

Policies and strategies to break the vicious circle

Mainstreaming : how to reshape international co-operation in the context of HIV/AIDS?

Kate Molesworth, Swiss Tropical Institute

Abstract

The HIV/AIDS epidemic places in jeopardy all aspects of human development and security. It requires a prioritised and integrated international co-operation response that combines both focussed and integrated initiatives. This presentation introduces the concept of mainstreaming and how it can contribute to reshaping international co-operation in the context of HIV/AIDS. It illustrates that mainstreaming HIV/AIDS is both relevant and crucial to all sectors of development and is fundamental to food and livelihoods security, especially in low-income countries.

Mainstreaming has been defined by UNAIDS to be a process that enables development actors to address the causes and effects of HIV/AIDS in an effective and sustained manner, both through their usual work and within their workplace. Although there is no standard approach to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS, responses need to be adapted to the local epidemic and socio-cultural contexts and integrated into the development process through linkages with core activities. While mainstreaming HIV/AIDS should be initiated as early as possible, the approach is relevant at all stages of the epidemic and to both development and humanitarian assistance. Mainstreaming entails all international organisations considering their work to be in a context affected by HIV/AIDS to a greater or lesser extent, analysing how activities can be adapted to this reality and thinking from an HIV/AIDS perspective. The essential principles of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS are discussed together with some ideas for application within the food and agriculture sectors.

The Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC) regards HIV/AIDS to be a priority both in its health policy and as a transversal theme throughout other sectors. Recognising that the control of infection and mitigation of the impacts of HIV/AIDS require a comprehensive approach, in 2004 SDC launched the toolkit and resource collection "Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Practice". This will be made available to the symposium participants in English and French.