



REQUEST FOR ABSTRACTS

Mobilizing Social Capital in a World with AIDS

Workshop to be hosted by aids2031 in Early February 2009

aids2031 is a consortium of partners* examining what the international community and local communities have learned about the AIDS response, what has been done effectively, what should and can be done differently now, and who can do it in order to change the face of the pandemic in 2031, 50 years after AIDS was first reported.

aids2031 will host a small workshop for invited scholars and practitioners to examine how factors like social capital, culture and religion are shaping and are shaped by the nature, locale, and momentum of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Social capital has been widely acknowledged and discussed among researchers and policy makers alike. Recently, however, critiques have highlighted the need to reconceptualize our understanding of social capital to emphasize its potential empowering aspects to improve the quality of life for marginalized groups. This workshop will seek to identify a conceptual approach to social capital, culture and religion relevant to policies and programs addressing AIDS in the context of the turbulence, instabilities, and environments of risk shaping the lives of individuals and groups in marginalized communities.

The goal of the workshop is to elicit innovative thinking and break new ground for ways to address the complex social and political obstacles to the successful prevention of HIV and AIDS. The workshop will examine existing data and analyses to develop recommendations for a long-term sustainable response to AIDS, which address the social, political, and economic factors shaping risk and vulnerability. Participants in this workshop will have opportunity to contribute to cutting edge analyses of the ways in which cultural attitudes and practices, religious beliefs and institutions, and diverse forms of social capital have affected and will affect the pathways taken by AIDS in various parts of the world. In addition, participants will play a key role in shaping the policy agenda for addressing AIDS over the next 25 years.

Of particular interest are:

- context analyses that will reveal which behaviors drive (or protect against) risk and vulnerability and which structural factors influence that behavior, whether those factors operate proximally or distally to the risk behaviors or vulnerable persons;

* Among the institutions involved in aids2031 are UNAIDS, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Imperial College London, Brookings Institution, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), Results for Development Institute, Communications for Social Change Consortium, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Duke University, Georgetown University, Konkuk University and Clark University, host of the coordinating unit. (See the aids2031 website (www.aids2031.org) for detailed information about all of the partners, vision and organization.)

- analyses of specific actions (policy change, legal reform, poverty reduction, etc.) that can be identified and prioritized for their effectiveness in addressing the prevention, care or treatment of HIV and AIDS;
- exploration of new social configurations and approaches to enhance engagement and capabilities for coping with HIV and AIDS; and
- the development of new methodologies to enable more effective measurement of the impact and outcomes of structural approaches, a necessity given the diversity of settings, multiple causal pathways, distance from “exposure” to outcome, range of variables, and complexity of interventions.

The conveners solicit abstracts of published or unpublished papers or analyses that capture research and experience on social capital, culture, and religion, as they relate to a long-term response to the AIDS epidemic. Ten to twelve of the submitted abstracts will be selected by the conveners for presentation at the meeting.

Papers need not be prepared specifically for this workshop; they may have been presented recently in other forums. Abstracts of comparative analyses across different settings, evaluations of structural approaches, and documentation of political or social mobilization to bring about change will be given priority. Other criteria for selection of abstracts to be presented at the workshop include:

- Relevance to the overall theme.
- Orientation toward shaping the long-term response to the AIDS epidemic.
- Representation of new voices in the dialogue on social capital and HIV and AIDS.
- Practicality for application of proposed solutions.
- An innovative perspective in proposed solutions.

In sum, what does your work have to tell both scholars and practitioners about a policy agenda for HIV and AIDS in the coming 25 years?

In addition to the authors, participants at the meeting will include 10-12 community activists, national policy experts and program implementers, who will be invited by the convening partners. Following the meeting, the conveners will prepare a document that includes summaries of the papers presented at the meeting, summarizes the key findings, presents priorities for research, and makes overall recommendations for researchers, programmers, advocates, policy-makers, and donors who are investing in a long-term response to AIDS. This document will be incorporated into aids2031’s *An Agenda for the Future* that will synthesize recommendations for policy change and long-term approaches to mitigating the impacts of HIV and AIDS.

Abstracts of approximately 300 words should be sent in PDF format to Brandon Cohen, email address: brcohen@clarku.edu, by **September 30, 2008**. Submissions will be reviewed and applicants notified regarding acceptance for the workshop by **October 31, 2008**. Completed papers are due to the conveners by **January 10, 2009**. Direct travel expenses as well as room and board will be covered by the workshop host. Exact dates and the venue for the 3 day workshop will be finalized soon.