

Report

ADA-IE Event on "The Current State of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Uganda and Thailand - and challenges for SDG#3", 12th January, 2017.

The public seminar and workshop on "The Current State of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Uganda and Thailand - and challenges for SDG#3" was jointly organised by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna (IE). It started with a **panel discussion** on *Uganda's and Thailand's early comprehensive response policy to HIV/AIDS - 25 years on*. Since Uganda and Thailand were hailed as "success stories" in the 1990s and treated as the only cases in the "developing world" where the epidemic could be contained, the forum intended to open up discussions on how the picture looks like today.

After welcoming remarks from Prof. **Wolfram Schaffar** (IE) and from the Head of the Department of Quality and Themes at the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Mag. **Erwin Künzi**, the floor was given to Prof. **Juliet Kiguli** from Makerere University, Uganda. Prof. Kiguli currently holds a Guest Professorship at the Department of Development Studies at the University of Vienna, funded by ADA. She is an anthropologist, with a PhD from the University of Cologne, lecturing at the College of Health Sciences at Makerere University. Prof. Kiguli has been involved in both, development work as well as community and health related research. On the basis of her experience, she talked about "success" mechanisms of reducing and curbing HIV/AIDS prevalence in Uganda over two decades.

The second speaker was Prof. **Wolfram Schaffar** who teaches development studies and political science at the Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna. Drawing on his research on social movements, health policy and globalisation in Southeast Asia, he discussed Thailand's successful reaction to the HIV/AIDS crisis and its long-term effects on citizenship, institutions and international relations.

Mag. **Yuki Seidler**, the last speaker of the first panel, has a long working experience as country and regional officer of the International Red Cross - among other assignments as a South-east Asia Regional HIV/AIDS Programme Officer in Bangkok and as director of several multi-lateral and bilateral HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She is currently working as lecturer on health and development at the Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna. Based on her first-hand experience at times when the HIV/AIDS crisis was at its climax, she reflected on the role of leadership in successful HIV/AIDS prevention programmes.

In the second part of the event, participants were invited to join a **workshop** on *Current Challenges of HIV and AIDS with respect to the Sustainable Development Goal No.3*. The workshop was opened by Dr. **Peter Hauslohner**, who, like Mag. Seidler, is a distinguished expert on HIV and AIDS, with long-term working experience as policy planner and senior

advisor in the US State Department who designed and managed health development projects in Central Asia, the Transcaucasus, and West Africa, including projects connected to PEPFAR in Nigeria. Dr. Hauslohner critically discussed the prospects of the SDG#3 against the background of stagnating ODA and plateauing new infection rates.

The last speaker, Ma. **Marijana Grandits** from the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights, served as the director of the regional office of the World AIDS Conference 2010 in Vienna. Having served as a Green deputy to the Austrian National Council (Nationalrat), she is now academic coordinator of the Vienna master programme in HR, also contributing to the European Master Programme at the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice. In her talk “Rights here, right now” – the slogan of the 18th International AIDS Conference (IAC) in 2010, she argued that promoting and protecting human rights is still crucial for a successful response to HIV.

The workshop ended with a lively discussion among the participants. It became clear that the HIV/AIDS crisis, which - 25 years after its outbreak - appears to be overshadowed by more recent and seemingly more urgent global concerns, has left deep marks in the countries that were hit by it. Despite the impression that, with the increasing availability of ARV medication, the most serious times of the crisis are over, the prospects to reach the sub-goal of SDG#3, "Ending HIV/AIDS", under the current circumstances, seems to be rather dark.

(By Ines Höckner)