists and management response guides. This suggests that if the conference is opening up new fields of practical methodology and implementation, it is incumbent on the report writers to treat it as a 'user manual', to ensure greater utility and dissemination. For example, most conferences beseech their participants to go home and spread the good word of what they have experienced, but do not provide the means for them to do this effectively.

41. There is a huge opportunity to cascade the impact of a good conference downward *if* the materials are available for participants to replicate and disseminate it. This too should constitute a conference objective and there is a case for the design of a generic conference template for this purpose.

42. Second, the conference materials should be carefully considered in the same light: Electronic presentations, for example, should be provided on disk to allow participants to repeat them in their own environments, and even adapt them for use in their own presentations. Sub-sections of the reports which constitute training or information modules in their own right should likewise be structured so that they can be extracted and used to widen the dissemination of the material, and hence its utility. Copyright, so jealously guarded by tradition, should be more rationally understood to be

the protection of intellectual rights through acclaim, accreditation and acknowledgement and *not* a constraint on the material's use for the greater good.

Relevance and Commitment of Participants

43. It is necessary to recognize that participative, strategic development planning, of the kind envisaged in all the conferences under review, can only really be done *by those who will be directly affected by its outcomes*. While professional facilitators, conference organizers and resource people are central to this process, it is not their task to provide the answers, but to guide and distill what must be said and agreed. The point of this comment is that all too often many of those engaged have a limited personal or institutional stake in the outcome and implementation; they can for example fly north or return to a sinecure that insulates them from the uncomfortable process of turning words into action.

44. This is not to say they should not be there or be involved – quite the contrary – but that the comparative weight of responsibility should be recognized and roles and voices assessed accordingly. On this basis it may be possible to develop greater frankness and honesty about what can be done, and how; declarations of intent may indeed be more realistic, if those from outside the field of action opt for an objective and critical role in guiding conference quality and outcomes, rather than exacerbating the problem by imposing their own well-intentioned visions. There is no easy answer to this issue, but a useful start would be to comb invitation lists and establish roles and responsibilities in direct relation to stake in the outcome, versus a professional input in ensuring there is one. If the way forward lies in sustainable, systemic mitigation and management, then those directly charged with these tasks should be supported in playing the leading roles that fall to them, with due acknowledgement of their responsibility.

Future Conference Design

45. It is suggested that this analysis confirms that future conferences should begin by reviewing what has gone before and asking the question: *Why* have another, and for *what* purpose?

46. Second, they should determine *where* in the intervention continuum they fit, *what* is required to make them useful, *what* outcomes should be expected and *how* these will be implemented and monitored. This sequence should be carefully considered to determine whether the envisaged theme is a priority, or whether there are other interventions required ahead of it, to enable its success.

47. Third, they should carefully consider *who* should attend and *why*, and *what* stake these participants have in the outcome; they should consider too whether the proposed conference should not be 'multiplied' into a *series* of meetings at a level closer to the ground, to empower those more directly responsible for action.

48. Finally, they should make certain that the outcome has practical utility, that it is accessible to ALL interested parties and that its declarations and promises are *deliverable*.

5. ANALYSIS RESULTS

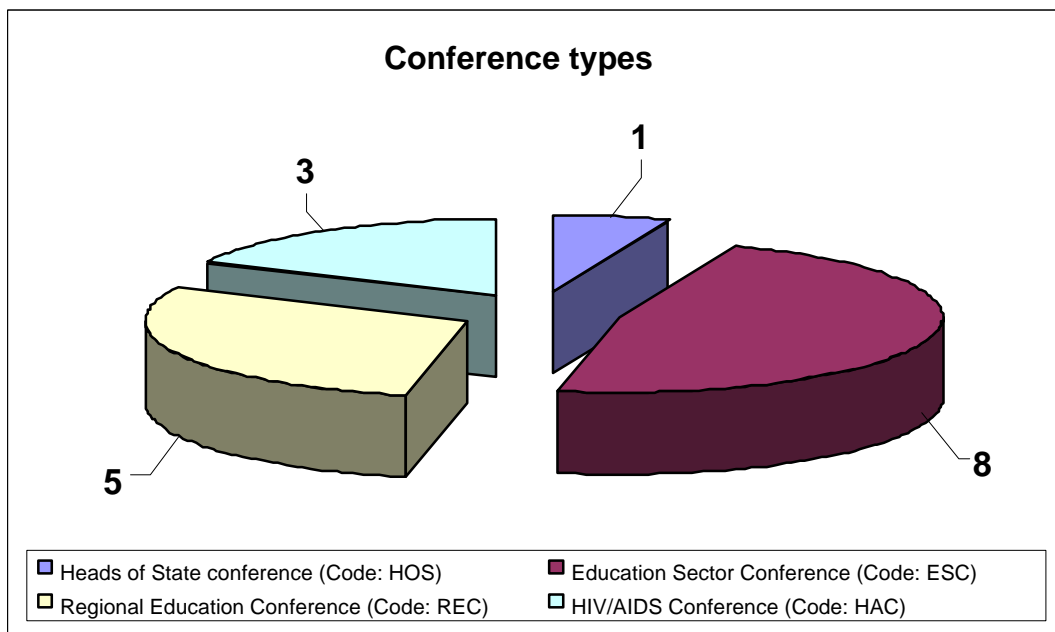
Types of conferences

49. An analysis of the workshop participants and conference discussion points, and categorization of the types of conferences were developed:

Table 1. Conference Type Categorization

Conference type	# of conferences	Typical attendees	Typical conference discussions	Hiv/aids focus
Heads of State conference (Code: HoS)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of government • Donor Agencies • United Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues affecting all countries on a particular continent 	Part of discussions, but not main theme
Education Sector Conference (Code: ESC)	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Sector Specialists • Ministries of Education • Education Institutions (e.g. universities) • Academics and education researchers • Education section representatives of donor/funding agencies • NGOs • Opinion Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future of education • Strategies and policies regarding education 	Part of discussions, could be the main theme or a sub-theme of the conference
Regional Education Conference (Code: REC)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministries of Education within a particular region (e.g. SADC) • Other Ministries • Education section representatives of donor agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on education sector in each country • Development of a regional strategic framework 	HIV/AIDS impact and mitigation strategies is the main theme of the conference
HIV/AIDS Conference (Code: HAC)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV/AIDS specialists • PLWA • Government representatives • Religious Sector • NGOs • Donor Agencies • Opinion Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV/AIDS research • Prevention, counselling and care strategies • Main streaming of HIV/AIDS • HIV/AIDS intervention methodologies 	HIV/AIDS is main focus of workshop

Figure 1. Conference types



All further analyses have been carried out based on this categorization of conferences

Conference Location and Duration

50. Of the 17 conferences analysed, **14 conferences** (82%) took place in Africa and principally involved representatives from African countries. These 14 conferences were geographically located across the African continent as follows:

- 6** in Southern Africa
- 4** in East Africa
- 4** in West Africa

It is assumed that there is a direct association between the levels of HIV/AIDS prevalence and incidence and the choice of conference venues; this would explain the slight predominance of Southern Africa, for example.

51. The average **workshop duration** was **3.6 days**.

Conference Proceedings

52. Conference proceedings followed one or other of the general patterns described in table 2 below. The proceedings of each of the conferences listed in **Annex 1**, has been categorized using the definitions already described. Analysis results are as follows:

Table 2. Conference Proceeding Types and Analysis Results

Pattern	Pattern descriptors	Percentage
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction by host country • Key note speakers from education sector and HIV/AIDS research field • Identification of workshop themes • Working Groups to discuss theme selected • Feedback from Working Group • Agreement on actions/the way forward 	6.25%
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction by host country/organisation • Keynote speaker – to contextualise political commitment and severity of impact • Specialists providing research results in presentation format • Case study presentations by various groups • Group discussions – based on predefined themes • Feedback from groups • Joint closing session – identify outcomes • Closing keynote speaker 	87.5%
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening address • Case studies – presentations by participants • Open Space Technology – no formal group and feedback sessions • Discussion on issues not yet raised • Workshop conclusions and actions 	6.25%

The individual conference proceedings are summarized in **Annex 2**.

Conference Content Summary

Objectives of the Conferences

53. An analysis of the conference objectives per conference type yielded the following results:

Table 3. Objectives for different conference types

CONFERENCE TYPE	OBJECTIVES
Regional Education Conference (REC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared understanding of impact of pandemic on education and economy. • Provide management guidelines and frameworks to assist in dealing with realities of impact • Attain a greater understanding of the scope of HIV/AIDS strategy • Agree guidance on working with/supporting governments • Develop principles for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Area Based Programmes and at sectoral level • Draft guidelines for supporting NGOs • To understand how educators are responding to the impact of HIV/AIDS on education • To understand the current and potential future impact of the disease on all education sub-sectors • To understand how to act in a proactive manner to protect the education system
Education Sector Conference (ESC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a policy that universities could use • Establish a Commonwealth Knowledge Network • Draft a communiqué to be presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting • Formulate a framework for action • Instill hope and positive messages with participants • Develop a Declaration: Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All • Understand the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on education sector • Assess current national strategies and their effectiveness • Discuss and approve the Synthesis Report on HIV/AIDS in education for submission at ADF-II • Exchange experiences on the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic • Identify measures that have been introduced • Identify strategies needed to ensure successful implementation of identified measures • Understand the challenge of knowledge creation and application in the 21st century • Scope the extent of the HIV/AIDS problem • Share experiences of what activities and strategies have proven successful • Agree on a detailed programme that will have real, long-term impact and provide lasting materials
Hiv/Aids Conference (HAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable participants to discuss the serious consequences for children directly and indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS • Understand the effects and impact of HIV on the education sector • Understand how to involve youth in the fight against HIV/AIDS • Finalize the African Consensus and Plan of Action for Leadership to Overcome HIV/AIDS
Heads Of State Conference (HOS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the ADF 2000 consensus on fighting HIV/AIDS

54. For **12 of the 17 conferences** it can be deduced from the information supplied that the workshop objectives were at least partly met. The report information for the other 5 conferences was not conclusive in terms of whether workshop objectives have been achieved.

