

Road to Vienna:

Advancing the agenda of family-centred services for children affected by HIV and AIDS

An initiative known as the *Road to Toronto* was started following a meeting and discussion among child advocates at the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok in 2004. The aim was to get children on the agenda of the Conference in Toronto in 2006 in a substantial way and, to this end, four meetings in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Abuja and The Hague focused on understanding psychosocial support, its definition, measurement, implementation and evaluation. *Where the Heart is:*

http://www.bernardvanleer.org/publication_store/publication_store_publications/where_the_heart_is_meeting_the_psychosocial_needs_of_young_children_in_the_context_of_hivaids/file

written by Linda Richter, Geoff Foster and Lorraine Sherr was the direct result of the process and the document was presented as a plenary at the first CCABA Symposium in Toronto.

Many of the ideas developed during this time profiled strongly in the plenary presentation Linda Richter delivered at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in 2008 (see attached), and in the conclusions and key recommendations of the Joint Learning Initiative on Children and AIDS (JLICA) <http://www.jlica.org>, including the importance of family-centred services for children affected by HIV and AIDS. A focus on families is important because, in high prevalence settings, HIV and AIDS cluster in families by virtue of the sexual and parental transmission of HIV. Secondly, it is families that carry the heaviest load in treating, caring for and protecting children and other members directly affected by the epidemic; and, thirdly, well-functioning families play a fundamental, but as yet not fully recognized role, in the prevention of HIV transmission.

The *Road to Vienna* has been proposed by CCABA to address and energise, through a similar process of meetings and conversations as occurred in the *Road to Toronto* and the *JLICA*, the idea of family-centred services for children affected by HIV and AIDS. Two to three small meetings are envisaged, culminating in a symposium or satellite at the International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference in Vienna in July 2010, as well as a session at the CCABA pre-conference symposium.

The first meeting, to learn from a wide range of possible family-focused services for children, brought together individuals and groups with experience of family-focused services, both in the field of HIV/AIDS and beyond. This first meeting was piggy-backed on the first African conference "Promoting Family-Based Care for Children in Africa" taking place in Nairobi on the 30th of September and October 1st 2009 <http://www.anppcan.org/node/45>.

The second meeting is aimed at building a broad coalition of advocates for family-focused services, including especially marginalized groups of people affected by HIV and AIDS, such as commercial sex workers, injecting drug users and men who have sex with men. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, the children of people in especially marginalised groups are amongst the most stigmatized and under-served in the world and, secondly, the family networks that are frequently the last bastion of support for individuals in especially marginalized groups – parents, partners, and children – are seldom recognized or given support.

Like the *Road to Toronto*, we envisage the meetings as having some core participants, as well as participants specific to one of the three meetings. In addition to a CCABA Symposium and IAS Conference presentations, the initiative will also produce an integrated report on *Family-Centred Approaches to Children Affected by HIV and AIDS* and we are working on a special journal issue containing the papers presented at the meetings. A call for paper proposals will be posted in the near future, calling for submissions on work with children and families of especially marginalised people living with HIV or AIDS.