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Before tackling the question of what it means to 'strengthen' the family, we need to establish a working definition of 'family' that fits the many contexts in which we are working

THE JLICA MEETS IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

The Steering Committee of the Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS (JLICA), together with the Learning Groups held their first meeting from 7-10 March 2007 in Durban, South Africa. The purpose of the meeting was to map the way forward for the next stage of the JLICA's work.

The goal of the meeting was to bring together the various role players in the JLICA, - the Learning Group co-chairs, the Secretariat, the Steering Committee, and the lead authors and members of the Learning Groups to reach agreement on the purposes and processes of the JLICA, and to chart the way forward. On March 7 and 8, the four Learning Groups met to share their early ideas and to advance their research plans. Thereafter, on March 9 and 10, the Steering Committee assembled to discuss the JLICA's work plan, measurable outcomes, advocacy strategy, and partnership building.

The meeting was attended by 40 international participants including scientists, funders and policy makers from organizations such as the Social Science Research Council in the USA, the University of Malawi, Makerere University, Université de Cocody in Cote d'Ivoire, the International Food Policy Research Institute, DFID, and Care USA. Representation by the founding partners included the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Global Equity Initiative at Harvard University, Francois-Xavier Bagnaud (FXB), UNICEF and the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa.

This first meeting of the Learning Groups



Participants in the Learning Group 1 Meeting

was greatly welcomed as it provided an opportunity for participants to meet one another, as well as to bring together expertise from the varied backgrounds of public health, clinical medicine, economics, development studies and advocacy. LG1 participants discussed their research agenda with respect to identifying:

- Synergies and points of collaboration between lead papers
- Key gaps, including additional topics to be covered, such as child abuse and neglect, children's perspectives on social protection, and unique features of programmes for children in low prevalence countries, and

NEWS

Learning Group 1: Strengthening Families will be doing an oral presentation on the work of the Group at the 8th International AIDS Impact Conference in Marseilles, 1-4 July 2007.

The JLICA is at the forefront at an *International Symposium on Children and HIV/AIDS: Meeting Children's Needs* to be held at Harvard University on the 24th September 2007. The JLICA Steering Committee will meet later in the week in Boston.

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES LEAD PAPERS

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- Creating mechanisms for timely sharing of information between participants in LG1, the wider LG1 stakeholder community, and between Learning Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 .

This is especially important because Learning Groups are taking on several cross-cutting functions. For example, LG4 will be responsible for costing the policy and programming recommendations of LGs 1-3.



Vicky Hosegood, José Kimou & Will Aston (DFID) at the LG1 Meeting

LEARNING GROUP 1: LEAD PAPERS

The Strengthening Families Learning Group explores variations in family response on the frontlines of the pandemic, and assembles evidence on models of family support for children as well as the role of systems and services strengthening in protecting children and adolescents from HIV infection and the worst effects of poverty and social disruption. Nine papers have been commissioned to investigate these important issues:

1. *Families and crisis in the developing world*
Dr Sangeetha Madhavan and Laurie DeRose - University of Maryland, USA
2. *Demographic evidence of family and household changes in response to the effects of HIV/AIDS, and how these can be taken into account in efforts to strengthen families*
Dr Victoria Hosegood – London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK and the HSRC, South Africa
3. *Migration and families affected by HIV/AIDS*
Dr Mary Haour-Knipe - International Organization for Migration, Geneva