Understanding of the Effects of HIV/AIDS

55. Some discussions on the effects and impacts of HIV/AIDS took place during various conference plenary sessions. In total, 7 conferences (42%) specifically addressed the issue of HIV/AIDS impact in the education sector. A summary of the types and levels of impact within the education sector has been summarized below:

Table 4. Types and Levels of Impact

Type of impact	Level of impact
Decreased enrolment	Leads to decreased demand in education due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced number of learners • Higher drop out rate This will lead to decline in skills development
Provision of education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces number of skilled personnel able to supply educational services • Reduces efficiency of sector through increased costs of service delivery (increased sick leave payments)
Quality of education	Decreases the amount of time spent on teaching in classroom and learning outside formal classroom time (increased sick that need to be cared for)
Resource availability	Reduces resources available to education sector

56. It is important to note that this understanding of the impact/effect of HIV/AIDS on the education sector was the product of these conferences and that it was communicated/shared at the conferences in different ways. In several, this impact was demonstrated using **qualitative comments** and **anecdotal information** to create understanding and awareness, as opposed to the use of scientific analysis and hard data. In some conferences however, **statistics** and **hard data** were used to great effect to demonstrate impact on education, but these indicators were often limited in scope and availability, reconfirming the overriding need to develop, capture and analyze dependable data, on a regular basis.

57. In summary, the impact on the education sector was understood to be very significant and quite unlike any other impact previously experienced. Please refer to **Annex 3** for a visualisation of the types and levels of impact discussed and described.

Key Challenges Identified / Constraints to Implementation

58. Table 6 overleaf summarises the key constraints identified in six of the conferences; while these may have been discussed in other conferences, there is no information forthcoming to inform this analysis.

Actions Agreed Upon and Status of these Actions

59. Table 7 overleaf summarises the actions agreed upon at each workshop, and lists the status of the actions agreed upon (it should be noted that not all information was available on this matter). Each conference is coded (A to R) according to the complete and chronological list to be found in **Annex 1**.

Indicated Constraints on Implementation of Policy and Mitigation/Prevention Strategies

Table 5. Implementation Constrains

REF	Conference Name	Conference Date	Type	Implementation Constraints
E	Working Group on the Teaching Profession/ Francophone Section	29-31 May 2000	REC	Geographic – location in Africa (e.g. Mauritius protected)
				Economic factors – poverty
				Cultural factors – use of condoms, etc.
				Political factors – e.g. refugees from other countries, lack of control
G	Regional HIV/AIDS Seminar for Ireland Aid	6-8 September 2000	REC	Lack of government resources for mainstreaming
				Lack of understanding of need for multi sectoral approach
				Lack of consistency between local and national policies
				Lack of NGO co-ordination with government
H	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	15-17 Sept 2000	ESC	Lack of effective leadership commitment
				Need for openness and recognition of severity of disease
				Creating a real awareness
				Need to examine a number of untouchable cultural taboos
J	Rights of the Child and HIV/AIDS	22-24 October 2000	HAC	National legislation is not in place
				Traditional healers are not sufficiently engaged
				Political leadership not yet galvanized
				Stigma associated with the disease is not being dealt with
L	African Development Forum 2000: AIDS: The Greatest Leadership Challenge	3-7 December 2000	HAC	Lack of effective leadership commitment
				Need for openness and recognition of severity of disease
				Creating a real awareness
				Need to examine a number of untouchable cultural taboos
P	HIV/AIDS: Towards a strategy for Commonwealth Universities	11-13 March 2001	ESC	Lack of commitment, and the pressing nature of other problems
				Fear and denial, and reluctance to deal with prevention measures that encroach on students' time
				Religious, cultural and moral considerations
				No co-ordination of response, and lack of financial resources

Agreed Actions and Levels of Achievement

Table 6. Actions Agreed Upon at Various Conferences

Ref	Conference	Type	Declaration prepared	Strategy after conference?	Action agreed to	Achievement status
A	The Social, Demographic and Development Impact of HIV/AIDS: Commonwealth Universities Respond	ESC	N	Y Draft policy for Universities developed	Finalisation of policy	Unknown
					Present communiqué to Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting	Completed
B	Third Biennial DFID Education Advisors' Conference	ESC	N	N	HIV/AIDS to be included in Dakar Declaration: Framework for Action	Completed
C	HIV/AIDS in Education Workshop	REC	N	N	Initiation of a network of professionals in the field	In Progress
					Demand for regional database identified	Unknown
					Agreement on the need for the development of an HIV/AIDS manual for district level managers	In Progress
					Development of a toolkit as a framework within which to define management responses to the impacts	In Progress
D	World Education Forum	ESC	Y (The Dakar Framework for Action)	N	Implementation of Dakar Framework Agreement	Unknown
E	Working Group on the Teaching Profession / Francophone Section	REC	N	Y Each country developed an action plan	Each member country to prepare an action plan	Unknown
G	Regional HIV/AIDS Seminar for Ireland Aid	REC	N	Y Policy developed ("Modalities for Effecting Support")	Ireland Aid to develop HIV/AIDS policy	Completed
H	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	ESC	N	Y Report prepared for ADF-II, entitled "HIV/AIDS and Education in Eastern and Southern Africa: the Leadership Challenge and the Way Forward"	Finalisation of report and presentation of report at ADF-II	Completed
I	IIEP Workshop on the impact of HIV/AIDS on education	ESC	N	N	Development of an HIV/Aids clearing house for information sharing	Unknown
					Conducting a study on the impact of HIV/AIDS and education and the response in 5 African countries	Unknown
					Development of training materials to develop regional networks	Unknown
K	14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers	ESC	Y (Halifax Statement from Ministers of Education)	N	Preparation of Halifax Declaration	Completed
L	African Development Forum 2000: AIDS: The Greatest Leadership Challenge	HAC	N	Y African Consensus and Plan of Action: Leadership to Overcome HIV/AIDS	Finalisation of the African Consensus and Plan of Action: Leadership to Overcome HIV/AIDS	Completed

Ref	Conference	Type	Declaration prepared	Strategy after conference?	Action agreed to	Feedback on achievement?
M	10th General Conference of the Association of African Universities- theme: "African Universities and the Challenge of Knowledge Creation and Application in the New Century"	ESC	Y (AAU Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium	Y Development of Core Programme of Activities for 2001 – 2004 and addition of a new Programme on HIV/AIDS	New Core Programme of Activities Agreed upon	Unknown
					Declaration made by AAU members	Completed
N	SADC Education and Training Conference	REC	N	Y Report on Country Preparedness prepared	Development of a report on the prepared ness of SADC countries in dealing with HIV/AIDS	Completed
P	HIV/AIDS: Towards a strategy for Commonwealth Universities	ESC	N	Yes workshop document developed	Conducting of sensitization workshops for vice-chancellors	Unknown
Q	Elmina Conference on HIV/AIDS and Education: A Call for Action	REC	N	N	The conference defined how prevention and controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS should be handled	In progress in countries
					The conference recommended how the traumatic impact of HIV/AIDS can be reduced	In progress in countries
					The conference identified the need to improve management capacity and procedures	In progress in countries
					Regional linkages through the creation of regional frameworks and opportunities for working co-operatively be further explored	Unknown
R	Special Summit to endorse ADF 2000 consensus on fighting HIV/AIDS	HOS	Y (Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other related Infectious diseases)	N	Leadership at national, regional and continental levels to mobilize society	Unknown
					Improvement of Information, Education and Communication	Unknown
					Resource Mobilization	Unknown
					Partnership development	Unknown
					Presentation of the spread of HIV/AIDS TB and ORID	Unknown

6. CONCLUSIONS

Conference Logistics

60. It is a positive sign that 82% of conferences held took place in Africa. This would have had the effect of creating 'ownership' of the problem and creating an important focus on contextual issues specific to Africa, and indeed to the local regions within which these conferences took place. This would have also assisted in facilitating the interrogation and transfer of knowledge and skills, and the involvement of Africans in discussing, planning and designing their collective future.

61. The average workshop duration of 3,6 days should not be seen as an indication of optimal duration, but simply the average amount of time available to the events and their planners. While future conferences may view this as some sort of benchmark, its significance is probably limited to an indication of the number of issues that can be discussed over that conference period. This may assist in fine-tuning workshop planning, maximizing effectiveness and minimizing participant fatigue, but it should be recognized that the key constraint is the availability of the right type and level of participant for the period in question. An objective should be to reduce the length of conferences in the future, based on prioritization and focus.

Conference Objectives and Outcomes

62. Conference objectives were extremely diverse, but few were seen to be achieved. In some cases, workshop objectives were either not defined, or not clearly stated in the documentation available for analysis. This is hardly surprising insofar as few conferences of any kind ever achieve their objectives in full, a problem compounded by the sheer enormity and complexity of the HIV/AIDS challenge. Areas that have **not** been extensively covered in the conferences are:

- Determining success factors – how success can be measured and monitored over time;
- Determining follow-up action and allocating responsibility for this within an agreed time frame;
- Articulation of factors influencing best practice and useful case studies;
- Identifying and understanding the fact that HIV/AIDS in education is a systemic management problem within which prevention, life skills etc must be located;
- Understanding that HIV/AIDS will make worse existing systemic problems;
- Recognizing that existing levels of system dysfunction will reduce the prospects for sustainable behaviour change irrespective of the investment in prevention measures;
- Identifying the importance of data and how this may be captured or supplemented.

HIV/AIDS: Understanding the Impact/Effects of the Disease

63. The conferences demonstrated a good deal of understanding about the impact of HIV/AIDS, in general terms. The conference records indicate that although the severity of the impact is influenced by economic, cultural, religious and social factors within a country, the areas of the education sector that are identified as being affected by HIV/AIDS, are:

- Demand for education services

- Supply of education services
- Quality of Education
- Availability of Resources

64. It is clear throughout the conference material that whether the impact is understood on a qualitative basis or a quantitative basis, the scarcity of hard data required to validate these assumptions remained a key problem. As a consequence, use of anecdotal insights and subjective assessments were common, as was the lack of issue-related dialogue.

Assessment of Actions Agreed Upon at Conferences

65. The focus on ‘declarations’ in these conferences was predictable, and is due at least in part to the need to establish and demonstrate visible Political support in the form of high profile statements of intent; indeed, there is a demonstrable international demand for such declarations. It is also a means of creating a ‘marketable’ promise of action and transferring responsibility for its implementation, on the basis that someone else will be charged to do something about it, once the media response has subsided. The focus could also be due in part to the fact that many of these HIV/AIDS conference initiatives were hosted and funded by international agencies, who have all too often in the past relied on such declarations as a proxy for country commitment, and a way of asserting that the conference objective had been achieved. It may also be substantively influenced by the repetitive involvement of the same organizers, agendas and participants, suggesting that it is high time the existing framework of ‘cultural’ reference be reviewed and perhaps replaced. This should challenge the prevailing sense of ‘mission accomplishment’ borne of simply mounting a conference and place the focus on the measurable implementation of plans capable of moving good intentions off the drawing board and into action.

