

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Projects in Botswana

Improving Public Awareness about HIV/AIDS by Training Media Professionals

People in Botswana often receive inaccurate information about HIV/AIDS through the media because reporters lack basic knowledge about the virus and have limited access to reputable sources and evidence-based resources. This inaccurate information fosters stigma and does little to stem the spread of HIV.

Partners at the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in Gaborone and the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM) in Lusaka are working to change this through a targeted effort to improve the quality, quantity, and scope of HIV/AIDS reporting in Botswana.

With the overall objective of increasing public awareness of HIV/AIDS and its impact on all sectors of society, this south-south partnership is providing skills-based journalism training for reporters and editors, as well as timely, accurate, issue-based information on HIV/AIDS. They are also working to disseminate best practices in HIV/AIDS reporting to media outlets throughout the country.

Based on a needs assessment and situational analysis of HIV/AIDS reporting in Botswana conducted at the onset of their collaboration, partners produced a report, which they disseminated to representatives of media outlets during a symposium in November 2007. They also conducted a training for journalists titled "Media Fatigue and Stigma in Botswana: Changing Hearts, Minds, and Behaviors." Topics covered during the event included stigma and HIV/AIDS fatigue among reporters and editors.

Over the next year, partners will develop additional modules to enhance their journalist training program and conduct a "Best Practices in Quality HIV and AIDS Reporting" workshop at the Highway Africa conference in South Africa.

Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children

In response to United Nations Programme estimates that more than 20 percent of all children in Botswana

Botswana Country Overview



Botswana has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 2005 estimates placing the HIV prevalence rate among adults ages 15-49 at 24.1 percent. In real numbers that translates to some 260,000 adults and 14,000 children living with HIV. The virus has had a dramatic impact on Botswana's healthcare system—including approximately 17 percent of the country's health-care workers lost to AIDS between 1999 and 2005.

With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the United States Government team in country, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center currently manages five partnerships in Botswana.

will be orphaned by 2010, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center launched a south-south partnership linking the Marang Childcare Network in Botswana with Tanzania's Human Development Trust (HDT) in January 2008.

Together, partners are working to strengthen Marang's organizational capacity to support its network members in their efforts to deliver high quality, comprehensive care and support services to children living with, or affected by HIV and AIDS in Botswana.

Partners have conducted three professional exchanges with the most recent focusing on performing a detailed

assessment of Marang's member organizations, as well as planning for the first training workshop.

Partners are working to improve Marang's organizational management and HIV/AIDS programming capacity, as well their leadership and networking capabilities. They are also strengthening Marang's communication and monitoring and evaluation methods.

Upcoming activities include conducting policy analysis and advocacy training for Marang's members and continued organizational capacity building assistance.

Integrating Palliative Care Topics into Health Professions Education and Training Programs

The Institute of Health Sciences in Gaborone is partnering with the African Palliative Care Association (APCA) in Uganda to strengthen its capacity to provide quality palliative care education and training for pre-service and post-basic students.

Partners are focusing on faculty development on topics in palliative care. They are also working to introduce palliative care into the Institute's existing pharmacy technology, health education, and dental therapy programs, as well as to develop organizational capacity in the areas of planning, research, and monitoring and evaluation.

Partners have conducted a sensitization workshop for faculty and staff at the Institute, along with members of the local community. The workshop introduced the concept of palliative care with a particular focus on current advances in the field in Botswana to ensure that future activities are in keeping with national guidelines.

Partners also conducted a palliative care course for faculty, staff, and other interested parties that focused on an introducing hospice and palliative care concepts. Pre- and post-course evaluations were administered to determine the success of the training. The results indicated a significant improvement in knowledge and understanding of palliative care, with the pre-test average of 59 percent climbing to 82 percent on average for the post-tests.

Upcoming activities for this south-south partnership include:

- an organizational development workshop for Institute faculty and staff;
- a training-of-trainers course in palliative care that will include clinical placements for practical skills-building; and
- integration of palliative care into the Institute's curriculum.

Strengthening VCT Services

With the goal of improving access to quality HIV prevention services, including voluntary counseling and testing, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center has established two south-south partnerships linking community-based organizations in Botswana with counterpart organizations elsewhere in Africa.

Tebelepole VCT is collaborating with Kenya-based Liverpool VCT and the Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Program (BOCAIP) is working with the AIDS Support Organization in Uganda (TASO).

The overall goal of these south-south partnerships is to strengthen the capacity of Tebelepole and BOCAIP to provide quality counseling and testing programs in Botswana.

Specifically, partners are working to:

- Improve organizational capacity as a means of making HIV counseling, testing, prevention, care, and support services more readily available to children and adults;
- Strengthen organizational capacity and quality of service by developing and implementing a quality assurance program;
- Develop a comprehensive Supportive Counseling Program; and
- Share experiences of Liverpool VCT and TASO regarding implementation of an organizational capacity building program for CBOs.

Partners have conducted three professional exchanges, including an exchange to provide training and mentoring to Tebelepole VCT and BOCAIP on the establishment of post-test clubs. Partners have focused on developing post-test protocols and procedures, including a proper exit strategy for clients and improved linkages to existing support services. They have also developed informational materials for clients.

The BOCAIP/TASO partners have conducted an organizational capacity assessment of BOCAIP to guide future activities and trainings, as well as to ensure a coordinated effort among donor organizations.

Upcoming activities include trainings on child and youth counseling and supervision training to improve quality assurance in program services.

