

## *Research*

# **INCLen-Africa works on governance and equity issues**

In February 2004, INCLen-Africa (IA) was granted seed funds from the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR) to develop a research proposal on the impact of governance on the equitable financing and delivery of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to HIV/AIDS clients in Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The principal proponent, Dr. Gilbert Mawera of the University of Harare CERTC, and his collaborators, Dr. Winifred Adrine Tumwikirize of Makerere CEU and Dr. Vincent Muoki Mutiso of Nairobi CEU, are currently working on the proposal to be submitted in August 2004 for the third phase of the selection process. Phase 1 involved submission of a letter of intent in May 2003. Phase 2 involved a workshop on governance, equity and health, held in Kampala, Uganda on November 10-14, 2003. The workshop facilitated revision of the pre-proposals of a selected group of investigators, including Dr. Mawera. The group that will be chosen in the 3rd phase will be granted funds to implement the full proposal.

Sub-Saharan (Eastern and Southern) Africa carries the greatest burden of HIV/AIDS in terms of morbidity and mortality. However, access to ARVs is very inadequate. Previous studies have suggested that there may be a relationship between governance (political commitment and policy progress) and health. Unfortunately, no study in this region has been done to demonstrate the relationship. IA's proposal aims to demonstrate the effect of governance on equitable financing and delivery of ARVs to HIV/AIDS clients in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. A comparative study using both cross-sectional and time-series designs will be done. It will also involve review of governance documents and ARV procurement documents. Assessment of ARV-accredited centers will also be done. Relevant data will be collected using semi-structured and structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. It is envisioned that the results of this study will be the basis for improvement of governance and equitable financing and delivery of ARVs to those who need them.

As part of the development of the proposal, the following activities have commenced in the three countries: formation of in-country teams; collection of policy documents on ARVs and other related issues; development of a data collection form (DCF) to be used during the visits to selected ARV accredited distribution centers by the Uganda team. This form will then be discussed by the whole study group for possible adoption of a uniform DCF in the three

countries. Likewise, an inter-country workshop is being organized to finalize the proposal.

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