66. Some very comprehensive and visionary declarations were made in this sequence of conferences and had much to offer, including measurable commitment to action and well thought through schedules of implementable activity. Amongst these more implementation-related successes was, for example, the ADF 2000 Conference, at which a practical plan of action was developed and accepted, and later endorsed at a linked summit in Abuja in April 2001.

67. Some parts of the university sector, particularly the Association of Commonwealth Universities, also took some excellent steps and developed frameworks to directly address the implementation constraints through a series of sensitization workshops, for example. This sector, one of the first to ‘politically’ commit to the fight against HIV/AIDS, appeared to make good progress in converting action plans into measurable and implementable action, and in fact pioneered approaches that have relevance across the education spectrum. Although it is too early to claim a trend, these and other palpable successes in this chronology suggest that conferences are indeed getting better at recognizing their inherent limitations and setting their sights on some long term, developmentally-sound action. As indicated earlier, there is a rich vein to be found in most of these conferences and even value in those which fell short of discernable excellence; the secret of improving future outcomes will lie in translating ideas and intent into action, through the creation of access to their content and lessons, and the consequent mobilization of those required to deliver.

Level and Effectiveness of Commitment to HIV/AIDS Solutions

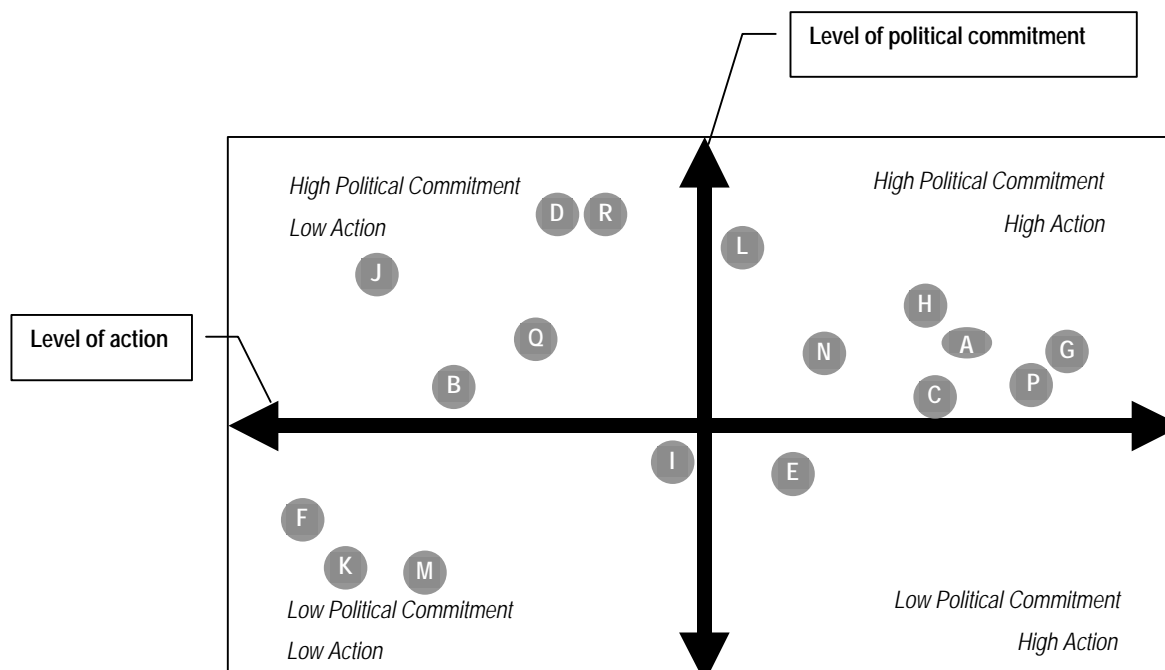
68. Involving Ministers of Education and Heads of Government to publicly commit to fighting ‘the new war’ ensured visible and demonstrable Political commitment to the process. Declarations to this effect were made at 5 of the 17 conferences (29%).

69. This indicates much needed visible Political commitment to the process, but still required some means of translating promise into action. This perceived gap between political commitment and operationalization/implementation, may be due amongst other things to:

- A lack of human and material resources;
- A lack of systemic capacity and structure in which action and prioritized implementation can be mounted and monitored;
- A lack of permanently dedicated personnel within such structures; instead there are ‘part time people handling a full time crisis’, often in committee environments, with a growing feeling of despondency – “how can I cope with this as well as my regular job and the many other crises and development agendas of my department?”
- No ‘marketing’ of regional frameworks and support structures and resources to various line function departments;
- No operational presence at conferences to translate commitment into action;
- The continuing lack of hard and regularly collected data and indicators to inform and guide prioritized response and quantify results sufficiently to provide a ‘reality check’.

70. The different types of commitments demonstrated at the 17 conferences that were analysed, can be visualized as follows:

Figure 2: Level of political commitment and level of action



The criteria used in this Scatter Diagram are self-evidently subjective, but are based on the following principles:

71. **Political Commitment** was defined as the clear, public and unequivocal commitment of leaders at the **Political level** as well as sectoral/institutional heads (who might also be described as **political leaders**) to create the ‘political space’ and resources required, for appropriately qualified individuals and institutions from across the societal spectrum to respond to and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on education. This also implies the commitment of leaders at *every level* of a given sector or institution, and their preparedness to work together for the greater public good and integrate their responses into *every* aspect of their public, professional and social responsibilities. Conversely, by way of a process check, the question is whether the necessary international, regional, national and local response to HIV/AIDS will be inhibited in any way as a result of the *lack* of such support.

72. In the context of this analysis, **Political Commitment** was therefore deemed to be the expressed commitment and support of those leaders (**Political and political**) whose support was critical to progress and the empowerment of action, regardless of whether they were international, national, sectoral or institutional in stature.

73. **Level of Action** was defined as the presence or likely development of a plan of action, flowing from the conference proceedings and linked to its stated objective(s), which looked likely to have a fair chance of successful implementation within the indicated time lines. Prospects for success self-evidently necessitate the identification of a mechanism, agency or other systemic means of carrying the planned action forward, and some reasonable – if subjective – sense that this will have the desired capacity to achieve the objective. Conversely, by way of a process check, the question is whether the identified action plan is likely to fail or simply not be initiated as a result of the *lack* of some practical and sustainable systemic means to implement it, or the required resources to effect its implementation.

74. Thus, in the context of this analysis, **Level of Action** was deemed to represent the reasonable likelihood of action flowing from the conference and the achievement of at least 50% of its stated objectives.

75. It should be immediately stated that the application of these criteria is subject to interpretation of conference reports that vary greatly in style, quality and content; for this reason, the location of these conferences on the Scatter Diagram above should be seen merely as a general indication rather than a hard and fast bracketing based on absolute and constant indicators.

Types of Action

76. An analysis of the ‘types’ of action plans developed at these conferences was undertaken to determine the ‘nature’ of the action agreed upon and its area of focus. It is disturbing to note that the lowest frequency (1) was accorded to developing research, followed by systemic management tools (3) and dissemination of conference outputs (3), confirming a number of concerns already noted. The following criteria were used in placing conferences on the histogram overleaf:

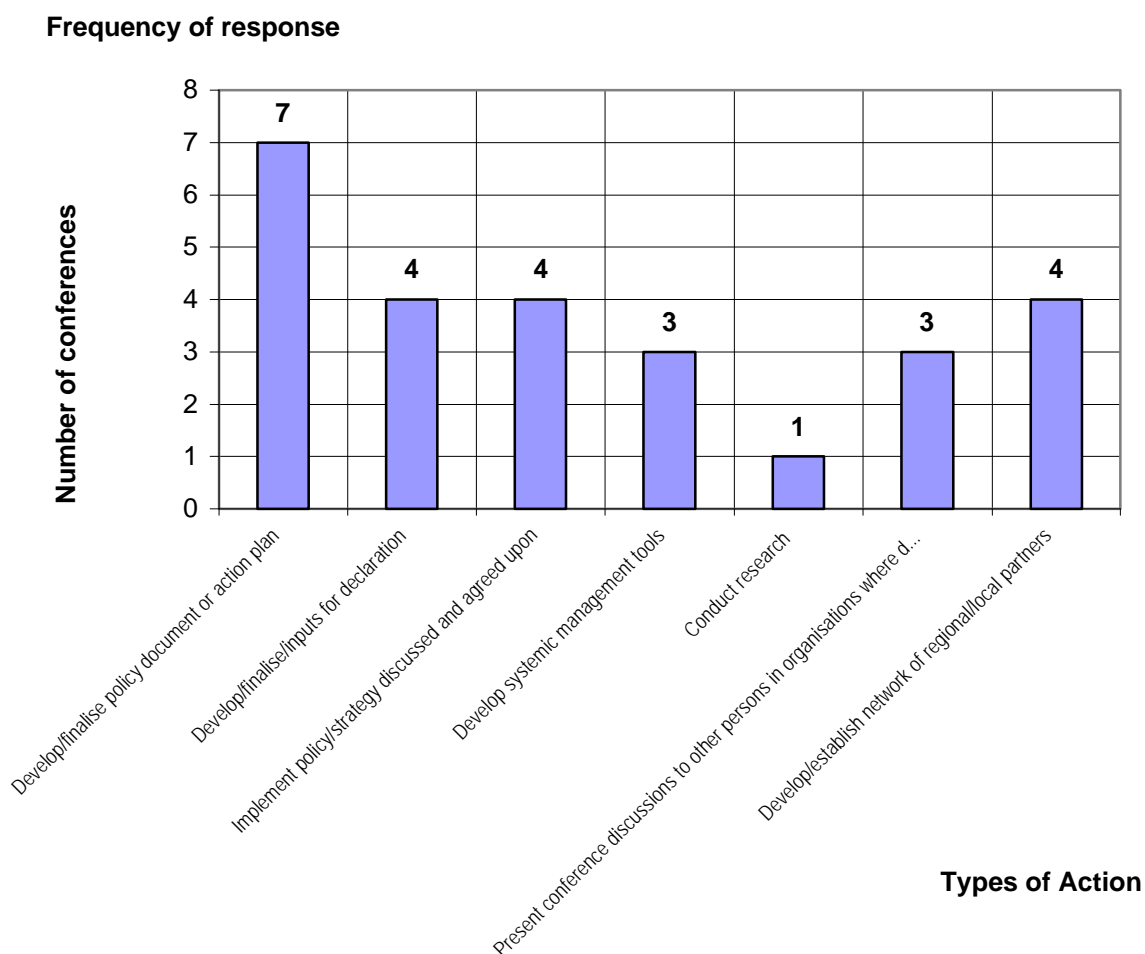
- Assessing the types of actions agreed upon for all conferences where the conference reports listed specific actions, per the analysis summary provided in Table 7 of this document; and
- Locating the type of action agreed upon in one of the defined categories.

