Understanding the institutional dynamics of Zimbabwe’s response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic

Felicity Hatendi
Edward Makondo
Mary Caesar-Katsenga
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Mary Caesar-Katsenga (Editor)
Felicity Hatendi (Principal Researcher)
Edward Makondo (Assistant Researcher)

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Felicity Hatendi holds a Masters degree in Strategic Management and has extensive professional experience in the Zimbabwean public health sector and also with UNICEF and other UN organisations. She has a strong track record in strategic management in the health sector, communication and advocacy and institutional responses to HIV/AIDS. She has worked with IDASA’s Governance and AIDS Programme as a research associate on this and other interventions.

Edward Makondo holds a Doctor of Literature and Philosophy degree, a Master’s degree in Adult Education, SRN, RMN, British Tuberculosis and Thoracic Association Certificate, Dip. N. (London), and is a Registered Clinical Teacher with the United Kingdom Central Council. He is the Principal of the Post Basic School of Nursing. Dr Makondo teaches health workers health-related subjects including research and management of health services. He also conducts and supervises research projects. He is a member of the Public Health Advisory Board of Zimbabwe.

Mary Caesar-Katsenga is the Research Facilitator in the Governance and AIDS Programme. She holds an LLB degree and a Bachelor of Arts (sociology and psychology) degree from the University of Cape Town. She worked as the National Co-ordinator for the AIDS Legal Network, focusing on human rights law, ethics and HIV/AIDS. She has contributed to and written several articles in her area of expertise and has co-ordinated a number of research projects in the area of human rights and HIV/AIDS. Ms Caesar-Katsenga has co-authored publications on AIDS and governance and has undertaken evaluations of local-level structures responding to HIV/AIDS in South Africa (a study funded by the Department of Social Services in 2002).

The Governance and AIDS Programme (GAP) staff
- Kondwani Chirambo: Programme Manager
- Mary Caesar-Katsenga: Research Facilitator
- Marietjie Myburg: Regional Media Co-ordinator
- Bernard Likalima: NGO Capacity-building Co-ordinator
- Vasanthie Naicker: Administrator
# Contents

_Acronyms_  vii
_Acknowledgements_  ix
_Foreword_  x

## 1. Introduction  
Scope of the study  1  
Research methodology  1

## 2. Country profile  
Geographic location  3  
Population  3  
System of government  4  
HIV and AIDS prevalence rates  6

## 3. Summary of institutional arrangements  
The Zimbabwe National AIDS Council (ZNAC)  8  
Sub-national AIDS councils  16

## 4. Resource mobilisation: The NATF  
Mandate and function of the NATF  24  
The NATF structure  25  
Procedures for the NATF  26  
Management of the NATF at district level  27

## 5. The ZNAC: Findings and recommendations  
Legal and policy framework  30  
The ZNAC structure  30

## 6. The ZNAC in partnership with civil society  
Civil society in the ZNAC structure  40  
The Southern African AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS)  41  
The Women and AIDS Support Network (WASN)  53  
The Child Protection Society (CPS)  59

_References_  67
Appendix 1:
Institutional arrangements established in Zimbabwe to address challenges to HIV and AIDS 68

Appendix 2:
Checklist 69

Appendix 3:
Assessment of the structures, institutions and/or processes established specifically to implement and/or co-ordinate HIV and AIDS-related interventions 70

Appendix 4:
Tool to measure HIV and AIDS organisational leadership 72

List of tables and figures
Table 1: The structure of the ZNAC 10
Figure 1: Local government structure 5
Figure 2: Distribution of funds to sub-national structures (DAAC financial arrangements) 22
Figure 3: Co-ordination structures and mechanisms for the management of the NATF 25
Figure 4: An organogram of SAFAIDS 44
Figure 5: An organogram of WASN 55
Figure 6: An organogram of the CPS 62
Acronyms

ACPDT  African Community Publishing Development Trust
AGM    Annual General Meeting
AIDS   Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV    Antiretroviral drugs
ASO    AIDS Service Organisation
CBO    Community-based Organisation
CDC    Centre for Disease Control
CPS    Child Protection Society
CSSAC  Cabinet Social Services Action Committee
DAAC   District AIDS Action Committee
DAAP   District AIDS Action Programme
DGIS   Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DMAAC  District Multi-sectoral AIDS Action Committee
GAP    Governance and AIDS Programme
HIV    Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDASA  Institute for Democracy in South Africa
MDAC   Multi-sectoral District AIDS Committee
MDC    Movement for Democratic Change
MOHCW  Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
NAC    National AIDS Council
NACP   National AIDS Co-ordination Programme
NANGO  National Association of Non-governmental Organisations
NATF   National AIDS Trust Fund
NEPAD  New Partnership for Africa’s Development
NGO    Non-governmental Organisation
OVC    Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PAAC   Provincial AIDS Action Committee
PEP    Post-exposure Prophylaxis
PLWA   Person(s) Living with HIV and AIDS
RDC    Rural District Council
RDDC   Rural District Development Committee
SAFADS Southern Africa AIDS Dissemination Service
SAT    Southern African AIDS Training Programme
STI    Sexually Transmitted Infections
SWAA   Society for Women and AIDS in Africa
TB     Tuberculosis
UC     Urban Council
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VAAC</td>
<td>Village AIDS Action Committee</td>
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<td>VIDCO</td>
<td>Village Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAC</td>
<td>Ward AIDS Action Committee</td>
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<td>WADCO</td>
<td>Ward Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASN</td>
<td>Women and AIDS Support Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAN</td>
<td>Zimbabwe AIDS Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANU-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National African Union–Patriotic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZBCA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Business Council on AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZNAC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National AIDS Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZNNP+</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National Network for Positive People</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANAC</td>
<td>South African National Aids Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Treatment Action Campaign</td>
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<td>UAC</td>
<td>Uganda Aids Commission</td>
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Acknowledgements

