

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center



Field Notes

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New Partnership Will Build Social Work Training Capacity in Nigeria, Improve OVC Care

The Twinning Center recently launched a new partnership designed to train social workers and para-professionals to provide much-needed care and support to Nigerian children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in the West African nation's Enugu State.

Hunter College School of Social Work in New York City is partnering with the Federal School of Social Work in the city of Enugu and the Department of Social Work at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka.

Together, partners are working to strengthen the capacity of both Nigerian institutions to provide in-service and pre-service training in social work, case management, leadership, and other skills necessary to ensure comprehensive services are available to children and families

affected by HIV/AIDS in Enugu State.

This partnership is the Twinning Center's first in Nigeria, and was established with support from PEPFAR through CDC/Nigeria and in close cooperation with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development.

Hunter College School of Social Work will draw on its more than 50 years of experience training social workers and para-social workers, tapping into a broad and varied network of local service delivery and professional organizations, including the New York City Administration for Children's Services, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Association of Black Social Workers, the Nigerian Social Workers Association, and Howard University School of

Social Work in Washington, DC.

Partners from Hunter College and the US-based Nigerian Social Workers Association traveled to Nigeria September 22-26, where they met with their counterparts, conducted an initial situational and needs assessment at both Nigerian institutions, visited local OVC and AIDS service organizations, and began to jointly develop a plan that will guide their capacity-building efforts.



US and Nigerian partners, along with CDC and USAID officials, at the Federal School of Social Work in Enugu.



Sec. Leavitt and Ethiopian Minister of Health Dr. Tedros A. Ghebreyesus.

HHS Sec. Mike Leavitt Visits Black Lion Teaching Hospital during Visit to Ethiopia

US Sec. of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt visited Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa Aug. 11, speaking to a group of medical faculty and students at the teaching hospital, which is affiliated with Addis Ababa University. Dr. Tedros A. Ghebreyesus, Ethiopia's Minister of Health, hosted the briefing.

Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy partner Ephrem Abebe and Howard University School of Pharmacy partners Bisrat Hailemeskel and Noreen Teoh attended the event, which focused on the important role the United States plays in assisting Ethiopia and other nations to combat HIV/AIDS.

Members of the audience posed questions on topics such as the need for university-level collaboration to improve lab services and more pre-service training. The dramatic loss of 60-70 percent of recent medical school graduates to the West was also stressed.

Expanding Education and Pre-service Training to Improve HIV/AIDS Lab Services in Namibia



By offering ongoing in-service training courses like this one in May 2008, as well as pre-service education and training through the newly established bachelor's degree program, partners are helping Namibia develop a cadre of skilled medical technologists capable of supporting the provision of high quality treatment and care to people living with HIV.

AIDS is the leading cause of death in Namibia, yet the nation's response to the epidemic is impeded by a severe shortage of qualified medical technologists who play a critical role in HIV care by informing decisions about ART and related treatment by providing CD4 counts, basic metabolic profiles, and other necessary diagnostics.

Currently, there are only 160 medical technologists in the country and the infrastructure and expertise to train more lab professionals does not exist.

Members of a Twinning Center partnership launched in December 2007 with support from PEPFAR through the CDC are working to change this by establishing a new bachelor's degree program in medical technology.

The partnership links the

Polytechnic of Namibia in Windhoek with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in Little Rock.

Partners are working together to develop a nationally accredited curriculum for the medical technology program, along with related training materials. They are also focusing on faculty and organizational capacity development to ensure more effective administration, expansion, and sustainability of the new four-year degree program.

In addition to the pre-service training program, partners have also launched a continuing education program designed to strengthen the skills of practicing scientists. The Polytechnic delivered the first course May 29, 2008. Some 55 people attended the training, which was held at the US Embassy's American

Cultural Center in Windhoek.

Participants learned about the laboratory's role in the timely diagnosis of TB, as well as key elements of an effective quality control/quality assurance program for a tuberculosis lab. UAMS partner Dr. Kathleen D. Eisenbach presented a lecture on "Tuberculosis Diagnostics for the Rollout of Antiretroviral Treatment in the HIV/AIDS Epidemic" remotely from Arkansas.

A second continuing education workshop held August 5, 2008 at the Polytechnic was presented by UAMS partner Dr. Talmadge Holmes. Nearly 60 people attended his lecture on "Integration of Laboratory, Emergency Care Services, Infection Control, and Quality Assurance in HIV/AIDS Care."

VHC Volunteer Helps Strengthen Pre-service Medical Education in Ethiopia



"When you live abroad, you tend to complain a lot about Africa, but I didn't want to be negative and passive. I wanted to help change things from the inside," says VHC volunteer Fikir Zerai.

