



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of aidsfocus.ch, the Swiss platform on HIV/Aids and international cooperation

December 12, 2012, 9.15 a.m. – 12.30 p.m., vatter business centre, Bärenplatz 2, Berne

Agenda

Part 1: Formal Part (9.15 – 10.30)

1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2011
2. Annual Report 2011/12 (till July 2012)
3. Accounts 2011
4. Activities planned for 2013
5. Theme of the aidsfocus.ch conference in spring 2013
6. Election of members of the Steering Committee
7. Varia

Part 2: Strategic orientation of aidsfocus.ch (10.00 – 10.30)

Part 3: The Global Fund and Civil Society. Input and discussion with Michael O'Connor, Manager for the Civil Society and Private Sector partnerships team at The Global Fund. (11.00 – 12.30)

Participants:

Steering Committee: Jochen Ehmer (SolidarMed), Kate Molesworth (Swiss TPH), Vreni Wenger (Swiss Red Cross), Harry Witzthum (Swiss AIDS Federation), Coordinator: Helena Zweifel (aidsfocus.ch/MMS/ Moderation).

Partners: Irene Bush (terre des hommes switzerland), Mieke Eberhardt (Kindernothilfe Schweiz), Peter Leuenberger (mediCuba), Elisa Moos (Schweiz. Katholischer Frauenbund), Barbara Müller (FEPA), Mike Nielsen (World Vision Switzerland), Isabelle Vianden (TearFund).

MMS: Martin Leschhorn, Martina Staenke (Minutes).

Guests: Barbara Bertisch (Kantonsspital St. Gallen), Martin Bevalot (Handicap International), Marc DeSantis (SDC), Jean Francois Golay (SDC), Maria Katulu, Andreas Loebell (SDC), Michael O'Connor (The Global Fund), Luciano Ruggia (BAG), Nina Schneider (Alliance Sud), Fortunat Walther (Medicor Foundation).

Apologies: Marcel auf der Maur (CO-OPERAID), Romana Büchel (Fastenopfer), Patrick Durisch (Berne Declaration), Gabriele Hansch (Swiss Red Cross), Stefan Hoffmann (Kwa Wazee), Nathalie Vesco (SDC), Johanna Voegeli (miva Schweiz), Katharina von Allmen (Aids & Kind), Maria Winiger (Caritas).

Welcome

Helena Zweifel, coordinator of aidsfocus.ch, welcomed the participants in the name of aidsfocus.ch and chaired the assembly. 11 of 27 partners are present as well as representatives from SDC, BAG, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, Handicap International, Alliance Sud, Medicor Foundation, Kantonsspital St. Gallen and MMS.

Part 1: Formal Part

1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting, October 31, 2011

The minutes were approved.

2. Annual Report 2011/ 12 (till End of July 2012)

Helena Zweifel gave a brief overview of the most important events in the last period as described in the annual report. The highlight was as usual the aidsfocus.ch conference.

The annual report was approved.

3. Accounts 2010

The coordinator commented some figures: We spent some more on the annual conference but on the other hand there had been less expenses on the general costs. We have less income through partner organisations because two organisations left aidsfocus.ch. Overall expenses and incomes are balanced.

The accounts 2011 were approved.

4. Activities planned for 2013

- Strategy 2013-2016
- Annual conference in April 2013
- Website and aidsfocus.news
- Meeting Points: MSM in Cuba, etc.
- Advocacy: Global Fund

Website and aidsfocus.news

The aidsfocus.ch website is under construction and will be launched in spring. The aidsfocus.news will be published 8-10 times a year.

Meeting points

Two meeting points are planned. Based on the initiative of MediCuba Swiss one meeting point will deal with MSM in Cuba. Again the coordinator encouraged the participants to inform her when they have guests from the south in order to share experiences with other members.

5. Theme of the aidsfocus.ch conference in spring 2013

The coordinator introduced the three themes proposed by the Steering Committee:

1. The Global Fund: Broad view of the Global Fund and his implementation strategies. Invitation of implementers and of people from partner organisations to share their experiences.

2. Boys and men: Up to now there has been a strong focus on girls and women. It could also be important for the global AIDS response to focus on boys and men with linkages to the gender question.

3. HIV-TB co-infection: As it is crucial to look beyond HIV and AIDS TB is one of the leading causes of death among PLWHA. Swiss NGOs have already a lot of experiences in this co-infection (Swiss Red Cross, MSF, SolidarMed etc.) and could contribute in a valuable manner.

