University-based HIV Interventions

Goal and Proposed Outcomes

Based on formative assessments conducted in five regions, university students were identified as a key population in need of HIV and STI prevention interventions. At the time, universities lacked strategic policies, plans, intervention packages and a structure to respond to HIV in their institutions.

In 2011, as a part of the COSM (Community Outreach and Social Mobilization) initiative, NASTAD Ethiopia began working in close collaboration with HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Offices (HAPCOs), Regional Health Bureaus (RHBs) and university staff to design an HIV and STI Prevention Intervention Package for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This package targeted university students, staff, and the surrounding community, and was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of the university in planning, implementing, and monitoring HIV and STI interventions in an effort to achieve greater mainstreaming of HIV in the education sector (structural pillar)
- Increase responsible sexual behavior among university students, staff, and the surrounding community (behavioral pillar)
- Improve access to HIV and STI health services (biomedical pillar)

Strategy and Approach Used

NASTAD Ethiopia supported six universities in five regions (Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa) in the implementation of a wide range of activities included in the Prevention Intervention Package (see box). NASTAD Ethiopia played a leadership and coordinating role throughout the initiative, and provided technical assistance in the development of HIV policies, strategic plans, and frameworks for each university.

With NASTAD’s technical support, the Federal HAPCO, Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Health (MoH) conducted discussion forums with key stakeholders. A technical working group was established, under the coordination of HAPCO, to lead the development of strategic documents and a program framework, and baseline assessments were done to inform the ideal intervention package. NASTAD Ethiopia also played a key role in supporting the establishment of the Higher Education Institution Forum against HIV/AIDS (the Forum), designed to coordinate development of the interventions, communicate guidelines, develop strategic plans, and conduct supportive supervision. NASTAD Ethiopia also supported the Forum General Assembly annual meeting where policies, strategic plans, intervention frameworks were endorsed in the presences of state ministers and other officials.

NASTAD Ethiopia then designed and conducted trainings to build university staff capacity in HIV mainstreaming, the implementation of behavioral interventions, and the provision of HIV services. Over 100 higher education institution staff were trained on HIV mainstreaming, 17 clinical staff were trained on sexually transmitted infections management and HIV counseling and testing, and from that, 4,746 people received HIV counseling and testing, and 175 university students were treated for STIs. With NASTAD’s support, the structural, behavioral, and biomedical interventions were highly successful: the achievements are summarized in the following table.
Summary of Outcomes and Impact from NASTAD’s Technical Assistance

Through NASTAD’s technical assistance and with the leadership of HAPCO, all universities have

- Prepared and endorsed an institutional HIV policy
- Included HIV interventions in their annual plan
- Allocated budget for HIV interventions
- Approved HAPCO structure and assigned regular staff
- Assumed leadership in implementing interventions and have sustained programs

Five universities have conducted risk assessments and used the results to design needs-based interventions. Four universities established an AIDS resource center.

Intervention Impacts

According to an evaluation conducted in the six participating universities, the risk of HIV among students at participating universities is thought to have decreased due to the implementation of the University Prevention Package. SISTA, an evidence based intervention for women, is highly regarded by the university community in that positive changes have been found among participating female students.

HIV mainstreaming has resulted in a standardized and sustainable system of addressing the HIV prevention needs of university students. University leadership and senior management have been motivated to commit resources and create a system of structural interventions. NASTAD Ethiopia’s contribution is noted as a success in the development and planning of the most tangible HIV prevention activities.

Summary of Achievements of the Structural, Behavioral, and Biomedical Interventions

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<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
<th>Biomedical</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six universities produced and endorsed an AIDS policy</td>
<td>Conducted three SISTA Training of Trainers (TOT) reaching 1,200 female students at six universities</td>
<td>Conducted one training on HIV Counseling and Testing for all six universities</td>
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<td>Five universities established HIV Units and assigned permanent staff</td>
<td>Conducted four edutainment sessions at six universities</td>
<td>Conducted one Syndromic Management Training for all six universities</td>
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<td>Five universities conducted HIV/STI Risk Assessments</td>
<td>Conducted weekly Mini-Media Programs at six universities</td>
<td>Organized eight HIV Testing Campaigns allowing over 8,000 students to be tested</td>
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<td>Five universities developed comprehensive HIV Plans and allocated budgets</td>
<td>Disseminated over 10,000 leaflets and brochures on preventing HIV transmission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four universities established AIDS Resource Centers</td>
<td>Conducted four panel discussions on HIV/AIDS prevention at six universities</td>
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