The histogram below provides an insight into frequency of the types of action agreed upon at conferences where action plans were developed.

Table 7. Types of action agreed upon

Type of action	Conference reference	Frequency of response
Develop/finalize policy document or action plan	A, E, G, H, L, N, R	7
Develop/finalize/inputs for declaration	B, D, K, M	4
Implement policy/strategy discussed and agreed upon	G, M, P, R	4
Develop systemic management tools	C, I, Q	3
Conduct research	I	1
Present/disseminate conference discussions to other persons in participant organizations	A, Q, R	3
Develop/establish network of regional/local partners	C, I, Q, R	4

Figure 3. Frequency of Response



Lack of Visual Materials

77. Whilst there was a good conceptual understanding of, and consensus on, the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector, the lack of reliable data, analysis and value-added information, together with relevant case studies and best practice insights, was problematic for most of the conferences. Yet the foregoing analysis of **Types of Action** agreed suggests participants did not see this for the problem it patently is, nor did they appear to identify the need for sustainable and systemic approaches to mitigation in many cases.

78. While it is not known how much use was made of visual aids and electronic presentation techniques at the conferences themselves, the conference proceedings and subsequent records are ‘text-intensive’ and lack graphic and illustrative representations (as well as maps and other models and tools) that would together have more effectively and economically focused the limited attention span of the reader. Certain examples of such graphic illustrations are contained in this report, for example, although even here there is text-dominance.

79. What is clear is that any strategy to minimize the amount of time required from busy individuals and leaders, and provide summarized information that is easy to digest and respond to, is likely to shorten conference time and improve the quality of outcomes.

80. Such graphics (**Annex 3, figure 2** or **figure 3** are cases in point) could be circulated prior to conferences, as part of preparatory reading sets for example, to ensure the rapid grasp of a common point of departure and early focus on strategically important areas. In reference to the conference proceedings however, it should be acknowledged that:

- The impact of HIV/AIDS on education appears to be ‘broadly’ understood although there is clearly limited perception of its systemic implications; secondly, that the nature of its impact is broadly generic to Sub-Saharan Africa, although the severity or level of impact differs from country to country, and within countries, from area to area, depending on circumstances.
- The implication is that conferences should now move beyond ‘understanding’ the and debating declarations and instead begin to focus on:
 - Advocating HIV/AIDS policies/strategies that have been successfully developed
 - Reaching agreement on action plans and initiating measurable implementation
 - Developing/utilizing reliable data and value-added management information
 - Assessing the mitigation impact of actions that have already been undertaken

Critical Success Factors Identified

81. The following critical success factors were identified in these conferences, and are listed to help ensure that future conferences are more successful:

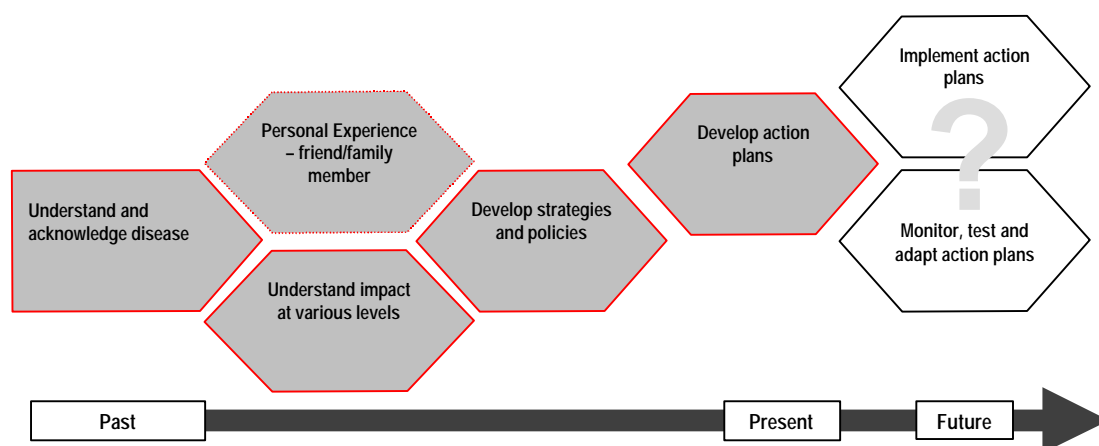
- (a) The need for political will and determination clearly linked to an achievable plan for visible action within a given time frame.
- (b) The need and importance of identifying ‘bite size’ activities that can be quickly and visibly implemented, particularly those options requiring little or no budget commitment (ie ‘zero budget’ options); the value of short-term gains and small successes should not be discounted in building momentum and developing a sense of achievement;
- (c) The need to identify key data sets and indicators for benchmarking, measurement, analysis and monitoring, and ensure the *systemic* means of their *regular* capture and provision to inform proceedings and country strategies with supportable scientific evidence;
- (d) The need to establish a process to involve conference participants in the direction, prioritization and guidance of the agenda, so as to ensure shared ‘ownership’ of the meeting and its outcomes. Failure to do so will lead to detachment, disinterest and even cynicism, particularly where conference declarations are obviously distant from implementation realities and constraints, and may exacerbate ‘conference fatigue’ syndrome;
- (e) The need to ‘humanize’ the HIV/AIDS pandemic by acknowledging and involving PLWAs, young people and others in presenting their views and needs as key stakeholders, in tackling the disease;
- (f) The need to acknowledge the sense of ‘fatalism’ and denial that exists within many MOEs at various levels, and adopt strategies and specific interventions to systemically convert this outlook from negative to positive by demonstrating success and building momentum within the context of a ‘we will win’ attitude;
- (g) The need to define mechanisms to ensure the feedback and dissemination of conference information and outcomes to MOEs and ALL other partner organizations, agencies and interested stakeholders after the event;
- (h) The need to also define and institute monitoring and evaluation procedures, both of the conference proceedings themselves and of the programs and outcomes that are developed and initiated, and identify the means to feed back this information to the participants and other stakeholders involved;
- (i) The need to improve focus on key points and conclusions through better presentations, conference reports and outcomes, and ensure the inclusion of succinct Executive Summaries, prioritized key points, best practice lessons learnt and better graphic and tabular information – based on hard data;
- (j) The need to identify the barriers/constraints – at all levels – to implementation and develop systematic means and mechanisms to DIRECTLY target and overcome these;
- (k) The need to ensure **Political Commitment** from both political leaders and sectoral heads, as well as senior operational staff, to create the ‘space’ for strategic decision making and planning, and that these plans are effectively and accountably implemented (**Operational Output**);

- (l) The need to recognize the availability of skills and specialist resources and best practice experience, and apply these to the regional benchmarking of impact on the sector to determine the current, *real* position in respect of future declarations, policy and planning, and the factors that influence these;
- (m) The need to facilitate and promote regional learning/sharing at all levels – between countries, between departments within countries, between public, civil and private sector partners, and between funding agencies. Conferences are a means to this end and therefore have a responsibility to address these issues in their objectives.

7. CLOSING REMARKS

82. It has been acknowledged in various of these conferences that ‘HIV/AIDS means having to do things differently’ and that it is no longer ‘business as usual’ in education management. By definition, this means that **HIV/AIDS is making an already bad sectoral situation worse**. Thus, the real issue is recognizing that that this is not simply a health issue but an education management challenge of the highest order; consequently, it must be recognized that mitigation is dependent in the first instance on better systemic management at all levels of the system. Policy change and prevention initiatives, however good, will be fundamentally inhibited by the comparative dysfunction of the school system and its management at district, regional and national levels. For all these reasons, it is vital that conferences begin in future by examining the prevailing structural and systemic climate within which they hope to locate declarations, policy and action, and become grounded in the reality of the situation in the classroom and school. To do otherwise is to betray the trust of those for whom the outcomes of such conferences are intended, and would be a missed opportunity of unparalleled magnitude.

83. The organic nature of the intervention strategy/methodology that has however evolved over these workshops and outside them, has developed a natural progression as understanding about HIV/ AIDS and its impact increases. This may be represented graphically as follows:



84. This implies a natural progression from acknowledgement and understanding of the disease to understanding system impact and defining response modalities and mechanisms. This may represent a generous view of how far these conferences have come over the period of review, but it is at least useful to consider locating the progression of conferences in this context, and to apply it to future planning.

85. It simply suggests that in order to move all the stakeholders involved to the next step along this progression (ie implementing and assessing actions plans), it is necessary to acknowledge the extent and value of the often unrecognized country work done so far, and then move all concerned from a detached strategic vision to prioritized goal and objective setting and the translation of these into practical, time-bound implementation plans within an information sharing and networking environment.

