

Annex IV

Meeting Evaluation

MEETING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the meeting were that by the end of the meeting, participants would have:

- Shared lessons learned and interventions in BCC in the East, Central and Southern Africa region
- Discussed key current issues and BCC tools for HIV and AIDS
- Discussed the expansion and operationalisation of the BCC network
- Fostered linkages among BCC practitioners and those in allied professions in ECSA

Participants were asked to respond to a number of questions on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree).

In general, participants were pleased with the meeting (see Figure 1 for mean scores on questions concerning meeting objectives, specific sessions, and meeting organisation). Participants agreed that “the presentations and discussions provided valuable information and covered key current issues in BCC for HIV and AIDS” (3.4). Participants also felt that they improved their understanding of BCC issues for HIV and AIDS and their skills in planning for BCC interventions (3.2). They felt that the sessions on expanding and operationalising the BCC Network were valuable (3.3). By far, the most important aspect of the meeting was networking and forming linkages with other BCC practitioners (3.5). This was confirmed in the narrative questions where a plurality of people cited networking and meeting others as the most beneficial part of the meeting. One participant commented, “There is so much value in being able to meet with and talk to other people from different African regions. There is so much to learn from them and share with them. And there is so much that we all have to offer...”

INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

The highest rated sessions were the Youth/Stigma panels (3.4) and the State-of-the-Art presentations on Day One (3.3). The lowest rated sessions were Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (3.1) and Prevention/ABC (3.2). Other sessions ranked between these. While most people were happy with the content, participants felt the schedule was too crowded. A small number also felt that “the quality of the content of some of the presentations was nothing new.” This appeared to be a comment from the more experienced participants.

MEETING MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

Some participants did not feel that there was a good balance between presentations and participatory group exercises, although most agreed that there was a balance (3.0). Participants felt that the group work sessions provided good opportunities to exchange information (3.2). The facilitators got good marks for preparation and assisting participants (3.4). Participants felt they could participate as much as they wanted to (3.1). They also strongly agreed that the meeting was well organised (3.5). Accommodations, meals, and transportation arrangements were satisfactory according to most participants (3.4). Logistics were generally well-handled, but a large number of participants commented under “other comments or suggestions” that the location or distance between the two hotels was not good.

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

When asked what was most beneficial about the meeting, the vast majority listed networking, meeting others, sharing experiences, and learning about other programmes. The next most commonly cited benefit was the discussion/exchange of information about tools and materials.

Participants listed a wide diversity of issues to add to the meeting, but there was no consensus on any one specific issue. When asked what they would remove, most participants commented that they would limit the number of presentations and “lectures.” The session that was most commonly cited as one that could be removed was the session on existing networks.

Participants had a lot of ideas on how to improve the meeting. Most felt there should be more debate, discussion, and time for group work. Many also felt the meeting would benefit from being shortened. One participant explained, “I’d cut fewer days with a more focused agenda...” Others felt that the meeting would benefit from more PLHA participation. Other suggestions included moving the site visits to mid-week to “break the monotony,” reducing the amount of paper distributed (by including documents on a CD-ROM), and creating and distributing a participant list by the end of the first day.

Most participants plan to network, share what they have learned, and debrief colleagues after the meeting. Several were eager to participate in the Regional BCC Network.

Other than the location/transport arrangements, only two comments came up repeatedly when participants were asked for other comments or suggestions: (1) they would like more skills-building sessions and (2) they would like to hear from more non-USAID or non-USAID-funded BCC practitioners.

Figure 1: Mean Scores for Regional BCC Network Meeting Evaluation Questions