When Fikir Zerai left Ethiopia for Lyons, France in 2001 to pursue a dual degree in anthropology and psychology, she wasn't sure where life would take her. After graduating in 2004, she traveled to Canada to begin a master's program in psychopathology and clinical psychology, returning to Lyon where she completed the degree in 2007.

In December of that year, she returned to Ethiopia. "I wanted to see how things were and maybe explore the possibility of staying if the right opportunity presented itself," she explains. That opportunity turned out to be

an 11-month Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC) placement with JHPIEGO-Ethiopia helping to strengthen pre-service training programs for nurses, midwives, and medical students.

Serving as a link between JHPIEGO staff and partners Addis Ababa University Zerai is providing technical assistance for the creation of an Educational Development Center (EDC).

"Basically, the EDC help to institutionalize quality training programs and ensure that medical field graduates have adequate knowledge and skills, particularly in the area of HIV/AIDS," Zerai says.

"Our overall goal is to make sure the university is preparing students to meet the healthcare needs of people today, not 20 years ago," she continues, noting that key elements of her work include helping professors adopt a more interactive, engaging model of teaching.

"Being part of the process to strengthen pre-service education in Ethiopia is very rewarding," Zerai concludes. "I really feel I am making a lasting, positive contribution here."

The Twinning Center's VHC program in Ethiopia is funded by PEPFAR through the CDC.

Para-Social Worker Training Helps Improve OVC Care in Dar es Salaam's Temeke District

Mohamed Shurkuru is 18 years old, but with his slight frame, shy gaze, and soft-spoken manner he could easily pass for 12 or 13.

"When I was little, I remember that my mother was very sick. She would send me to a clinic in another district to get her TB medicine," Mohamed says. That was before she died, leaving him and his baby sister orphaned. "We lived with our grandmother for a while, but she was sick and became blind. It was very hard to get her the medicine she needed," he explains quietly.

"If it weren't for this place, I would have joined a gang and likely been involved in drugs," Mohamed admits.

He's talking about Nira Children and Youth Orphans Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the needs of orphans and vulnerable children and families in Dar es Salaam's Temeke District. Home to more than 1 million people, Temeke District is one of the poorest in the city, with untold thousands of children in desperate need of assistance and support.

"It is actually quite dangerous here, with gangs of children people call 'wild dogs' roaming the streets. If they come upon you alone, they will rob you of everything," says Edithrose Moyo, who founded Nira in 2005.

"I have lived in this area for many years and I have two children myself, so when I noticed more and more kids were joining these gangs rather than going to school, I began to talk with them to learn more about their problems," Moyo explains. "I wanted to help them cope with the traumas they had

been through and, little by little, I began to gain their trust" she continues, noting that many were orphaned by HIV/AIDS, living in abject poverty, or abusive situations.

Occupying a small compound leased to the organization free of charge by Moyo's sister, Nira is now home to 30 children—some orphans and others whose family situations are so desperate that the children are unable to live at home. Nira also provides home-based care and support to 25 other children and their families in a portion of the district known as "Mzasa A."

"The families we work with are in really terrible situations. Many have HIV or other illnesses that prevent them from working, so they are very poor. Most service providers do not come to remote areas of the city like this and it is a big challenge for them to access care," Moyo says, so it is up to her and her small staff of two volunteers.

They find orphans and vulnerable children through the local community development office, area churches, and by canvassing the neighborhoods themselves. "We help where we can, whether it is providing food, clothing, school uniforms, fees for books, or accommodations. We also try to link people with other organizations that can provide assistance that we cannot," Moyo says.

On site, they provide pre-school lessons to children between the ages of 3-7, teaching the youngest basic self-awareness and hygiene, as well as a lot of singing and drawing. For the 5-7 year olds, staff focus on preparing them to enter one of the six primary schools located in the district. They have also set up

a fledgling silk screen printing shop to provide useful vocational skills to the older children, such as Mohamed. All this on a shoestring budget funded primarily by small donations of money or other necessities like maize, cooking oil, and firewood.

Thanks to a para-social worker training course conducted by members of a PEPFAR-supported Twinning Center partnership funded by the American people through USAID, Moyo says she's better equipped to assess the needs of vulnerable children and help them get the care and support they need.

"The case management skills I learned have really helped me adopt a more organized approach," Moyo points out.

"I've also been using the community mobilization skills I learned to get additional support from individuals and church groups. What I learned about developing a support plan has been especially useful, and I've already been in contact with a few priests who have talked to people in their congregations about how they can support our work," she continues.

