

Global Program Country Profile: ETHIOPIA

NASTAD

The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) represents the United States chief state and territorial health department program directors responsible for coordinating, administering, and managing HIV prevention, care, and support services. NASTAD's Global Program works to build the organizational, programmatic and human resource capacity of its regional/state public sector AIDS program counterparts across the world. In Ethiopia NASTAD works in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Global AIDS Program (CDC/GAP) as part of the unified U.S. response to the HIV pandemic through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

HIV/AIDS IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa, and one of its most ethnically diverse, with approximately 80 nationalities with 200 different dialects making up its population of 75 million. Eighty-five percent of the population is rural and agriculture accounts for 80 percent of total employment. Ethiopia is also one of the poorest nations in the world and approximately 44.2 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.¹ Health service infrastructure is limited, poorly maintained, and unevenly distributed.

A number of underlying factors contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia including poverty, illiteracy, stigma and discrimination of those infected/affected by HIV/AIDS; high rate of unemployment; wide spread commercial sex work; gender disparity; population movement and

harmful cultural and traditional practices. HIV/AIDS, in turn, contributes to the poverty of the individual, family, community and the nation at large.²

Ethiopia implements its national response to HIV through a federal level HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO) which is directly accountable to the Ministry of Health. At the regional level, Regional HAPCOs are accountable to their respective Regional Health Bureaus, and provide support and direction to Woreda/District Health Offices.

ACTIVITIES

NASTAD's primary goal in Ethiopia is to strengthen the capacity of regional HAPCOs to support the implementation of Ethiopia's National Social Mobilization Strategy. The Strategy calls upon the community to take ownership of the HIV epidemic and make use of its own assets to prevent and control the disease. The Strategy is implemented primarily through a national social mobilization intervention known as Community Conversations. Community Conversations engage members of a community in a productive dialogue around a particular issue or set of issues. Using transformative tools, facilitators explore a community's concerns, possibilities, and opportunities for action and change. Other components of the Strategy also include ongoing implementation of strengthening public sector leadership, coordination and monitoring and evaluation functions, and promoting multi-sectoral or mainstreaming strategies.

¹ UCSF HIV InSite website accessed October 21, 2008.

² Ethiopian Strategic Plan for Intensifying Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Response (2004-2008)

Support for Regional HAPCOs

Since 2008, NASTAD staff have been located in three regional HAPCOs (Amhara, SNNPR, and Oromia). These staff work with the regional HAPCO zonal and woreda HAPCOs to enhance quality and continuity of regional Community Conversations, to support comprehensive HIV planning activities, and to promote coordination and collaboration through review and refinement of HIV service provider referral networks.

Support for Community Conversations

In 2003, NASTAD worked with federal and regional HAPCOs to develop and implement tools by which communities can plan for their own HIV needs. In 2004, NASTAD refined its community planning training model to assist communities to plan and mobilize for support of PLWAs and ART treatment adherence. In 2006, NASTAD integrated its work with federal HAPCOs roll-out of the National Social Mobilization Strategy. In 2007, NASTAD expanded its work in support of Community Conversations, providing trainings for regional and district staff in every region in the country on ART treatment adherence in the context of Community Conversations, and working with selected districts to assist them to integrate the ART treatment adherence module into ongoing local Community Conversations.

Twinning

In 2007, NASTAD began a twinning program between regional HAPCOs and HIV/AIDS sections of U.S. state health departments. This bi-directional exchange of HIV program management experiences is designed to provide support to selected regions for implementation of all areas of the National Social Mobilization Strategy. Currently, four twinning relationships are established between Amhara and Michigan, SNNPR and Maryland, Oromia and Minnesota, and the cities of Dire Dawa and San Diego. As a result of these twinning partnerships, regional training for quality management of the Community Conversations intervention has been developed and delivered, an assessment of nutrition service activities in Oromia and a planned partnership between a nutrition service agency and PLWA

support group has been initiated, as well as the planned replication of an U.S. evidence-based prevention intervention SISTAs within the prison system in Amhara.

Products

- *Community Planning for HIV/AIDS Prevention Care and Support, Training of Trainers Manual, June 2004*
- *Community Planning for Community ART Treatment Adherence, Training of Trainers Manual, April 2006*
- *Program Management for Community Conversations, Training of Trainers, January 2008*

Evaluation

An external evaluation performed in Addis Ababa in early 2004 showed that following delivery of training, 203 plans were developed, presented to, and funded by National HAPCO, and that all communities were in the process of implementing the activities generated from the planning process.

Next Steps

In 2009 and beyond, NASTAD plans to place regional coordinators in the remaining regions of the country and expand its support of regional HAPCOs to HIV prevention, by providing organizational, programmatic and fiscal support to local HIV prevention implementing partners.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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May 2009