Annex 1

List of conferences

Table 8. List of Education Conferences

Conference/Strategy Name	Conference Paper/Report Name	Dates	Duration	Venue	Hosted / convened by	Funded by	
Conference reports							
A	The Social, Demographic and Development Impact of HIV/AIDS: Commonwealth Universities Respond	Report on the proceedings of a Symposium hosted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the University of Natal	8-9 November 1999	2 days	Durban, South Africa	ACU, UND	ACU, UND
B	DFID Africa Education Conference	HIV/AIDS: The Challenge to Education	4-6 April 2000	3 days	Glenburn Lodge, Pretoria, SA	DFID	DFID
C	HIV/AIDS in Education Workshop	HIV/AIDS in Education Workshop	11-12 April 2000	2 days	Durban, South Africa	HEARD	USAID, DFID
D	World Education Forum	Information from web obtained, no formal proceedings report	26-28 April 2000	3 days	Dakar, Senegal	WEF	??
E	Working Group on the Teaching Profession / Francophone Section	Report of the Seminar on HIV/AIDS and the Teaching Forces in Francophone Africa	29-31 May 2000	3 days	Lome., Togo	MoE, Togo	WGTP/FS
F	XIII International AIDS Conference	Report on Session D01: HIV Prevention in Educational Institutions	9-14 July 2000	6 days	ICC, Durban, South Africa	UNAIDS	UNAIDS
G	Regional HIV/AIDS Seminar for Ireland Aid	Seminar Report	6-8 September 2000	3 days	Jinja, Uganda	Ireland Aid	Irish Government
H	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	Draft Report from Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Impact of HIV/AIDS On the Education Sector in Africa" Sub Regional Outlook and Best Practices	15-17 Sept 2000	3 days	Lake Victoria, Uganda	UNECA, and Ugandan Government	UNAIDS, UNDP
I	IIEP Workshop on the impact of HIV/AIDS on education	Summary Note of Workshop	27-29 September 2000	3 days	Paris, France	IIEP	UNESCO
J	Rights of the Child and HIV/AIDS	Report on workshop	22-24 October 2000	3 days	Harare, Zimbabwe	SADC	EU
K	14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers	Commonwealth News Release	26-30 November 2000	5 days	Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	Commonwealth Secretariat	?
L	African Development Forum 2000: AIDS: The Greatest Leadership Challenge	African Consensus and Plan of Action: Leadership at all levels to overcome HIV/AIDS	3-7 December 2000	5 days	Addis Ababa	UNECA	UNECA
M	10th General Conference of the Association of African Universities	Press Release: The Association of African Universities holds its 10th General Conference	5-9 February 2001	5 days	Nairobi, Kenya	AAU	AAU
N	SADC Education and Training Conference	Report on Country Preparedness in dealing with HIV/AIDS in the Education and Training Sector	26-28 February 2001	1 day	Pretoria, South Africa	SADC	??
O	Seminar for Ireland Aid Education Advisors and HIV/AIDS Focal Staff	Report on Seminar topic: HIV/AIDS and education	26-28 February 2001	3 days	Dublin, Ireland	Ireland Aid	Irish Government
P	HIV/AIDS: Towards a strategy for Commonwealth Universities	Workshop proceedings report	11-13 March 2001	3 days	Geneva, Switzerland	WHO/UNAIDS	
Q	Elmina Conference on HIV/AIDS and Education: A call for Action	Workshop Recommendations Report	19-23 March 2001	5 days	Elmina, Ghana	UNESCO	??
R	Special Summit to endorse ADF 2000 consensus on fighting HIV/AIDS	Web based workshop summary	26-27 April 2001	2 days	Abuja, Nigeria	ADF	??

HIV/AIDS impact on education in Africa
An analysis of conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings and summits

Conference/Strategy Name	Conference Paper/Report Name	Dates	Duration	Venue	Hosted / convened by	Funded by
Declarations						
14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers	Halifax Statement from Ministers of Education	26-30 November 2000	5 days	Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	Commonwealth Secretariat	?
Special Summit to endorse ADF 2000 consensus on fighting HIV/AIDS	Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other related Infectious diseases	26-27 April 2001	2 days	Abuja, Nigeria	ADF	??
World Education Forum	The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All – Meeting our Collective Commitments	26-28 April 2000	3 days	Dakar, Senegal	WEF	??
10th General Conference of the Association of African Universities	AAU Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium	5-9 February 2001	5 days	Nairobi, Kenya	AAU	AAU
XIII International AIDS Conference	The Durban Declaration	9-14 July 2000	6 days	ICC, Durban, South Africa	UNAIDS	UNAIDS
Strategies						
Action Programme on HIV/AIDS in Education and Training in the Southern African Development Community	No conference – strategy paper	1-Jan-00	not applicable	not applicable	SADC	SADC
SAUVCA HIV/AIDS Publication	Strategy completed after conference on 26 Oct 2000 – strategy paper	26-Oct-00	not applicable	not applicable	SAUVCA	?
SADC HIV/Aids in Education Strategic Framework	No conference – strategy paper	1-Apr-01	not applicable	not applicable	SADC	SADC
Irish Government: Department of Foreign Affairs	Modalities for Effecting Support: Ireland Aid's HIV/AIDS Strategy	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable		

Annex 2. Conference summaries²

Report A

The Social, Demographic and Development impact of HIV/AIDS: Commonwealth Universities Respond (8-9 November 1999, Durban, South Africa)

86. This thorough and well-structured 31-page Symposium Report details the impact of HIV/AIDS on the Commonwealth university sector, and goes further than might be expected in two days of engagement. Two of its three objectives were met: A communiqué was drafted for, and issued by, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting within three days of the Symposium, and a comprehensive 36-point HIV/AIDS Policy for Staff and Students at Commonwealth Universities was drafted and offered to ACU members as a framework for consideration, adaptation, adoption or rejection. A third objective, the establishment of a Commonwealth Knowledge Network apparently proceeds apace.

87. The Symposium was effective in unpacking many complex issues, including the need to mainstream response, better understand the nature of the challenge, and support strong leadership to drive research, improved institutional management and prevention strategies. Care, counselling, support and training as well as ethical issues and the fundamental re-thinking of resource allocation were also noted. The Report provides many thought-provoking insights: The fact that treatment cost per patient per year equates to the costs of educating ten primary school children per year, and that the term 'immiserisation' has been coined to describe the process by which peoples' lives are made miserable by poverty, disease and disadvantage.

88. While the Symposium drew on contextual inputs from Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, the Report does not provide much insight into these. Apart from a few well-known statistics, it is also thin on hard data regarding HIV/AIDS, a reflection of the paucity of such data at all levels of the education system; what is more problematic is that the Symposium failed to flag the university sector's potential role in meeting this strategic need. The Symposium identified the sector's links with the communities 'from which they draw their staff and students', but failed to locate universities within a wider definition of the education sector or recognize their direct dependence on the basic education feeder system.

89. On balance, the Symposium Report ranks as a very useful and perhaps groundbreaking resource document for the university sector, and its draft Policy document provides a substantive checklist for more detailed institutional response and regulatory framework formulation.

(Note: Although technically falling outside the period of review, this Symposium warrants mention and inclusion, not least because of its establishment of a principled approach within the tertiary sector; this is particularly relevant given other subsequent Commonwealth and university-sector workshops which spare little passing thought to the subject).

² Note: Report O (Seminar for Ireland Aid Education Advisors and HIV/AIDS Focal Staff) is listed in Annexure A, but has not been summarized or otherwise analyzed elsewhere given its limited relevance in the context of this report

Report B

DFID Africa Education Conference (4-6 April 2000, Pretoria, South Africa)

90. 41 education advisors, consultants, MOE officials, NGO and development agency personnel attended this third biennial DFID Education Advisors' Conference. The focus was squarely on HIV/AIDS impact on the education sector, and process rather than product; however the Conference Report claims success in generating a set of action plans for each of the four main DFID Africa regions, to be implemented in association with local partners.

91. The Conference theme was very clearly prevention related, with contextual inputs from Uganda, Zambia, Botswana, Kenya, and Nigeria. Each of these provided some key statistical indicators, often anecdotal, which together confirmed reduction in life expectancy, population movement, high mother-to-child transmission rates, reducing enrolments and stocks of teachers and managers, increasing orphan numbers and gender disparity, early and high risk sexual behaviour and limited evidence of behaviour change.

92. There was some emphasis on management and planning in one of four focal groups (described as an action plan), with the suggestion that future donor support should be conditional on MOE development and adoption of HIV/AIDS strategies. It suggested that technical support and capacity building be provided by the donor community, where required, with the support and assistance of NGOs. The Conference also considered who constituted 'agents of change' and stakeholders in mitigation, assessed availability of resources and examined issues of support and care structures and systems with particular emphasis on orphans. The use of radio as a key communication and behaviour change medium was analyzed and it was recommended that other countries in Africa should set up community radio stations to bring HIV/AIDS messages home to communities.

93. The Conference Report gives the impression of a loosely structured and largely informational if passionate meeting to share and learn. While it was clearly successful in awareness raising, and indeed contained many very valuable inputs, the lack of articulated objectives, linked outcomes and structure in the Report make for somewhat fragmented comprehension and reading. As a consequence, its value to the wider development community is diminished by the difficulty of disseminating the lessons of this Conference. The four action plans mentioned early in the Report are perhaps more accurately focal points of discussion and interrogation and cannot be seen as objective-led plans emanating from this Conference.

Report C

HEARD HIV/AIDS in Education Workshop (4-6 April 2000, Durban, South Africa)

94. This two-day regional Workshop was attended by 60 representatives of Southern and West African government education and finance ministries, development and donor agency personnel and other researchers and academics; these included officials from Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and representatives from USAID, DFID, British Council, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNAIDS, CIFCD and HIID.

95. The main objective of the Workshop was to develop a shared understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS on education and the economy, and begin to provide management guidelines and frameworks to assist in management and planning. The Workshop focused on four key themes: Understanding current levels of impact in each sector of government; reviewing likely future impact; examining options for mitigation; and identifying key indicators for benchmarking and monitoring. The participants used a HEARD-developed Toolkit for *Education Managers* to assist in considering these themes and were also introduced to the use of GIS and spatial analysis in identifying patterns of impact and potential high-risk areas.

96. The Workshop also examined prospects for a Resource Manual or Kit to assist local level education managers, a project which was already supported by DFID.

97. The well-structured Workshop Report claims four main outcomes: First, the initiation of a cooperative network of officials and development partners, in which a common understanding of the problem between education and finance ministry officials was established. Second, the identification of demand for a regional database; third, agreement on the need for the development of an education managers' Resource Manual or Kit; and fourth, the provision of a Toolkit to assist in management and monitoring. In addition, the Report notes very great interest in the further development of GIS and spatial analysis in establishing trends and sectoral associations in HIV/AIDS impact; usefully, it also lists other initiatives then underway in the region.

98. It would appear that the Workshop realized its stated objectives, and additionally introduced a number of new innovations and tools to the response effort. It also benefited from the seniority and standing of the officials opening and closing the Workshop, but the Report recognizes that participants were still – in spite of their comparative seniority – dependent on the support and 'buy-in' of their superiors on their return. Many participants noted that 'money' was not the limiting factor in their sectoral response, but 'political will and determination at the highest levels'. The Report notes the need for longer periods of workshop interaction and the need for 'mobile task groups' to go in country, and vertically integrate this kind of intervention *within* MOEs, from the highest levels down. On balance, this well-reported Workshop appears to have opened the way to a more practical, hands-on approach to mitigation and management response and focused exclusively on systemic management intervention rather than prevention.

Report D

The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All – Meeting Our Collective Commitments (26-28 April 2000, Dakar, Senegal)

99. More than 1 100 participants from 164 countries met for this World Education Forum, and ranged from teachers to prime ministers, academics to policy makers, and political activists to heads of international organizations. According to the Report, these participants shared a common vision of a world in which everyone would have the basic literacy and numeracy skills required to function as a citizen, worker, family member and fulfilled individual in the emerging global society. The purpose of the 3-day Forum was to agree on a strategy to turn this vision of ‘education for all’ (EFA) into a reality.

