

SPA professor brings accountability to AIDS spending

For more than 20 years, billions of dollars have been pledged worldwide to curb the tragic impact of HIV/AIDS. Allan Wallis, associate professor of public policy in UC Denver's School of Public Affairs, wants to ensure the money does what it's supposed to. Working with the Lundy Foundation, a Denver-based nonprofit, he evaluated the impact of an internationally supported community center in eastern Africa on children whose parents died from AIDS. "International groups prefer to talk about the work they've done," says Wallis. "They find it harder to explain what that work has accomplished."

Two years ago, the Lundy Foundation received \$150,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation to measure the degree of physical and psychosocial support the Godfrey's Children's Center provided for more than 50 orphans in Idwele, Tanzania. "Allan and I met volunteering for the mayor's office to distribute federal monies connected with the Ryan White Care Act," says Victor Dukay, the foundation's president. "I was impressed by what he knew about the needs of HIV communities and his sense of fairness."

The center opened in April 2006 with financing from a nongovernmental organization, administration from the local community and input from the orphans themselves, who determined how they thought the center should operate. The evaluation team believed such collaboration provides greater benefits than programs unilaterally developed by donors. "These kids are already vulnerable," says Wallis. "They need a healthy support system and they probably could achieve it with much-needed financial support."

An evenly split group of 14 American and Tanzanian educators, psychiatrists and social workers partnered with community leaders to develop a

questionnaire that would gauge wellness levels among orphans. The results showed that kids at the center were as healthy as kids whose parents were alive and healthier than orphans supported by extended families.

Wallis played a significant role in analyzing the data and writing the final report. With the Lundy Foundation, he presented the conclusions in Dar-es-Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, at the World Health Organization in Geneva and to several nonprofit and governmental stakeholders. With assistance from Patton Boggs, a law firm, evaluation recommendations were presented to members of the Senate Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committee in Washington, D.C.

That is where these findings could have the most impact. The 2003 President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) committed \$15 billion over a five-year period to address the needs of communities impacted by AIDS. This year, PEPFAR is considering reauthorizing \$50 billion for another five years. Influenced by the Tanzania study, the legislation includes new language requiring impact studies for all programming.

"This is huge," say Wallis and Dukay. "Groups engaged in AIDS relief now have to prove they're helping people. We're meeting with donors and international bodies such as UNICEF to argue that collaborating with communities can best ensure a successful, measurable program." But one evaluation study isn't good enough for science, and the evaluation team is seeking corporate and foundation support for future studies.

So how does the SPA associate professor feel about working outside of the classroom? "It's a great opportunity," Wallis says. "Knowledge earns its greatest reward when it serves people who need it."

To learn more about the
Tanzania study, visit [www.lundy-africa.org/
images/links/lundy_
report.pdf](http://www.lundy-africa.org/images/links/lundy_report.pdf)