Discussion: Harry Witzthum remarked that 2013 is a very important year for advocacy issues: There is the universal access campaign, the Global Fund is going to have a new funding round and the end of the MDGs in 2015 raises the question what will come beyond? We should take the opportunity and get involved into this process. We have to clarify where are we standing and what kind of advocacy we want to push forward. Kate Molesworth and Jochen Ehmer agreed in this view. The main question for Jochen is how can we influence this movement? Should we implement parliamentary lobby groups like in the UK? Harry added that it could be important to find out who are the key opinion leaders within the parliament and how can we approach them. The conference should contribute to clarify these questions. Vreni Wenger argued that we have to find out what options have the platform and how could these options be realized.

As Helena summarized the working title will be "The future of the global AIDS response". Regarding to the 10th anniversary of aidsfocus.ch in 2013 this special view on the global AIDS response will suit very well to the occasion.

Decision: The aidsfocus.ch conference on April 11, 2013 will be devoted to the issue "The Future of the Global AIDS response" (Working title).

Helena Zweifel invited all interested parties to join the accompanying group, which will meet twice to prepare the conference. All interested parties are most welcome.

6. Election / Confirmation of the Steering Committee

The following members stood up for re-election: Vreni Wenger (Swiss Red Cross), Harry Witzthum (Swiss AIDS Federation), Kate Molesworth (Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute) and Jochen Ehmer (SolidarMed).

Helena Zweifel introduced Irene Bush (terre des hommes schweiz) and Maria Katulu, who both would like to join the Steering Committee and fill in the vacancies left by Rao Satapati (CO-OPERAID) and Tony Jungo (INTERTEAM). Irene Bush, who was active from the very beginning of the aidsfocus.ch platform, has 7 years of experiences in psychosocial support, especially in solution focused memory work. Maria Katulu is an independent expert with 8 years of field experiences in Swaziland building up the HIV/AIDS treatment program for the SRK in Swaziland. Helena recommended Irene and Maria for election.

Decision: All current members were unanimously confirmed in office. In addition, Irene Bush and Maria Katulu were unanimously elected as new members of the Steering Committee.

The coordinator thanked the members of the Steering Committee for their valuable support.

7. Varia: Luciano Ruggia reported from a planned survey on Sub-Saharan migrants living in Switzerland. The survey will be conducted in cooperation with the institute universitaire de médecine sociale et preventive in Lausanne and with the Swiss AIDS Federation and has the goal to fill the knowledge gap on this high prevalence group especially regarding sexual health, AIDS and STI. The web-based questionnaire will be distributed through different channels and it would be appreciated if the aidsfocus.ch network could also spread the information.

Part 2: Strategic orientation of aidsfocus.ch 2013-2016 (Draft)

The coordinator introduced in the draft of the strategic orientation: Responding to changing conditions and new challenges, aidsfocus.ch will focus on **five priority themes**. This thematic focus allows the platform to join forces and make a more effective contribution to a future without AIDS. **Respect for and promotion of human rights** guides the commitment and strategy of aidsfocus.ch as a fundamental principle.

Priority themes of the new strategic direction: **1.** More than before aidsfocus.ch wants to focus on key populations at higher risk, such as MSM, sex workers, IUDs, children, youth, women, etc. According to the slogan "Know your epidemic" aidsfocus.ch will look carefully to each regional context. In middle income countries the focus must be more on MSM and sex workers compared to South Africa where still women and children are most infected. **2.** Geographic focus on low- and middle-income countries with high HIV burden. In the old strategy the focus was mainly on low income countries but in future aidsfocus.ch will also look on middle income countries such as Eastern Europe and Asia. **3.** Strengthen links between HIV programmes and other health areas such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, TB etc. We don't want to look on HIV in isolation we will pursue an integrated approach. **4.** Sustainable financing of the international AIDS response, in particular of/by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Aidsfocus.ch will continue the advocacy work especially with SDC to raise the contribution. **5.** Anchoring of HIV and AIDS on the global development framework, which will replace the MDGs after 2015. aidsfocus.ch will advocate that AIDS stays an important issue on the "Beyond 2015" framework.

Discussion: Barbara Müller was convinced that this strategy captures very well the development and debates of the last few years. It is an ambitious approach but in her point of view a strategic direction must be ambitious. Jochen Ehmer appreciated the new strategy as a very forward looking framework with a good reflection of the global challenges. He underlines that it is important that we anticipate the upcoming developments especially regarding the post MDG discussion in order to join our forces to go forward.

The coordinator thanked the assembly for the confidence. The steering committee will follow up with the review of the new strategy of aidsfocus.ch.

Part 3: The Global Fund and Civil Society

"The involvement of civil society in the Global Fund": Presentation by Michael O' Connor, Manager of the Civil Society and Private Sector partnerships team at The Global Fund. The presentation focused on the recent situation of the GF after re-organisation and on the role of Civil Society in the development of the Global Fund (see presentation in the attachment).