Through the Para-Social Worker Training Program, partners from the Tanzania Institute of Social Work and the University of Illinois-Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work and Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center have trained 605 social welfare officers, NGO staff, and other community caregivers. The trainings arm participants with the knowledge and skills they need to better assess the needs of orphans and vulnerable children and families, and link them to critical support services.



Edithrose Moyo and Mohamed Shurkuru display a tee-shirt and pillow case designed and printed by Mohamed and three other boys at Nira. Moyo has already received an order for 300 shirts from a local church and hopes the project will provide much-needed job skills to the center's children, as well as income to help with operating expenses.



Thanks to the skills she gained through the Para-Social Worker Training Program, Moyo is better able to assess the needs of children and families in the community and link them to care and support services.

School-based Abstinence and Behavior Change Program Empowers Kenyan Youth



St. Augustine students Brian, Frank, Crispinus, and Ferdinand all say that the ABY program has taught them to behave more responsibly and understand the potential consequences of risky and unhealthy habits, including premarital sex and substance abuse.



Teachers Stela Shilisia, Evaline Shikoli, and Judith Shibuku have all been trained to teach ABY classes. Religious Education Advisor Charles Mbalilwa oversees the program at St. Augustine and other participating schools in Kakamega Diocese.

More than 122,000 Kenyan school children between the ages of 10-14 have learned to better cope with peer pressure and avoid behaviors that put them at risk for contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, as well as developing problems with alcohol, substance abuse, and violence through a program called "Making Life's Responsible Choices."

Launched in 2006 by Twinning Center partners at the Kenya Episcopal Conference-Catholic Secretariat in Nairobi and DePaul University in Chicago, the abstinence and behavior change for youth (ABY) program focuses on empowering primary school children with lessons and life skills that help them live healthier lives. To date, the program has been implemented in 656 schools across Kenya, both Catholic and public-sponsored thanks to PEPFAR support through the CDC.

"When you are young, you don't really think before doing, but ABY makes us think about our behaviors and their consequences," says Brian, a 14-year-old pupil at St. Augustine's School for

Boys in Mukumu, a town in Kenya's Kakamega Diocese, which is located in Western Province.

Fred Mukoto, head teacher at St. Augustine's agrees. He's seen the positive results first hand in the year since the ABY program was initiated. "Not only are the children becoming more aware of what they should and should not do, they are also becoming more disciplined with a stronger focus on education and other positive things in life," he stresses.

"I am happy that I'm taking the ABY classes because they have helped me change the bad behaviors I was engaging in," says 13-year-old Ferdinand. "I used to hang around with a group of kids who watched pornography and drank alcohol, but now I know how to avoid these things."

Self awareness, building strong and amicable relationships with peers, family, and authority figures, positive behaviors such as sharing and respect for others, and, of course, staying healthy and free from HIV — these are all things ABY teaches pupils.

"ABY is having a strong impact on both students and teachers," says Charles Mbalilwa, Religious Education Advisor for Kakamega Diocese.

"It has opened up people's minds and started a dialogue about things such as sex, pornography, HIV/AIDS, and abuse that people weren't able to talk about before," he continues, explaining, "In the past, teachers just taught their lessons, but now they look at the whole child and all his needs."

"I thought the ABY classes were strange at first, but they've really helped me be a better person and decide that, for me, it's best to abstain from sex until I get married," says 12-year-old Frank.

Crispinus, 16, agrees. "We all have different goals and things we want to accomplish," he says. "Some of us are orphans without family to support us, though, and that makes it difficult. ABY helps by teaching us how to stand up to peer pressure and live a healthy, responsible life."

Radio Programs Reinforce Abstinence, Behavior Change Messages for Young People in Kenya

Partners plan to expand the content of the ABY radio broadcasts in the coming months and increase the level of student participation. They will also produce CDs that can be distributed to schools that do not have access to the radio broadcasts.

When Twinning Center partners at DePaul University and the Kenya Episcopal Conference-Catholic Secretariat launched their school-based abstinence and behavior change for youth (ABY) program in 2006, they began airing complementary messages on Catholic Church-owned Radio Waumini.

"We started with short public

service announcements to familiarize the public," says Nicholas Waigwa, a production technician and broadcast journalist at Radio Waumini.

"In the second phase, we covered content from the ABY manual and featured public health specialists and experts from the Ministry of Education with a strong background in Catholicism," Waigwa notes.

"Now, in addition to these experts, we also feature role plays done by students who have participated in ABY classes at their schools," he continues, explaining that a program targeting parents will soon be piloted as well.