100. This meeting followed the 1990 World Conference in Jomtien, which adopted a ‘World Declaration’ on EFA, affirmed education as a fundamental human right and urged international support for the basic learning needs of all. Importantly, it approved a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, spelling out targets and strategies for attaining this goal by 2000. The Forum in Dakar was convened to assess progress towards EFA since Jomtien, to analyze where and why the goal had remained elusive and to renew commitments to turn this goal into reality. Participants presented data and analyses, debated strategies and listened to input from across the spectrum, before adopting the *Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments*. This Framework reaffirms the goal of EFA as laid out by Jomtien and other international conferences, commits participants to working towards specific educational goals by 2015 or earlier and affirms that ‘no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources’. It also calls for the developing or strengthening of national, regional and international mechanisms, built on existing structures, to coordinate global efforts and to accelerate progress towards EFA.

101. The Forum participants collectively committed themselves to achieving six specific goals related to EFA, which encapsulated the various themes and issues that permeated the sub-meetings and plenary sessions. These included: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; ensuring that by 2015 all children, especially girls, those in difficult circumstances and those from ethnic minorities, have complete access to completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality; and assurance that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs. Also, the achievement of a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and the achievement of gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic education of good quality; and the improvement of all aspects of the quality of education and the assurance of excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Report E

Report of the Seminar on HIV/AIDS and the Teaching Forces in Francophone Africa (29-31 May 2000, Lome, Togo)

102. This Seminar was attended by 13 Francophone African countries, with 39 representatives in three person teams from the Ministries of Education and Health and the country WGs of the WGTP in Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tchad and Togo.

103. The well-structured and professional Report sets out a comprehensive background, identifies the participants and provides a rationale for the Seminar. The early provision of the agenda provides a clear sense of issues and sequence and gives an indication of flow through to the Seminar outcome. The best feature of the Report is its provision of a structured framework for response reporting, ensuring some utility and continuation of the Seminar process. Importantly it notes geographic, cultural, political and economic variations in impact and analyses the process through which policies develop, thus providing insight and a common understanding. The Report also emphasizes the importance of partnerships but seems trapped in the view that HIV/AIDS is a health issue; however it is innovative in identifying how such a partnership with Health might work: Health might provide the technical knowledge/ skills, for example, while Education could provide action at a local level.

104. While the Seminar, and therefore the Report, is appropriately sensitive to the views, needs and capacity of participants, it fails to articulate any clear objectives for the meeting and instead raises a series of incremental questions about possible actions. Given that the Seminar seems to have been exclusively focused on issues of prevention, perhaps influenced by the view of HIV/AIDS as a health issue, this limits any appreciation of the systemic context within education. However, there is pleasing attention to the future, and the framework for future action outlines five steps which provide for commonality of reporting, and identify the need for general and specific objectives, linkages with the Ministry of Health, identification of actions to achieve each objective, expected results, timeframes and statement of support needs. This action was apparently directed at reporting to a scheduled Steering Committee meeting on 20-21 September 2000, in Paris; there is no information regarding this meeting or the success of the reporting to it.

105. One very useful insight into the problems of sectoral response is provided by the information that the representatives felt they 'had no mandate' to respond to the Seminar's key questions and request to participate in future activity. This goes to the heart of the matter of conferences and meetings on this topic and suggests the comparative impotence of participants in responding to what are, in effect, the major management challenges of the era. This statement opens the way to a continuing debate about the necessary seniority of decision-makers at such meetings, versus their limited availability, and alternative modalities for the empowerment of representatives.

Report F

XIII International AIDS Conference (9-14 July 2000, Durban, South Africa)

106. Given the scope and scale of this monumental event in Africa, and its unquestioned organizational triumph, the fact that only six out of 196 papers presented were on education-related issues, is simply outrageous.

107. This suggests that at a conceptual and organizational level, the allocation of only 3% of the available sessions to the issue of HIV/AIDS in education means there is scant appreciation of either the importance of the sector or its size and leverage in socio-economic and mitigation terms. On the face of it, the Conference organizers simply failed to grasp that the education system and sector represents both the largest defined block of population at risk and yet the greatest opportunity for containment and mitigation. Given the fact that the education sector either enrolls or employs up to a third of the population of most developing countries, and that it consumes up to 30% of their national budgets, it is difficult to understand this lack of recognition and attention. One uncomfortable explanation is that the Committee believes the pandemic to be a health issue and not the development and systemic management challenges it more accurately represents.

108. Six papers on education were presented, only two of which were from Africa; this notwithstanding the continent's burden of 70% of the world prevalence and infection. Of the two African papers, one was from Malawi and described a project in which community volunteers were used to develop awareness and provide peer counseling. This pilot project provided some useful insights, as did the second from Ghana, which described a peer education and support program in universities, using students living with AIDS; the use of infected persons in this program contributed to its reach and effectiveness, and was linked to some degree of behaviour change, albeit short-term. A similar response was reported in a paper from the United States, in which presentations by students living with AIDS were also shown to motivate varying degrees of behaviour change in peer groups

109. In fact, all six papers were prevention oriented and none had any bearing on the health of the education system itself or otherwise addressed issues of systemic management or sustainability. This observation is not a criticism of the papers, which in fact provided some useful and thought-provoking ideas, but rather of the selection criteria by which they were chosen. For example, a paper on response in Mongolia discussed life skills, curriculum change and materials development in a country so sparsely populated, and with such miniscule levels of infection, that it bore not the slightest relation to the problems of Africa; while the level of response described was laudable in the extreme, it was also apparent that it was being mounted in a comparatively functional system, again far removed from the experience of Africa.

110. The three permeating themes were that HIV/AIDS education is a crucial ingredient in combating its spread; that this is difficult to accomplish because it is a sensitive and complex issue; and that we need to rethink old assumptions and theories of teaching and learning.

Report G

Regional HIV/AIDS Seminar for Ireland Aid (6-8 September 2000, Jinja, Uganda)

111. The fact that this is not specifically an education-focused Seminar Report does not detract from its excellence and demonstration of good development practice and professional strategic planning skills. There is however constant reference to MOEs and every issue discussed is cross cutting, with implications for education.

112. The key point of departure is Ireland Aid's thoroughgoing internal evaluation of its capacity to mount a sustained response to HIV/AIDS and consequently do an effective job of supporting African ministries to mount and sustain theirs. This review of systemic capacity and the prioritization of strategic and institutional response is precisely what is lacking in most of the conference proceedings reviewed, and speaks to the fact that no ministry or organisation can hope to respond effectively unless it is itself institutionally sound and equipped.

113. The Report is clear and professionally structured with content and objectives set out at the beginning; it also provides the Seminar program, list of participants and appends all the presentation papers. Most importantly, the Seminar Report identifies the structure and survival of their own organisation as being a precondition to its ability to support others; while this internal focus may seem strange to some, their reaction may be driven by the fact that few MOEs and donor organizations appear to have engaged the simple truth of this basic development principle.

114. The Report lists the Seminar's targeted outputs upfront, which are systematically attained through the establishment of an operational management framework, and provides a valuable and replicable checklist and virtually guarantees that this Report will be utilized and disseminated widely – a valuable lesson indeed. It is also one of the few conferences reviewed to identify issues of recognition, learning and practice and to flag the overarching importance of monitoring and evaluation; it also deals extensively with the issue of 'mainstreaming' and provides useful practical insights into definitional and operational aspects. In short, the Report warns that it is no longer 'business as usual' and cites the need to seriously engage 'changing priorities'.

115. It also pays due attention to the views of Ireland Aid's country partners and provides welcome 'success stories' and best practice examples, emphasizing the value of partnerships with NGOs and Civil Society and a multi-sectoral approach to response – highlighting all the while that this requires operational frameworks and accountability. The Report sets out a schedule of achievable steps as well as action plans by country, with comprehensive, responsibility-allocated tasks clearly linked to defined deliverables. The only criticism of this approach is the looseness of its time frames (ie 'short-term', longer-term' etc).

116. Given the comparative size of Ireland Aid, this Report and the Seminar it details is an exemplary example to other development agencies – and indeed to MOEs themselves.

Report H

UN Economic Commission for Africa: Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Education Sector in Africa and HIV/AIDS and Education in Eastern and Southern Africa: A Synthesis Report (15-17 September 2000, Lake Victoria, Uganda)

117. This Meeting was called to review the social and economic implications of the epidemic on education, in light of the emergency situation and the imminent danger of the collapse of the formal system. It brought together 40 participants, education policy makers and experts from 10 countries in the Eastern and Southern African region, including specialists at all levels, NGOs, religious leaders, resource persons and representatives from several development agencies. UNDP, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the EU Aids Project also attended.

118. The Meeting Report sets out seven focal points for discussion: A brief socio-economic study of HIV/AIDS impact on education; assessment of current country strategies; a review of steps to increase MOE response capacity; examining strategies to support systemic capacity and human resource development; reviewing teacher demand and the flexibility of training options; identifying how systems could better recognize and mitigate the vulnerability of females; and debating the leadership role of education and its multi-sectoral relationships.

119. The Meeting was divided into eight sessions to review Country Desk Studies prepared for a Sub-Regional Synthesis Report: Session One was an Overview of the Strategic Issues and presentation of the draft report of the ECA, while Session Two and Three looked at country case studies in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Session Four examined conceptual frameworks for evaluating what education can do to HIV/AIDS; Session Five focused on plenary discussion of each chapter of the Report in order to review Main Conclusions and Recommendations of the Meeting and synthesize these. Sessions Six, Seven and Eight summarized the recommendations of the Report and incorporated these into the Synthesized Report.

120. The Report thus contains the Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Meeting and the draft Synthesis Report, **HIV/AIDS and Education in Eastern and Southern Africa: The Leadership Challenge and the Way Forward**, which it produced. The 59-page Synthesis Report itself is an imposing body of knowledge: The first section is called **Background and Impacts on Education**, in which Chapter One deals with *HIV/AIDS in Eastern and Southern Africa*, Chapter Two addresses *Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS* and Chapter Three looks at the *Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education Systems in the Sub-Region*. In the second section, **The Impact of Education on HIV/AIDS**, Chapter Four covers *The Response of the Education Sector to HIV/AIDS*, Chapter Five examines *Teaching Programmes and Activities for Containing and Responding to HIV/AIDS* and Chapter Six addresses *The Strategic and Organizational Response of Education to HIV/AIDS*. In the third section, **The Way Forward**, Chapter Seven looks at *Providing Leadership for Education's Response to HIV/AIDS* and Chapters Eight and Nine examine *The Role of the International Community* and *A framework for Action*. *Conclusions* and comprehensive references and tables are dealt with in Chapter Ten in this seminal if lengthy work.

