



INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BARR, TIDES FOUNDATION SENIOR PHILANTHROPIC ADVISOR

Tides Foundation, a U.S.-based public charity and active participant with Funders Concerned About AIDS, has more than 25 years of experience as a funder of grassroots peer-reviewed grantmaking in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention, public health, international development, and community development. Tides has significant experience in the development and administration of collaborative funds that bring multiple donors together to support community-based funding mechanisms. In partnership with the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition, Tides coordinates the innovative Collaborative Fund for HIV Treatment Preparedness, which supports community-based HIV treatment advocacy and education projects in several regions around the world, including China.

FCAA Interim Executive Director Derek Hodel recently talked to David Barr, Tides Foundation Senior Philanthropic Advisor and Director of the Collaborative, about the initiative's recent foray into China.

Just briefly, explain what the Collaborative Fund for HIV Treatment Preparedness is...

Basically, the Collaborative Fund supports community-based HIV treatment advocacy and education projects in Africa, Asia, Commonwealth of Independent States/Baltics, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Funding priorities are set by a community-driven process in which Community Review Panels, made up of leading HIV treatment advocates from their regions, set funding priorities, develop and review funding applications, and make funding recommendations. Grant making processes are conducted in the dominant languages of the region or sub-region. People living with HIV/AIDS lead all aspects of the work of the Collaborative Fund. Funding is also provided for technical assistance, regional network support, and program monitoring in each region.

How was the Collaborative Fund started?

The Collaborative Fund was developed in response to recommendations from the International Treatment Preparedness Summit (ITPS), an historic 2003 meeting of AIDS treatment activists from 67 countries representing each region of the world. The ITPS recommendations call for better use of community expertise in developing treatment access and literacy programs, more control to HIV-affected communities in setting funding priorities, and stronger relationships among community advocates and donors. Tides Foundation developed the Collaborative Fund in partnership with the ITPS participants.

What exactly is treatment preparedness?

Ultimately, the effectiveness of HIV treatment access efforts depend on HIV treatment preparedness – that is, the ability of people living with HIV to overcome the stigma associated with HIV disease, access medicines and health care services in their communities and understand how to make and follow through on treatment decisions. These activities are as essential to success as the drugs themselves.

How does the Collaborative Fund work?

The Collaborative Fund grantmaking model comprises four components: 1) regional planning processes that convene a diverse and equitable array of voices and perspectives; 2) community-based peer-reviewed grantmaking; 3) support for grantees and grantmaking through funding of community-based networks and other technical assistance providers; and 4) monitoring and evaluation of grantmaking and grantee efforts to assess impact, outcomes, and process-related successes and challenges.

In each funding region, Community Review Panels, comprised of leading community-based treatment advocates and educators, set funding priorities and select grant applications for funding. Support is also provided for regional networks that facilitate the dissemination of treatment information and education approaches, develop joint advocacy strategies, and provide technical assistance to grantees. Approximately 87% of all funds are spent within the funding regions. Each Community Review Panel develops policies to ensure transparency in its funding process, protect against conflicts of interest, and to gain input from the communities they represent. In each region, local and/or regional organizations are selected to coordinate activities in their respective regions.

In what ways is the Collaborative Fund unique?

The Collaborative Fund is directed by those most vested in its success: people living with HIV/AIDS. The Collaborative Fund is a partnership with the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC), comprised of leading treatment advocates and educators from around the world. People living with HIV/AIDS are directly involved in leadership positions in all aspects of Collaborative Fund activities. The people involved in and priorities of the Collaborative Fund reflect a deep understanding of HIV treatment need in every world region, and a commitment to advance HIV treatment while also advancing gender equality and the rights of women, youth, the poor, drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men, prisoners, migrants and other vulnerable populations. The Collaborative Fund represents the first time that a global coalition of people living with AIDS has developed a funding mechanism that will allow them to set funding priorities and implement their strategies. Over 100 community-based and regional organizations around the world are already involved in Collaborative Fund activities.

The Collaborative Fund recently started work in China – what has the experience been like so far?

The Collaborative Fund convened a Community Treatment Preparedness Workshop in Kunming, China from 24-27 September 2005. The four-day meeting was attended by sixty Chinese participants, of which about fifty were people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). Sixteen out of China's twenty-eight provinces were represented. It was possibly the largest and most geographically diverse gathering of PLWHA in China ever. One participant, Zhong Jing, described herself as a joker, but was completely serious in her commitment to responding to AIDS. "I'm very tired but learned so much I wanted to know," she said at the workshop's close. "The sessions I found most useful were on project writing and management." She is currently forming a group for positive women called "Home of Colour Clouds" in Yunnan.

What are specific treatment preparedness challenges in China?

Recently, China has increased its commitment to provide antiretroviral treatment to its citizens, with a goal of treating 30,000 PLWHA by the end of 2005. This goal is clearly too ambitious and won't be achieved. But there are treatment programs across the country as part of China's "Four Frees and One Care" program. The problem is in implementation. Access to programs varies from place to place. Many PLWHA have dropped out of treatment programs due to a lack of treatment education and support. There is a need for PLWHA to be able to understand side effects, adhere to treatment, and find ways to ensure

that they can stay on treatment. Other problems faced by PLWHA in China include confidentiality issues, excessive hospital charges for CD4 testing and Opportunistic Infection treatment, a lack of treatment education, counseling and other information, and a shortage of qualified medical staff.

What was achieved at the Kunming meeting?

Through funding from Johnson & Johnson, grant making is now underway in China. The workshop set the stage for the grantmaking process, allowing participants to develop a treatment preparedness agenda. The funding priorities for the grants are determined from the workshop discussions. The review panel will make grant selections in December. But perhaps the most exciting achievement of the meeting was the establishment of a National Treatments Advocacy Network. Workshop participants elected a five person steering group to look at actions in three areas: working with drug companies to lower prices and increase accessibility of needed HIV drugs, tackling stigma and discrimination - especially within the government and its health structures, and improving the implementation of national treatment policy. As part of this new advocacy initiative, the group drafted and reviewed two public statements that will be released in the near future, one directed at a pharmaceutical company and the other regarding stigma among medical workers in China.

The full report from the workshop will be made public when it is available. A call for submissions for applications to the China Collaborative Fund will be distributed widely. Grants are available only to groups working in China on treatment access issues.

Who are the funding partners in the Collaborative Fund?

Since mid-2003, the Collaborative Fund has raised more than \$5 million for its activities. Current contributing partners include:

- AIDS Fonds Netherlands
- American Jewish World Services
- Calamus Foundation
- Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Ford Foundation Russia
- Gargarin Family Trust
- Johnson & Johnson
- Open Society Institute
- Overbrook Foundation
- Pfizer Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Stephen Lewis Foundation
- Tides Foundation
- UNAIDS
- Vanguard Associates
- WHO

Is the Collaborative Fund seeking additional funding partners?

Tides Foundation and the partners of the Collaborative Fund are now engaging in conversation with a large number of new potential funding partners to realize full funding for grantmaking activities in all eight global regions for 2006. Supporting the Collaborative Fund allows contributors to pool resources in support of HIV treatment access worldwide. A grant of \$10,000 can support a treatment education program in China for an entire year.

What steps should grantmakers who are interested in participating in the Collaborative Fund take?

Obviously, we would welcome their support! They can visit the website at www.hivcollaborativefund.org and click on "Information for Donors" or contact me (David Barr, the Collaborative Fund Director) at 212-509-1049 ext 226 or at dbarr@tides.org.