Currently, the 15-minute shows air Thursday and Saturday evenings and draw an average of 500,000 listeners.

Partnership Helps Lusaka Association Become Leader in Field of Palliative Care in Zambia

Twinning Center partners at the Palliative Care Association of Zambia (PCAZ) have been working with the Kampala-based African Palliative Care Association (APCA) since 2005 to strengthen the institutional and human resource capacity of PCAZ.

With the support of PEPFAR through USAID, partners have been working to make PCAZ a national leader in palliative care advocacy and policy throughout Zambia, as well as the national custodian of palliative care standards and training.

Through the partnership, PCAZ has made great strides toward becoming a better established organization, according to Mary Margaret Mpomba, national coordinator at PCAZ.

She recalls the many challenges she and her colleagues faced when she joined the organization in July 2006 when PCAZ was a young organization struggling to settle into a cramped space with very limited staffing and resources.

"When I started at PCAZ, it was a new organization, with many things still not in place," Mpomba says. "We had only one other person on staff when I started. I felt alone and was trying to do everything myself."

With the support of APCA and other collaborating organizations, such as Catholic Relief Services, PCAZ embarked on a series of partnership activities aimed at increasing its organizational capacity.

They established management and financial policies, improved the functioning and involvement of its board of directors, learned how to better organize effective

training workshops and other events, and established monitoring and evaluation systems.

With a human resource strategy in place, PCAZ has been able to bring on additional staff. They have even been able to find a larger and more suitable office space to house their fast-growing operations.

"There is more sharing of responsibilities and we are all working together to complete our many tasks. Now we have grown not only in terms of capacity and staffing, but also in terms of a bigger and better physical space," Mpomba acknowledges. "The attitude in the office is different. There is more staff involvement, more creativity, and we are getting things done!"

Partners continue their efforts to position PCAZ as Zambia's leading advocate for palliative care. To that end, PCAZ conducted a situational analysis on palliative care in Zambia and has organized several workshops, including one focusing on advocacy for use of morphine in pain management.

APCA is assisting with the development of a PCAZ Web site and the partners will establish a palliative care resource center, which will further enhance the role of PCAZ as standard-bearers for palliative care in Zambia.

Mpomba says she knows there is plenty of work yet to do, but she is optimistic about the future of PCAZ and can see the organization assuming the lead role as a national association by providing better services to its members and driving the national policy agenda on palliative care.

She also stresses her deep appreciation for the assistance she and her colleagues have received from APCA, the Twinning Center, and the American people.

"Our partnership with APCA provides not only technical assistance and mentorship in organizational development; it helps us develop effective working relationships with other international collaborators," Mpomba underscores.

Calling APCA's Director Faith Mwangi-Powell a role model, Mpomba says, "I am amazed by her. She is hardworking and straightforward. We have become better partners with everyone through this process."

In the past year, PCAZ has demonstrated their improved leadership and capacity by conducting in April a two-day advocacy workshop on the use of morphine for pain management and palliative care. The event drew a cadre of hospice workers and District Health Management Team professionals.

Topics covered included: governing policy and law concerning morphine in Zambia; modalities for ordering morphine; safe storage and management of oral morphine; the pain control ladder; pain assessment and measuring tools; and knowledge of accessory drugs.

Following a capacity building workshop conducted by APCA in May, the partners finalized a monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework that has since been institutionalized.

"Our partnership with APCA provides not only technical assistance and mentorship in organizational development; it helps us develop effective working relationships with other international collaborators."

—Mary Margaret Mpomba, PCAZ National Coordinator



PCAZ staff at a monitoring and evaluation training conducted with PEPFAR support this summer.

Building Institutional Capacity to Train Journalists How to Effectively Cover HIV/AIDS



ZAMCOM Director Daniel Nkalamo talks about Zambia and ZAMCOM's work on the air at WMMT-FM in Whitsburg, Kentucky, during the August professional exchange.

Media coverage of HIV/AIDS in Africa has historically lacked the depth, innovation, and dedication that the epidemic demands.

Many working editors have limited or no exposure to the realities of the pandemic for individuals, families, communities, and even nations. In fact, most are unfamiliar with even basic information about HIV and its far-reaching implications for every sector of society.

ZAMCOM bolster organization and management capabilities thereby increasing efficiency.

Since the partnership was launched in May 2008, the US and Zambian partners have been assisting journalists in Zambia to gain a better understanding of HIV/AIDS issues and improve their ability to inspire and foster community mobilization for prevention, treatment, and support for those affected by the epidemic.