4. *Qualitative, cultural accounts of family and household changes in response to the effects of HIV and AIDS: A review with pointers to action*
Ms Vuyiswa Mathambo - Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa; Professor Wiseman Chirwa - University of Malawi, Malawi; and Ms. Gertrude Musonda - Save the Children, Zambia
5. *The family as the locus of actions to protect and support children affected by or vulnerable to the effects of HIV/AIDS*
Dr Mark Belsey – New York
6. *Social protection for families affected by HIV and AIDS: Economic strengthening through cash transfers*
Dr Michele Adato - International Food Policy Research Institute, USA
7. *A review of the socioeconomic impact of antiretroviral treatment of family wellbeing*
Dr Jose Kimou – Université de Cocody; Dr Clément Kouakou – Université de Cocody; Paul Auguste Assi - Family Health International; all from Cote d'Ivoire
8. *Strengthening families through HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support*
Professor Lorraine Sherr – University College London, UK
9. *Dealing with vulnerability: Parents' efforts to secure the future of their children in the context of multiple stressors.*
Dr Scott Drimie—RENEWAL, International Food Policy Research Institute, South Africa

The LG1 Secretariat is preparing the following two additional papers to fill identified gaps.

10. *A review of programmes to support families – learning from fields other than HIV/AIDS*

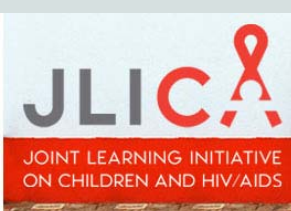
The paper will analyze programmatic responses to strengthening families both in the North and South, within and outside of the context of HIV/AIDS, with the goal of identifying common components of successful interventions and programs that can be meaningfully applied to children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. It will primarily include programmatic responses with a strong evidence base that have demonstrated through evaluation and impact studies to be successful in improving outcomes for children and youth, in particular, and families more generally. The review will conclude with how the best evidence on strengthening families can inform

For parents living with worsening illness and impending death, it is painful to face their eventual inability to care for their children and see them grow to maturity

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LEARNING GROUP 1



SPOTLIGHT: LEARNING GROUP 2: COMMUNITY ACTION

Continued from page 2

base that have demonstrated through evaluation and impact studies to be successful in improving outcomes for children and youth, in particular, and families more generally. The review will conclude with how the best evidence on strengthening families can inform family HIV/AIDS programming and strengthen the ability of families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to respond with resilience to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Dr Upjeet Chandan and Prof Linda Richter – Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

11. The costs of inaction

The premise of LG1's focus is that families are the primary unit of response. The bulk of the burden associated with HIV/AIDS falls on families, particularly with regard to the burden of care for children. This paper examines the implications and costs of leaving families unsupported in their response to the impacts of HIV/AIDS on children—specifically with respect to out-of-family (or institutional) care and the value added by families to other societal inputs, such as health care and education.

Mr Chris Desmond and Prof Linda Richter – Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

When families cannot cope with meeting the

(including governments, multilateral agencies, international and national NGOs, and donors) can strengthen community responses for children affected by HIV/AIDS while respecting local initiative and control.

Seven key areas of study within Learning Group 2 have been identified:

1. The role of faith-based organisations in supporting children affected by HIV/AIDS and in promoting supportive national OVC responses
2. The characteristics and effectiveness of community safety nets in different settings and the effectiveness of external initiatives to support them
3. Economic impacts of HIV/AIDS on children and community responses to vulnerable children that focus on economic strengthening
4. Channelling resources to community-level responses and building the capacity of communities to respond to vulnerable children
5. The role of government in strengthening and networking community responses
6. Involving children and youth as 'part of the solution': Community responses that strengthen the capacity of children and young people to meet their own needs
7. HIV prevention and vulnerable children and youth: What is the effectiveness of community-based and faith-based organizations in HIV prevention activities?

LEARNING GROUP 2: CO-CHAIRS

Dr Geoff Foster

Dr Geoff Foster trained in Medicine in London and, in 1985 took up his current appointment as specialist paediatrician with the government of Zimbabwe. He founded the Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT), a faith-based non-governmental organization and one of Africa's first AIDS service organizations. He serves as the present Chairman. Contact Geoff Foster on jlica2006@yahoo.co.uk

Madhu Deshmukh

Madhu Deshmukh is CARE USA's Director for HIV/AIDS. Before joining CARE, she worked with UNAIDS in Geneva. Madhu's expertise ranges from designing HIV/AIDS interventions for populations at risk to strategy development and project management.



