

HIV/AIDS Twining Center Projects in Kenya

Delivering Faith-based Youth HIV Prevention Programming through Targeted School- and Community-based Initiatives

Twining Center partners at the Kenya Episcopal Conference-Catholic Secretariat (KEC-CS) in Nairobi and DePaul University in Chicago are collaborating on the implementation of a youth abstinence and behavior change program targeting children in Kenya's Catholic Schools, as well as other educational institutions that request the programming.

The long-term goal of the partnership is to increase the capacity of KEC-CS to design, implement, sustain, and evaluate their faith-based prevention efforts. Specific objectives include strengthening the Kenyan partner's ability to:

- Train and support teachers in the implementation of a school-based youth abstinence and behavior change program;
- Support diocesan leaders and teachers in the implementation of a complementary Families Matter! program that targets parents; and
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation to facilitate ongoing updating, improvement, and expansion of these and related programs.

To that end, partners worked to adapt successful abstinence and behavior change models targeting young people not only to Catholic doctrine and teachings, but also to Kenya's rich and unique cultural heritage. The program they designed together contains two main components: Making Life's Responsible Choices and Families Matter!.

Making Life's Responsible Choices is a school-based abstinence and behavior change program for youth that builds on standard HIV prevention information and activities included in the Kenyan Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology's National AIDS Education Syllabus. Partners incorporated these messages with traditional Catholic and African values, drawing on the rich and varied teachings of both to better arm children with the tools they need to safeguard their health.

Kenya Country Overview



Kenya has a severe, generalized HIV epidemic, but in recent years the country has experienced a notable decline in HIV prevalence attributed in part to significant behavioral change and increased access to ART.

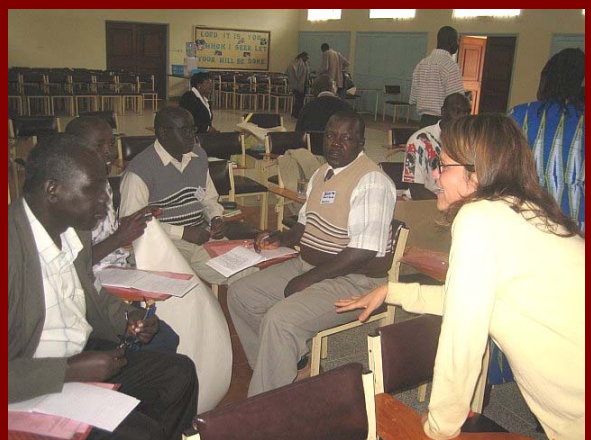
National adult HIV prevalence is estimated to have fallen from 10 percent in the late 1990s to about 6.1 percent in 2005. Women face considerably higher risk of HIV infection than men and also experience a shorter life expectancy due to HIV/AIDS. The 7th edition of *AIDS in Kenya* reports an HIV prevalence rate of 8 percent in adult women and 4 percent in adult men. Populations at risk include injecting drug users and commercial sex workers, whose prevalence rates are estimated at 53 percent and 27 percent respectively.

With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the United States Government team in country, the HIV/AIDS Twining Center currently manages one partnership in Kenya, with a second slated to commence mid-2008.

Currently, the Making Life's Responsible Choices program is being delivered in nearly 300 Catholic primary schools within 15 of the 26 Catholic dioceses in Kenya, with expansion to all 26 by the end of 2008.

The Families Matter! program further addresses the unique HIV prevention needs of Kenyan youth by aiming to increase family involvement in abstinence and behavior change. Implementation of this program commenced in 2008 among parents of children aged 11-14 in Murang'a, Machakos, Nakuru and Kitale dioceses.

Partners are working with Radio Waumini, a Nairobi-based Catholic radio station, to deliver youth and family-friendly radio messages to enhance both the Making Life's Responsible Choices and the Families Matter! programs.



DePaul partner Leah Neubauer during an interpersonal communication training session for teachers at Kenyan Catholic Schools participating in the youth HIV prevention program.



Thanks to the partnership's work, thousands of school children across Kenya have participated in HIV prevention and life skills classes that arm them with the information they need to stay healthy.



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