



DFID MSP PROJECTS: RESEARCH TO ASSESS LOCAL LEVEL FUNCTIONING INTEGRATION OF HIV AND AIDS SERVICES

Partner: Department of Social Development

Service Provider: Wits Health Consortium

HIV and AIDS have impacts and implications beyond health, and therefore the response needs to adopt a multi-sectoral strategy and engage stakeholders from across sectors, institutions and disciplines. This strategy demands the integration of HIV and AIDS services into the core activities of all public sector departments and civil society organisations through well co-ordinated collaborations. Services are delivered at local level and the effectiveness of the response as it emerges from all levels of government and civil society is only as relevant as the difference this makes in peoples' lives. In the light of this, DSD approached the MSP to fund a study to understand the influence, processes and outcomes of integration at the local level.

Wits Health Consortium was contracted by the MSP to undertake this study. The Project was originally scheduled for 9 months but was extended to a period of 27 months (November 2005 to February 2008).

The aims of the Study were to:

- Review perspectives, standards and national policies for integrated HIV and AIDS services:
- Review experience of integration through published literature and case studies.
- Identify the components of integrated HIV and AIDS services at 9 sites in South Africa.
- Identify lessons, challenges and recommendations on functional integration of HIV and AIDS services.

The study used a rapid situational analysis through in-depth, semi structures interviews, focus group discussions, case studies and participatory exercises. The Study was conducted in all 9 provinces of South Africa.

The Study recommended:

- The need for greater investment from the Departments of DSD, Health and Education in the drivers of integration at the local level through the employment of HIV and AIDS Co-ordinators, strengthening of inter-sectoral HIV and AIDS committees and district and local AIDS councils, including integration processes in job descriptions and performance management and developing integration indicators in structures.

- The institutionalising of integration processes through single strategic HIV and AIDS planning model, ideally managed by AIDS Councils and accountable to SANAC.
- The need to invest in the implementers of integration through the strengthening of school social services functions, the replication of multi-purpose drop-in centres, resourcing (human and physical) of primary health care facilities and the ongoing capacity building of HSBC service providers.
- Improved multi-sectoral collaboration at the local level to ensure members of communities and children are able to access ID documents, births and death certificates and social security grants.

This study was completed in December 2007. In terms of the final report submitted to MSP, the aims of the project were fully addressed and the study raised the level of integration and should DSD, Health and Education act upon the recommendations provided, substantial localised improvements are possible.