Report I

IIEP Workshop on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education (27-29 September, Paris, France)

121. This Workshop Report provides a good example of an established international agency, UNESCO's IIEP, coming to terms with the extent of the impact and seeking inputs from the countries concerned, on issues and responses. This structured Report provides a table of Contents and clearly sets out the purpose of the Workshop: To exchange experiences on the impact of the pandemic on education systems, identify measures that have been introduced to cope with this at all levels and identify strategies to introduce such measures.

122. The Report is in effect a synthesis of inputs from MOEs and experts in the Southern African field. Consequently the issues cited reflect practical experience on the ground and include: The slowness of MOEs and international agencies to recognize and respond to the scale of the problem; difficulty in obtaining data to measure systemic and socio-economic impact; the difficulty of dealing with the level of associated trauma; lack of capacity and resources to design counter-measures; the development of frameworks for local level response; and the need to move forward with existing indicators of 'order of magnitude'. The Report contains a useful analysis of the key areas of impact on the system, identifying four, including demand, supply, quality and equality of opportunity. It notes the challenge of simultaneously protecting the structural capacity of the education system while adapting to new needs and contexts.

123. The role of Impact Studies was interrogated at length, and several ideas and recommendations were mooted to improve the design of these studies and supplement available data. While the Report betrays a degree of confusion around using prevention strategies to protect systemic capacity, it is driven by the participants' view that this is first and foremost a management problem, which must be addressed systemically.

124. These regional views also confirmed that Ministries of Health, Finance and related economists should be involved in a multi-sector response and that mobile task teams of specialists should be deployed to provide support to MOEs. The Report notes that such a team is already in development at HEARD, in the University of Natal. It goes on to review national and local planning considerations and makes several recommendations based on these inputs: That committed and informed leadership is critical, and that a regular flow of local data is needed to determine trends; in this regard it noted that HEARD was developing such a system with support from DFID. It also recommends that HIV/AIDS should be seen as a core concern of management and planning, and that partnerships with NGOs, Civil Society, communities and development agencies should be strengthened.

125. Importantly, the Report identifies a number of knowledge gaps and proposes the creation of a clearing-house on information at the IIEP, action research, and the development of capacity building materials and courses for regional network workshops. There is no information on the action status of these ideas in the Report.

Report J

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Rights of the Child to Education (22-24 October 2000, Harare, Zimbabwe)

126. The reported proceedings of this Seminar provide a good example of a critical issue being addressed with passion and concern, but highlight the impotence of such gatherings to articulate practical outcomes, and consequently the frustration and even anger manifested in the face of issues of this scale and enormity. In terms of stated objective, the Seminar was designed to enable participants to discuss the serious consequences for children directly and indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS, from a child right perspective.

127. This was a direct outcome of SADC/EU cooperation aimed at strengthening the rights of the child, a priority for both organizations. The level of political involvement, in respect of the Ministers', envoys' and other speeches, inputs and declarations of intent was substantial, but while the Report lists any number of challenges, it does not identify many open courses of action. Indeed, one keynote speaker cited the gathering of world leaders 10 years ago (United Nations, 1990) to discuss the future of children, which made a World Declaration and set a Plan of Action; he noted that achievements are presently being assessed and the reason that so many targets have not been met, is being analyzed. Several key themes and targets for intervention were however listed: The need to 'galvanize' political leaderships; the importance of education; gender inequity; the need for coordination and partnership; the growing number of orphans; and the need for youth to play a role in decision making.

128. There was much reference to global consensus and international campaigns, but again little substance in respect of how change might be effected; one exception to this was the clear identification of schools as 'the only permanent structures in many communities' and the potential of these to become 'social and service centers and bases of operations for local organizations and caregivers'. An excellent analysis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was presented and made very articulate reference to the key issues for consideration. This was supported by a thorough review of tabular data and confirmed the importance of education, the child's right to it, the performance of infected/affected children, the growing number of orphans, decline in quality, trauma and stigma and the need for children to become social and economic providers. This reinforced the extent of the challenge and confirmed that a systemic response, within a policy and regulatory framework, was required.

129. Several other key points were identified in summation; these included the threat to the girl child, changing family structures, child abuse and neglect and the role of youth. A number of problems constraining response were also noted, including deepening poverty, lack of political leadership and legislation, the need to engage traditional leaders and healers and the lack of donor support. This was patently an important and passionate exchange, and many good ideas were captured; however, the inclusion of raw flip chart notes does not make for clarity and flow, and their interpretation and organisation would have added value to the Report.

Report K

14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (26-30 November 2000, Halifax, Nova Scotia)

130. This Conference is summarized in an official News Release that serves as a conference record, and is issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat on behalf of the Ministers of Education.

131. It is fascinating on a number of levels, not least because 30% of the world's population lives in the Commonwealth, which area also contains more than 60% of the global prevalence of HIV/AIDS. More particularly, it is interesting because the Ministers note on page 1 of their News Release, the 'serious threats to health, human security and national development posed by HIV/AIDS, burdens of debt and the particular vulnerability of states and countries affected by armed conflict'. In an environment where concerned interest groups and stakeholders from all quarters lament the lack of political leadership in regard to the HIV/ AIDS challenge, this seems on the face of it good news indeed.

132. However, only once again is HIV/AIDS briefly mentioned in this nine-page Release, and then in a context that brackets it with national disasters and civil conflicts as a major obstacle to education development; this recognition of its dramatic importance is gratifying but unfortunately gives a sense of short-term 'event' rather than the long-term exacerbation of existing problems it more correctly represents. The Ministers advocate the 'increased use of education to combat HIV/AIDS through a holistic and multi-sectoral approach that emphasizes prevention and mitigation'; again very gratifying, but there is no apparent comprehension of this as a long-term systemic issue. On a more pragmatic note, it suggests the 'Commonwealth should develop strategies to ensure education continues during periods of disruption' but again leaves the impression of short-term impact.

133. There is no mention whatever of the Communiqué issued by a very concerned meeting of the Association of Commonwealth Universities only a year before, and adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting a week after that, stating *HIV/AIDS threatens to decimate the higher education as well as every other sector society in Sub-Saharan Africa and to cripple socio-economic development in this and many other parts of the Commonwealth*. Instead the release eulogizes the ACU their many achievements in educational cooperation and enhanced student mobility, ignoring any impact on that sector.

134. Indeed, the balance of the Release is rich with praise for the many achievements of the Commonwealth in education terms and cites continuing commitment to achieving Education For All in keeping with the goals of Jomtien in 1990, and the Framework for Action agreed in Dakar in 2000. It ignores the effective redundancy of Jomtien in light of HIV/AIDS impact and simply presumes that education is 'business as usual', notwithstanding the clearly alarming signals all about them, including those from their own ACU. It is this apparent insulation from the realities of HIV/AIDS that makes this Release fascinating, leaving as it does a satisfied sense of normality while in large parts of the Commonwealth development gains are clearly being reversed.

Report L

The African Development Forum 2000: Leadership at All Levels to Overcome HIV/AIDS (3-7 December 2000, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

135. This ADF Meeting of some 1 500 leaders drawn from all segments of society across Africa was its second annual meeting and was positioned as a 'turning point in Africa's continental struggle against HIV/AIDS'. The executive director of UNAIDS, Dr Peter Piot, said it was 'not another AIDS meeting', making clear the implied distinction and perhaps summing up the level of conference fatigue that appears to dog response to HIV/AIDS. The ADF itself was a working meeting and was preceded by a series of 23 preparatory consultations across Africa at the national level, in which governments, UN agencies and civil society came together to set agendas and demands for the Forum itself.

136. The Forum scored high on political commitment both in terms of attendance and statements of concern and intent: 'Rarely in a prominent international conference have so many leaders spoken frankly about deeply personal issues'; perhaps the key point in this regard was that the entire meeting was focused on HIV/AIDS and it was not lost in a welter of other 'business as usual' issues. It was also refreshing in stating that there is no 'inevitable future', but that with the 'right leadership, the necessary resources and a true partnership of all, HIV/AIDS can be overcome'. This determined theme seemed to permeate the Forum, and the result is a very extensive schedule of outcomes reflected in five levels of commitment: Personal, community, national, regional and international.

137. These commitments are expressed in compelling if emotive language and leaves the reader in no doubt as to the anger of Africa at what they see as the lack of commitment, response and mobilization. This 'mood' characterizes the Report but is entirely understandable given that 'many commitments have not been translated into action'; the international donor agencies came in for some criticism, and reminded that they must change their worldview.

138. It would be presumptuous and unsatisfactory to attempt to synthesize the Forum Report but it is important to note the very substantial and rational links it makes between personal, community, national, regional and international levels of commitment: In short, no one level can be seen to work without the others and this fact is often overlooked in proposing a response agenda. It is candid in recognizing that a series of preconditions for mitigation, including peace, were required; it also recognized that HIV/AIDS is exacerbating *existing* problems and dysfunctionality: 'Every measure necessary to prevent HIV/AIDS and help those living with it is, without exception, something we want anyway for a better, more developed Africa'.

139. The Forum aroused considerable emotive energy and placed an enormous number of challenges on the table, but it remains difficult to derive from the Report clear and articulate plans for action. What it has done however is integrate the views of leaders across the spectrum, and created an unprecedented climate of awareness and determination for action; whether the ADF remains another 'talk shop', or in the words of Mrs Graca Machel, becomes a 'turning point in the struggle', remains to be seen.

Report M

10th General Conference of the Association of African Universities (5-9 February 2001, Nairobi, Kenya)

140. This Conference, the tenth in the series, is intended to determine the general policies of the Association and approve its programs and budgets. This session attracted over 250 delegates, comprising Vice Chancellors, policy makers, senior public administrators, eminent academics, NGO representatives, donor agencies, resource persons and observers from various countries.

141. The theme of the 10th General Conference was, *African Universities and the Challenge of Knowledge Creation and Application in the New Century*. It addressed four sub-themes, namely: *Higher Education Management and Leadership in the Information Age; Quality of Training and Research: Towards a Dynamic Process of Curricular Reform and Innovation in African Tertiary Institutions; Information and communications Technology: Building Capacity in African Universities; and Women in Tertiary Institutions, Equity, Empowerment and Advancement*.

142. Given that the Conference theme was quite clearly linked to the ‘new century’, it is quite surprising that after five days of deliberation, none of the eleven recommendations adopted mentioned HIV/AIDS. In fact, the subject only appears as part of a new Core Program of Activities for the period 2001 – 2004 and is bracketed with the need for Education for Peace and Conflict Avoidance. The Record does go on to say, however, that the ‘challenge posed by HIV/AIDS to human and economic resource development as well as teaching and research’ was discussed, and that there was a recommendation that higher education institutions take a ‘pro-active role in its presentation and management’.

