

Resources for key populations

INTRODUCTION

EHPSA Commissioned Nordic Consulting Group to investigate trends in resources allocated to HIV prevention for key populations (KP) in the six countries of Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia.

A baseline report was carried out in 2016, using information in the public domain. It made the following findings:

- It is not possible to accurately and comprehensively track either planned or actual spending on HIV prevention services for KPs using publicly available sources.
- Tools to track spending do exist but they are not being used routinely because countries have limited capacity and resources, and prioritise other issues.
- National AIDS Spending Assessments (NASAs), which are supported by UNAIDS, are an important resource-tracking tool but have not been kept up to date.
- Key funders and national governments classify data in different ways making it impossible to present a simple single figure for KP HIV prevention spending.
- Sensitivities around KP resource allocation seem to prevent transparency by both governments and donors.

In view of these challenges, the authors proposed a limited follow-up to track progress and update figures from a range of sources.

Work on the follow-up report was carried out from December 2017 to February 2018. It consisted of an analysis of publicly available data, a review of recent literature and telephone interviews and email conversations with a number of key informants at regional and global level. Findings are briefly described below.



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HIV PREVENTION RESOURCES FOR KEY POPULATIONS

Headline findings from the report included the following:

- Although resources from major donors for HIV prevention are decreasing, most of the six study countries are unlikely to be seriously affected.
- Over 95% of donor funding for HIV in the study countries comes from PEPFAR and the Global Fund. PEPFAR is by far the largest donor.
- PEPFAR is facing cuts in future years, but it is prioritising certain countries, including the six study countries.
- The share of PEPFAR funding to key populations doubled from 3.1% in 2016 to 6.6% in 2017 in the study countries.
- Overall, allocations from the Global Fund declined between 2014/16 and 2017/19, but again the study countries have been largely protected.
- Key populations are receiving increasing attention from the Global Fund: the 2017-22 Strategy contains a number of indicators related to KPs, and changes in policies have strengthened incentives for countries to fund KP programmes from their own sources.

Tools to track spending exist but they are not being used routinely because countries have limited capacity

FUTURE DATA SOURCES

- NASAs: National HIV/AIDS Spending Assessments (NASAs) are the most comprehensive tool for assessing spending on selected key populations.
- Stand-alone KP expenditure assessments: These would address additional questions related to the efficiency in allocation and use of resources not covered in NASAs. However, it is questionable whether the expense would be justified.
- Donor data: Both PEPFAR and Global Fund have good data on KP spending but this is not always in the public domain. PEPFAR data for 2018 can be analysed once the Country Operational Plans are finalised. The Global Fund's focus on KPs increases the potential for getting relevant data.

Alignment of data sources remain an ongoing challenge although efforts are being made by PEPFAR, the Global Fund and UNAIDS to begin aligning budget classifications.



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Data for policy and programming

The report suggests that better information on spending is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition for more informed policymaking in relation to the allocation of resources.

In countries with limited capacity, “state of the art” NASAs may not be the best way forward. More rapid “quick and dirty” approaches may be more appropriate. This must be seen in the context of some of the other major information gaps that exist - for example the size of the target populations.

The report also highlights other important inputs to the decision-making process, such as data on cost effectiveness and on unit costs. It is also important to realise that resource allocation is an intensely political process in which technical inputs play a limited role.

Resource allocation is an intensely political process in which technical inputs play a limited role

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, this review began with a focus on using publicly available information to get a comprehensive picture of expenditure on KPs as an important input to the decision-making process. The analysis and discussions that have taken place as part of this work suggests that:

- Publicly available data provides no basis for getting a clear picture on resource flows particularly for KPs;
- Lack of information on spending levels is just one of many important information gaps, and not necessarily the most important one;
- It will be important to monitor ongoing efforts to better track spending e.g. NASAs, PEPFAR dashboard, Global Fund reports; and
- There is need for greater clarity on the key information gaps that prevent more rational resource allocation and, having acquired this, a need to consider the best ways of accessing this information.