Dr Geoff Foster



Ms Madhu Deshmukh

SPOTLIGHT ON LEARNING GROUP 2

basic needs of the children, communities frequently act as the safety nets that support households facing shocks. In the context of HIV/AIDS, however the concept of 'community responses' is often invoked with little concrete evidence of how it works and when it is effective. There is scant systematic assessment of the level of community support taking place, and many facets of community coping are not documented in published literature. Safety nets based on extended families or friendship are the most widespread community response to the impacts of HIV/AIDS on children. But many of these safety nets are under pressure, weakened by poverty and economic insecurity, environmental degradation and migration.

Caregivers in community networks, such as local faith-based organizations and women's groups, could more often be targets of state and donor support, increasing the effectiveness of local initiatives. The goals of Learning Group 2 are to develop a body of evidence to: document the effectiveness of community-level responses to children affected by HIV/AIDS; evaluate external mechanisms' impact in bolstering or weakening community resilience; and recommend how external actors

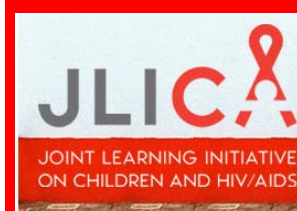
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LEARNING GROUP 1



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION: REFERENCE GROUPS

There are a variety of ways for people and groups to get involved and to ensure that their knowledge and experience becomes part of the Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS. There are LG1 Advisors, Companion and Parallel Initiatives, Stakeholders and other interested groups and individuals. Everyone connected to the Learning Group will receive Newsletters and other communications, and we welcome your input.

If you know others who would like to receive this electronic Newsletter, please ask them to send an email to JLICAFamilies@hsrc.ac.za with NEWSLETTER in the subject line. In the body of the email they should include their name, organisation and contact information.

We are also trying to raise additional funds for face-to-face meetings for some of the Sub-groups in LG1, as well as for meetings in different regions of the world. One way we can do this is through conferences, workshops and seminars at which we can get together.

Please keep us posted about meetings and other activities that are relevant to the work of the JLICA and to the work of LG1: Strengthening Families, in particular. Where possible, we will try and arrange for a member of LG1 to present the progress of the Learning Group and engage with participants and their responses.

REFERENCE GROUPS

We would like to convene telephonic, email and internet Reference Groups of about 10-15 people from a variety of sectors for each of the LG1 lead papers. If you are a policy maker, programmer manager, donor, community organiser, person living with HIV or AIDS or caring for a child affected by HIV or AIDS, or a stakeholder in another capacity in the work of the JLICA, and you would like to contribute to the work of one of the lead papers by reading drafts and making comments, please send an email to JLICAFamilies@hsrc.ac.za indicating your interest, and the number and title of the particular lead paper with which you would like to work.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES (LG1) CO-CHAIRS

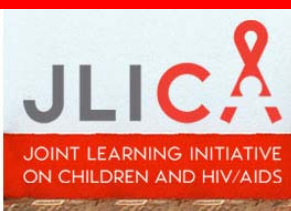
Short term costs of not supporting families include, for example, replacement care—and the social implications of who meets these costs

Longer term costs are incurred by the loss of the value added by families to children's health and education

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LEARNING GROUP 1



Professor Linda Richter is the Executive Director of the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development Programme at the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa. She has over 25 years of experience in child and adolescent research, as well as programmatic experiences relevant to children affected by HIV and AIDS.



For more information visit:

www.hsrc.ac.za

www.jlica.org



Dr Angela Wakhweya is a Senior Technical Officer in the Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Unit in the Prevention and Mitigation Division at Family Health International (FHI), based in Arlington, VA. Dr

Wakhweya has a strong background in international public health, especially in the area of HIV/AIDS.

For more information visit:

www.fhi.org

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