143. Given the preponderance of prevalence on the African continent, and indeed the views expressed fifteen-months earlier by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, this afterthought approach to the problem of HIV/AIDS impact is difficult to reconcile. A review of the eleven issues identified as recommendations for the Association does not reveal any more pressing issue, and thus it remains unclear why this representative body does not consider the pandemic enough of a threat to flag it as a priority issue for the sector.

144. While this was intended as a ‘general’ conference, it is therefore disturbing to reflect that the largest direct and indirect challenge to the future of tertiary education in Africa did not warrant more than passing mention as a future agenda item. Nor can it be argued that not enough is known about the problem: Many of the participants were also involved in the Association of Commonwealth University meeting in November 1999, and were party to the design and adoption of a comprehensive management checklist for the university sector.

145. In short, few parts of Africa are so remote from the pandemic to occasion this remarkable insularity and it remains amazing that the sector can be so blinkered to the present and future impact of HIV/AIDS on the sector.

Report N

SADC Education and Training Conference: Report on Country Preparedness in Dealing with HIV/AIDS (26-28 February 2001, Pretoria, South Africa)

146. This Report takes the form of a Country Preparedness Report Synthesis, and is pragmatic and useful. It stems from a meeting of the SADC country education and training sector representatives and is located within the three-pronged SADC Regional Strategic Framework to combating HIV/AIDS in the Southern African Region.

147. The first of these, appropriately, is *Creating a Foundation for Action*: This cites the need for a dual approach in which prevention and mitigation are coupled with systemic response; the need for committed and informed leadership; collective dedication; research and monitoring; effective management; policy planning and regulatory frameworks and adequate resources. The second is *Mitigating the Impact*: This includes the need for impact assessments; projecting supply and demand; stabilizing provision and quality; reducing institutional impact; responding creatively to new learning needs; and supporting orphans and other vulnerable children and youth. The third is *Preventing the Spread of AIDS*, and addresses the need to introduce curricula; develop and use appropriate materials; develop educator skills and knowledge; upgrade teacher educators; evaluate curriculum interventions; provide counseling and care; and work in partnerships.

148. The Report is set out as a Country table in respect of each of these issues. Thirteen countries are reported, and in each case scored against their responses to a set of questions. For example, under a *Foundation for Action*, the questions probe whether or not there is a Dual Approach, Leadership, Collective Dedication, a Research Agenda, Effective Management, Policy and Regulations, a Strategic Plan and Resources. The effect of this is provide a snapshot of preparedness, apparently on a scale of 1 to 3, although there is no explanation of how the measurement is undertaken; however, the Country comments are both comprehensive and informative within reason and provide a good comparative insight.

149. One inevitable problem is how objective the comments are: It may be difficult, for example, for a departmental official to point to anything less than the highest political commitment from the Country's leaders; however, since this is work in progress and will be regularly updated, this problem may be reduced. The value of this approach is that the key issues are quickly and simply addressed, without the cloak of a verbose report, and are considered in a common framework which compares their preparedness in a way that has real value for other interested parties. From a development agency's perspective, for example, there is sufficient information to narrow the search for answers and a sense of which other parties or agencies may be involved.

150. This methodology would benefit from more background and written context perhaps, but it gets to the heart of the issue and provides a usable investigative tool to open up a number of issues that may otherwise be lost in conventional reporting. Certainly, some insight into the criteria for scoring would add value.

Report P

HIV/AIDS: Towards a Strategy for Commonwealth Universities (11-13 March 2001, Geneva, Switzerland)

151. This is a Report on a Consultation process involving 15 interested parties from DFID, UNESCO, the university sector in Southern Africa, India, Latin America, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and the West Indies, the World Bank and the project leaders from the Association of Commonwealth Universities Secretariat.

152. It establishes the context within which the ACU has developed the deepest concern about the impact of HIV/AIDS, and makes clear that this Consultation is one step in a continuing process of engagement; strangely however, it does not cite or refer to the November 1999 meeting of the ACU, in which a comprehensive beginning was made in this regard. It can only be assumed that there is a link but this would not be obvious to the Report reader, and thus misses an important opportunity to establish a continuum of process and thought over a somewhat longer period. This said, the Consultation was thorough in setting out a valid and developmentally sound approach to sectoral response, albeit on a limited scale.

153. The Consultation was in the first instance refreshingly predicated on research: It analyzed the response of some 100 universities of the 450 in the Commonwealth, and set out the extent to which HIV/AIDS is recognized as a problem; this research was appended and also provided examples of strategies in use and certain of the policies that have been developed. It went on to ask some key questions, including *why* the ACU should take a role and interrogated the priority areas of response; these included Research, Advocacy, Capacity Building, Policy Development, Resourcing and Programs/Strategic Plans. This established a logical framework for further activity and was grounded in areas that lay within the realm of practical possibility for the sector.

154. This approach was supported by the balance of the well constructed Report and placed the desired qualities of the Project Outcomes up front; these spoke to the attainment of three inter-related outputs: *Institutional Action Plans*; a *Refined Workshop Document*; and a *Good Practice Guide*. It was agreed that these outputs or goals would be completed by 31 March 2002 and that workshops would be undertaken for this purpose between October 2001 and January 2002. This commitment to time frames was also very satisfactory and a welcome departure from many conference outcomes and reports.

155. These outputs were also well considered in terms of sectoral comparative advantage, and the Consultation examined Key Elements of the Project, Barriers to Implementation, Opportunities for Raising Student Awareness, Curriculum Change and Linked Activities. In essence, the Project sets out to facilitate a number of 2-3 day workshops designed to target Vice Chancellors and senior staff, in Southern Africa and India, to which 8 to 10 regional universities will be invited. These institutions would then be expected to cascade the workshops within their university communities, and a refined workshop document will be provided for that purpose. It was agreed that this must have Vision, Information, Self-Analysis, Threshold Standards, provoke Vice Chancellors and involve PLAs.

Report Q

The Elmina Conference on HIV/AIDS and Education: A Call to Action (19-23 March 2001, Elmina, Ghana)

156. This Report details the Recommendations of the Elmina Conference on HIV/AIDS and Education: A Call for Action, which stems from the Senior Experts Conference on HIV/AIDS and Education in ECOWAS. The Conference itself was attended by senior experts from MOEs and other ministries, such as Health, Manpower and Employment, Youth and Sports and Social Welfare in 13 ECOWAS nations; from universities; from social partners in education and NGOs; from UN organizations at HQ, regional and national levels; and most major development/cooperation agencies.

157. The Conference was held to consider how educators are responding to the impact of HIV/AIDS and interrogate issues relating to access, equity, quality, relevance, capacity and partnerships, and establish the level of ability to provide education appropriate to national development in light of this threat. The point was made that while West Africa is comparatively less affected than East and Southern Africa, rates are climbing and mobility and conflict will exacerbate this situation; it was noted that Cote d'Ivoire is already among the 15 worst affected countries and that Nigeria, with a 5% infection rate already has more than 2,7 million people living with HIV.

158. The Report calls for ECOWAS education ministers to fulfill the national and international commitments they have already made and then focuses on three 'strategic lines of action': *Preventing and Controlling the Spread of HIV/AIDS*, *Reducing the Traumatic Impact of HIV/AIDS* and *Improving Management Capacity and Procedures*. In the first of these, the bullet points are all laudable but it noteworthy that this is one of few conference reports to cite the importance of peer education and participation in response development. In the second, various interventions are listed but there is no sense of how these will be actioned, or by whom.

159. The third 'strategic line of action' is much more constructive and identifies several key interventions which are self-evidently the business of MOEs in any event. These include the establishment of a permanent HIV/AIDS Management Unit within each MOE, the regular and systematic collection of management data to inform a research agenda, policy audits and reviews, budget revision, capacity building and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

160. The Report calls for Regional Action, linking national response and action plans; this response should include Regional Frameworks for Cooperation, the establishment of 'Regional Assets' such as a Task Team and generic materials and training, regular meetings and a Regional Forum for advocacy and the expansion of expert networks – linking institutions of learning to supplement country capacity. It also calls for better regional cooperation between the ECOWAS-linked WHO and UNAIDS and other concerned UN agencies.

Report R

Special Summit to Endorse ADF 2000 Consensus on Fighting HIV/AIDS (26-28 April 2001, Abuja, Nigeria)

161. Sub-headed *The Abuja Framework for Action for the Fight Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases*, this Summit Report is primarily Health Sector-focused, but its scope and indeed acknowledgement of the role of education make it a useful addition to this analysis.

162. It claims that African Heads of State and Government recognize the challenge of developing feasible policies, strategies, structures and processes to ensure adequate prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases (ORID); however the evidence to the contrary in many cases raises some doubt about the validity of this far-reaching claim. Nevertheless, the Report takes this position and implies a level of political support that is entirely desirable.

163. What is more important is that the Report indicates a clear line of development thought and a sequenced process that suggests the prospect of some agreeable outcome: In the first instance this *Framework for Action* follows and articulates the commitments made in the earlier *Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS*, and insists that Member States will implement the activities in close collaboration with all stakeholders. It also declares that a Mechanism for Implementation, Monitoring and Follow-up exists to ensure that the Framework for Action is implemented in a sustainable manner, and that actions are well coordinated with continuous evaluation and feedback. These bold words do not, however, address the issue of *who* actually will do this.

164. The primary goal of all this activity is to arrest and reverse the accelerating rate of infection, and this is supported by a set of guiding objectives: First, to advocate for the translation into action and mobilization of the earlier commitments of African Leaders; second, to develop policies and strategies aimed at prevention and controlling impact on socio-economic development; third, the establishment of sustainable mechanisms for resource mobilization; and fourth, to attend to the needs of vulnerable groups.

165. For all its good intentions, the attainability of these visionary objectives seems uncertain given that, in the first instance, sights have been set so high, and in the second, the following Framework for Action betrays its very early stage of development. This is less a criticism than a reality check, and a reminder that the gulf between political declarations and implementation is vast indeed. In the event, the Framework for Action (contained in the Report) calls for Member States to adopt it in order to develop and strengthen their own plans, for the OAU Secretariat to follow up the development and implementation of National Action Plans of Member States and Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation. It mandates the OAU Secretariat, together with Members of the Bureau and Regional Economic Communities, to develop the Strategic Framework into an Action Plan for the Continent, to be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2001. It also calls on the OAU Secretariat to develop its own operational plan, but nowhere answers the key question of where all the required and specialized human and material resources are to be found.

Annex 3

Figure 4. Understanding the impact of HIV/AIDS on education

