

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 have conducted two trainings for journalists titled "Media Fatigue and Stigma in Botswana: Changing Hearts, Minds, and Behaviors." Topics covered during the workshops included stigma and HIV/AIDS fatigue among reporters and editors. Partners also produced a publication, "Inspiring HIV and AIDS Reporting in Africa," which was distributed to participants at the 2008 Highway Africa conference in South Africa.

Upcoming activities for this partnership include conducting an assessment of Botswana NGOs to determine their media relations needs. Partners are also focusing on the development of a media monitoring and evaluation toolkit for journalists.

Botswana Country Overview



Botswana has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 2008 estimates placing the HIV prevalence rate among adults ages 15-49 at 23.9 percent. In real numbers that translates to some 300,000 people under the age of 49 living with HIV. The virus has had a dramatic impact on Botswana's healthcare system — including approximately 17 percent of the country's healthcare 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.

Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children

In response to United Nations estimates that more than 20 percent of all children in Botswana will be orphaned by 2010, in January 2008 the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center launched a south-south partnership linking the Marang Childcare Network in Botswana with Tanzania's Human Development Trust (HDT).

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 a capacity assessment of Marang's 34 member organizations to identify general strengths and weaknesses of the organization and identify focus areas for further training. Information from the assessment was used to conduct a training workshop for participants from twelve member organizations focused on governance, management and monitoring and evaluation practices.

Upcoming activities include training for Marang on management and human resource issues and development of monitoring and evaluation tools.

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 in topics related to 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 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 conducted two palliative care workshops for faculty, staff, and other interested parties that focused on an introducing hospice and palliative care concepts. In addition, partners conducted two workshops on organizational development for faculty and staff at the Institute. Topics covered included the development and implementation of a policy and procedure framework, and monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

Upcoming activities for this south-south partnership include:

- 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.

Liverpool VCT has trained and mentored Tebelepole and BOCAIP in the establishment of post-test clubs. The support has focused on developing post-test protocols and procedures, including a proper exit strategy for clients and improved linkages to existing support services.

Partners have also developed informational materials for clients and are in the process of developing a comprehensive supportive counseling program. This has included a training of trainers for three Botswana partners and counselor supervision training for staff from BOCAIP, Tebelepole, and the Botswana Defense Force.

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, continued support and training on the supportive counseling program, and training on programming for sex workers and the deaf population.