IDASA’s Governance and AIDS Programme (GAP) began to explore the linkages between democratic governance and HIV and AIDS during 2001, and the initial research projects focused on the institutional governance of the epidemic. This research report on the Zimbabwe National AIDS Council (ZNAC), part of a four-country study that also included Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa, reflects some of the earlier efforts of this programme to interrogate internal democratic practices and the workings of National Aids Councils in southern Africa.

We wish to state categorically that this is not an official evaluation of the ZNAC, but research work independently undertaken by IDASA-GAP with the participation of key informants from several sectors including the ZNAC.

This research work would not have been possible without the support of the Ford Foundation whose contribution facilitated the creation of GAP as a regional project. We are deeply indebted to the Ford Foundation for its continued commitment to promoting the development of new knowledge on the linkages between AIDS and governance.

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Kondwani Chirambo
Manager
Governance and AIDS Programme
Foreword

Governance of the HIV and AIDS pandemic

Understanding governance

The application of ‘good governance’ principles to HIV and AIDS is fairly new. However, since the introduction of the concept of governance into the AIDS discourse a few years ago, a substantial body of knowledge has been generated. It is now acknowledged by many experts that HIV and AIDS may have effects on the manner in which states manage their political, economic and social affairs (governance). Nevertheless, there are still gaps in understanding the relationship between the two fields. Our approach on this programme is to place the pandemic within a broader political, economic and social context and determine the interlinkages between AIDS and governance by engaging in explorative research initiatives. Given that the direction taken by the majority of African states tends toward democracy, it is more critical to contextualise the pandemic within the framework of democratic governance, which, in today’s United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) parlance, is deemed to be the equivalent of ‘good governance’. Hence, we justify the use of democratic governance – with its key elements of participation and accountability – as the more qualitative instrument for assessing the effect of HIV and AIDS and responses to it.

For IDASA-GAP, therefore, the underlying principle of this relationship is the application of democratic governance principles to the analysis of and response to the epidemic. Essential elements in this relationship are strong democratic institutions, educated citizens who participate actively in democratic processes and the establishment and maintenance of economic and social justice. Among other things, our approach emphasises that the response to the pandemic should allow for accountability and participation of all sections of society (including people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS) in decision-making processes that impact on their health and more generally on their political, economic and social well-being. Inspiration in embracing democratic governance as the governing instrument may be drawn from many academic works and statements but, more importantly, it is also to be found in Africa’s own New Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad), which emphasises the values of transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights and promotion of the rule of law as being cardinal to bolstering political and economic governance. Although governance is understood differently by different people, more critical literature
suggests that it is when we adopt a human rights approach that we achieve some form of global consensus on what constitutes the core elements of good or democratic governance.

It is here that we find that most theories of governance rely heavily on the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and international human rights instruments. In brief then, good governance requires adherence to a set of basic principles, internationally agreed upon, and these may also be applied with authority in dealing with HIV and AIDS. In this regard, international human rights instruments suggest that citizens are entitled to good governance as ‘a public good’ (Olowu & Sako 2002). This, among other things, means that the state has a responsibility to create conditions to ensure that citizens – in particular the marginalised – avoid a situation where their social, economic and political situations expose them to disease and subsequent ill health.

The definition of governance we embrace, in this regard, not only stresses the importance of global values but also underlines co-operation between the state and non-state actors:

"Governance is a set of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social processes at all levels through interaction among government, civil society and private sector.

(Cheema 2000)"

Institutional governance

Some of the literature indicates that the concept and process of governance is all encapsulating and may be divided into five main domains: political, institutional, economic and corporate as well as global (UNDP 2000).

Institutional governance, the one most relevant to this study, refers to the administrative structures and processes through which policy design and implementation, including monitoring and evaluation of those policies, are undertaken. It proposes a participatory process, while state-centred interventions are considered inappropriate. This effectively means that public policy, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS, is devised and implemented by the government (or its representatives, such as national AIDS councils (NACs), in consultation with civil society sectors including communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. Participation in public policy processes by non-state actors is said to increase capacity to deal with the problem and potentially adds to informed responses and allows for greater efficiency in delivering services.

It may be assumed that good governance in all domains would lead to economic progress and specifically to human development – poverty reduction, better education, employment opportunities and reasonably long, healthy lives – with or without HIV and AIDS.

Kondwani Chirambo
Mary Caesar-Katsenga