Marc DeSantis (SDC), Swiss delegate within the board of the Global Fund (GF) to open the discussion by adding some information on the support of SDC to the Civil Society (CS) risk management forum.

Discussion: Marc DeSantis elaborated how it came to a special alliance between SDC and the CS. Civil Society plays a key role for SDC: On the one hand the CS has a big responsibility by implementing 40% of the grants of the GF and on the other hand they know the needs and the challenges at the country level. SDC realized that they have very much the same position and one year ago they started an alliance with NGOs and delegates from developing countries. This alliance led by Switzerland worked more structured on some issues. They started to share their views and to build on joint approaches. The main function is the risk management forum. It is a bottom-up approach in order to strengthen southern NGOs (currently Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Mozambique) and to support them by implementing the grants.

Kate was interested what are the requirements for CS to have a voice on Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM)? She was reporting from her experiences with a country proposal about 10 years ago where she has been realizing that there is no official position for the civil society in the CCM. In her point of view there is a need for empowerment of CS in the CCM. As Michael explained there was a redefining of the guidelines for CCM about 5 years ago. Ever since the country proposals has to be signed by CCM and the GF built in a process of evaluating the multi-stakeholder involvement. The GF also gave guidelines concerning a good CS engagement. But even with the better policy it is still a challenge.

Jochen was convinced that the GF is doing a great work and Switzerland should absolutely invest more in the GF. On the other hand he expressed his scepticism about the role of CS as critical enablers. In the UNAIDS investment framework for example the focus is more on the technical side and the critical enablers are measurable things like HIV treatment as prevention or access to bed-nets. He pointed out that millions of Swiss Francs go into CS with the idea of strengthen civil society. But how can we strengthen CS and how can we measure the outcome? It might be very important for the GF in his present situation to show value for money. Mark agreed that this is a key question. We have to make sure that value for money comes at the forefront more than in the past. But at the same time we have also a social responsibility. We cannot only focus on value for money and reduce it to that, we also have to look at a broader picture and for SDC CS is a key actor. One element which has not been touched during the restructuring of the GF is the CCM. May be we should raise the question and ask if the CCM is still a model for the future? This is a question I would like to give back to you. We need the partnership with the CS to get evidence from the field.

Harry raised another severe question: What will happen in Russia or in the Ukraine after 2015 when the GF will be out of the region, but the problems are still there? In the moment the CS is doing all the treatment and the government is not doing anything. Michael: One reason might be that the GF is very successful in doing these things and has displaced the governments in a way. Partly it is also because the GF is an emergency focused organisation in opposite to sustainable focused organisations. We will have discussions how to get more sustainable.

Andreas: In the future it will become more important to integrate the strategies concerning the treatment of HIV, TB and Malaria into the community based primary health care system. This is not yet the case and we still have two systems in many regions. How will the GF contribute to the health system strengthening, what is the strategy? Michael: In the new funding model we are relying very much on the national health plans rather than being project orientated as before. We assume to find all the funding resources as well as the national disease strategies in the national health plans. For the GF it is important to make sure that CS is involved in developing these plans because often they are developed by experts and CS doesn't have a voice in it.

Helena emphasised that Switzerland's contribution to the GF is still very small. This year it was 8 Million Swiss Franks and for next year it is still open. Already in 2006 the parliament had agreed in a motion, which said that Switzerland should pay 50 Million US dollars for 2006 and 2007. This

motion had been withdrawn by SDC. Within the new message of international co-operation it is written that the GF is one of the thirteen priority multilateral organisations with which SCD is collaborating. And in the period of 2013 - 2015 a substantial raise of the Swiss contribution is planned, but still no figures are available.

Proposal by the coordinator: aidfocus.ch should decide today that the steering committee write a letter to SDC asking of a raise of 50 Million a year.

Andreas commented that it is the role of CS to claim for that, but he would appreciate if aidfocus.ch would demand less money also considering the other enormous global challenges. Harry opposed that it is not the role of CS to consider the problems of the governments. We have to face our problems and we have an HIV/AIDS problem still. It is also Marks opinion that Switzerland should increase the contribution. But even more important than the amount is how the money is used. As mentioned before what is the value for money? Barbara: I would support that a letter is written as suggested. The 50 Million should be mentioned but not formulated that we demand 50 Million but that we claim for a substantial increase.

Decision: The steering committee will follow up the discussion and write a letter to Martin Dahinden (SDC) by mentioning the 50 Millions as a fair share. Addendum: The letter was already sent.

Thanks and farewell

Helena Zweifel expressed her thanks to Michael O'Connor for his valuable inputs and as well to Marc DeSantis for his interesting contribution. The work on the Global Fund within aidfocus.ch will continue.

For the minutes:
Basel, January 2013

*Martina Staenke
Medicus Mundi Switzerland*