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in Chicago, Illinois. After the conference, they traveled to Kentucky to participate in a professional exchange.

AEJMC is a respected forum for sharing new ideas and best practices in research and teaching methodology. The ZAMCOM partners learned about many new and different ideas and programs that they can adapt for use in Zambia.



David Greer and David Thompson of the Kentucky Press Association discuss journalism and freedom of information laws with Mwiika Malindima and Daniel Nkalamo.

With PEPFAR support, the Twinning Center has linked the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM) in Lusaka with the School of Journalism at the University of Kentucky in Louisville.

Together, partners are working to strengthen ZAMCOM's institutional and administrative capacity, particularly with regard to media-based communication on the subject of HIV/AIDS. Experts from the University of Kentucky are also providing technical assistance that will help

Through a series of professional exchanges conducted in the United States and Zambia, Zambian partners have gained the knowledge and expertise they need to train peers at their own institution, as well as other journalism facilities throughout the country.

In August, ZAMCOM Director Daniel Nkalamo and HIV/AIDS and Gender Media Specialist Mwiika Malindima traveled to the United States to attend the annual convention of the

"We came back with as many books about the various subjects we teach at ZAMCOM as we could carry," Mwiika Malindima.

"We have also been receiving more books since we returned from the publishers we contacted at the conference," he explains. "These have really added to the supply in our media library and give our lecturers and students an edge over other institutions."

VHC Launches South Africa Program, Places First Volunteer at University of the Witwatersrand



Monitoring and evaluation expert Catheryne Clouse worked with UW's Reproductive Health and HIV Research Unit and various Department of Health ARV sites to improve data collection, reporting, and follow up.

The Twinning Center's Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC) launched its PEPFAR-supported program in South Africa this spring with the placement of monitoring and evaluation expert Catheryne Clouse at the University of the Witwatersrand Reproductive Health and HIV Research Unit (RHRU) in Johannesburg.

Clouse, who has significant experience in the public health arena, worked at RHRU from February-July 2008, evaluating current trends and practices in

patient information and data collection at various Department of Health ARV sites.

During her five-month placement at RHRU, Clouse worked closely with staff to strengthen their data collection efforts. She developed and helped put into operation a systematic approach to file review preparation, implementation, and follow up. Clouse also assisted efforts to increase the capacity of staff at the ARV thereby improving the collection and reporting of quality data.

In addition to her monitoring and evaluation activities, Clouse provided technical assistance to RHRU staff on the effective use of Microsoft Excel software, which better supports data management.

A second volunteer, epidemiologist Marcel Yotebieng, was placed at Harriet Shezi Children's Clinic at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg from May-July and arrangements are underway for the placement of additional volunteers in the coming months.

Conferences, Grants, and Opportunities



2009 Infectious Diseases Society of America Clinical Practice Meeting

March 20-21, 2009
San Diego, USA

Southern African AIDS Conference 2009: Scaling Up for Success

March 31-April 3, 2009
Durban, KwaZulu Natal,
South Africa

IAPAC 4th International Conference on Treatment Adherence

April 5-7, 2009
Miami, USA

The American Conference for the Treatment of HIV

May 15-17, 2009
Denver, USA

HIV/AIDS 2009: The Social Work Response

May 21-24, 2009
New Orleans, USA

3rd International Workshop on HIV Treatment, Pathogenesis, and Prevention Research in Resource-Poor Settings (INTEREST)

May 26-29, 2009
Lusaka, Zambia

36th International Global Health Council Conference

May 26-30, 2009
Washington, DC, USA

5th International Workshop on HIV and Hepatitis Co-infection

June 4-6, 2009
Lisbon, Portugal

5th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment, and Prevention

July 19-22, 2009
Cape Town, South Africa

2009 National HIV Prevention Conference

August 23-26, 2009
Atlanta, USA

National Minority AIDS Council 2009 US Conference on AIDS

Oct. 29-31, 2009
San Francisco, USA

47th Annual Meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America

Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 2009
Philadelphia, USA

American Public Health Association 2009 Annual Conference

Nov. 7-11, 2009
Philadelphia, USA

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Visit us on the Web at

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The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center mobilizes and coordinates the resources of healthcare and allied professionals in the United States and abroad to effectively build capacity to reduce HIV infection rates and provide care to those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in support of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Funded by PEPFAR through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration, the Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance, a US-based nonprofit dedicated to helping limited-resource communities make positive, sustainable changes that improve accessibility to a broad range of high-quality healthcare services and preventive programs.

The contents of this newsletter are the responsibility of AIHA and the Twinning Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States government or other funding agencies.

