



Forum Summary

In May of 2006, Project Concern International (PCI) hosted the Africa Forum in Lusaka, Zambia. The event brought together front-line NGOs and other public health and development organizations from around Africa to learn from each other's experiences in integrating HIV/AIDS, food security, and nutrition programming. With support and financial assistance from partner organizations, PCI assembled 221 delegates to the Africa Forum from 20 countries, including: Angola, Canada, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, The Netherlands, Uganda, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Forum program proved to be without equal due to the diversity of activities over the five days, including: plenary sessions, skills building workshops, program site visits, presentations, panel discussions, poster sessions, morning motivational speakers, unique activities, and opportunities for networking and relationship building. Many of the delegates had never been to an international event prior to the Africa Forum, and some did not even have a passport, proving that this event was truly uncommon and exceptional. This was not another “power-point” driven conference; this was a unique, hands-on Forum with passionate participants, committed to making a difference in the fight against HIV&AIDS and food and nutrition insecurity.

Specific Objectives of the Forum

1. Enhance learning and information sharing between program implementers on best practices and lessons learned through presentations, workshops, hands-on training and site visits;
2. Identify gaps where information on best practices is lacking; and
3. Build and strengthen partnerships for continued learning.

Outputs and Outcomes

- Enhanced sharing of programmatic lessons learned and best practices among frontline practitioners in the areas of HIV&AIDS, food security and nutrition;
- New and strengthened networks for information sharing, action, and advocacy;
- Diffusion of information from participants to other stakeholders and implementers;
- Identification of knowledge gaps to help implementers prioritize activities and research; and
- Development of a forum agreement/accord which will be endorsed by all participants, with individual declarations of intention articulating how they will apply what they have learned.

Over the course of the week, participants shared their expertise, and learned practical solutions for improving food and livelihood security in their own communities. Participants also identified priorities and changes needed at all levels in order to make integrated HIV&AIDS and food security programming a reality. These ideas and front-line observations are captured in the Africa Forum 2006 Declaration. PCI and its Africa Forum partners plan to use the Declaration as an advocacy tool to help create a more supportive environment for integrated programming in the future.

