

SUMMER 2011

AREAS OF FOCUS

IN BOTSWANA

- Improving Coverage of HIV-related Topics in the Mass Media
- Strengthening Community Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- Strengthening Pre- and In-Service Training on Palliative Care
- Improving Access to Voluntary Counseling and Testing Services

ABOUT US

The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center is a collaborative program of the American International Health Alliance, the US Health Resources and Services Administration, and the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that builds sustainable health system capacity through institutional partnerships and other innovative technical assistance initiatives.

CONTACT US

For more information about our projects in Botswana, please contact JANNA SMITH, AIHA Program Associate, at jgsmith@aiha.com.

Russian Health Professionals Share Expertise with Botswana through Unique AIHA Initiative



AIHA's Strategic Health Partnership Initiative, which is funded by USAID/Russia, is helping leverage institutional relationships forged through our Twinning Center partnerships in Botswana to build institutional and human resource capacity in HIV and TB lab diagnostics, histology and cytology, lab quality control and assurance, mycology, and international quality and safety standards.

From July 2009 to March 2010, with the support of Twinning Center staff based in Pretoria, AIHA placed five Russian laboratory experts in Botswana. They served as technical advisors and mentors at the National Health Laboratory and Princess Marina Microbiology Laboratory in Gaborone, and at the Nyangabgwe Hospital Health Laboratory in Francistown. Collectively, these Russian experts contributed a total of 284 professional days of

"Some of our procedures are outdated and, with regard to mycology, very much neglected because of the general lack of capacity in that area, so we've been eager to learn the new methods and techniques that Dr. Shurpitskaya has been sharing with us."

*Irene Tsimako, Lab Technician,
National Health Laboratory, Gaborone,
pictured at left with Russian mycology
expert Dr. Olga Shurpitskaya
in February 2010.*

service (the equivalent of 9 and one-half months) toward building institutional and human resource capacity in Botswana.

In September 2010, USAID/Russia awarded AIHA a five-year cooperative agreement to continue the Strategic Health Partnership Initiative and expand the Russian mentor program to other healthcare disciplines. AIHA staff from Moscow and Pretoria, along with clinical experts from Russia, conducted an assessment visit in April 2011 to determine local needs and lay the groundwork for placement of additional medical experts in the coming months.



AIHATWINNING CENTER
PARTNERS IN BOTSWANA

- Media Institute of Southern Africa - Gaborone / Zambia Institute of Mass Communication, University of Kentucky
(2007 - Present)
- Botswana Institute of Health Sciences / African Palliative Care Association
(2007 - Present)
- Tebelepole VCT / Liverpool VCT
(2007 - Present)
- Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Program / The Foundation for Professional Development
(2007 - Present)
- Marang Childcare Network / The Children's Place Association
(2008 - Present)

AIHA has so far placed four VHC volunteers in Botswana. Collectively, they have contributed a total of 32 months of professional service, helping to build organizational capacity at the Media Institute of Southern Africa, Tebelepole VCT, and the Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Program. Their efforts were made possible by the American people with funding from PEPFAR and BOTUSA.

AIHA/South Africa

The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center

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MISA/Botswana's Hearts & Minds Campaign

Twinning Center partners from MISA/Botswana, ZAMCOM, and the University of Kentucky again participated in Highway Africa, an annual pan-African media conference that was held July 5-8 in Grahamstown, South Africa. Correspondents from Radio Waumini - a Nairobi-based Catholic public broadcaster and member institution of AIHA's highly successful youth HIV prevention partnership linking the Kenya Episcopal Conference Catholic Secretariat with DePaul University in Chicago - also attended the event, marking the expansion of the Hearts and Minds Campaign to East Africa.

Partners launched Hearts and Minds two years ago with the goal of elevating the quality of HIV/AIDS reporting in Africa thereby creating an environment that reduces stigma and discrimination by giving people better access to timely, accurate, relevant information about HIV and AIDS. The campaign also encourages journalists report on the epidemic in a way that doesn't just parrot statistics, but tells real stories about real human beings.

Hearts and Minds works to create sustainability by teaching communities the skills they need to continue addressing HIV-related issues after the trainings have ceased. In turn, this process gives journalists the opportunity to tell stories that have a more human face and are ultimately more appealing to their audiences.

At Highway Africa, the Twinning Center's MISA/Botswana partners shared details of how they are tapping into different media genres and outlets, in particular through "Mafoko Mathlong" - a program that features face-to-face interaction between journalists and communities.

AIHA Volunteers Support Capacity Building

Tebelopele VCT is an NGO based in the country's capital of Gaborone that operates VCT centers and mobile testing sites throughout Botswana, as well as other support services including post-test clubs and a referral system to ensure people know where to go to get HIV care and treatment. Through the Twinning Center's Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC)

volunteer Lihn Diep spent a year working with Tebelepole's Monitoring and Evaluation Department, providing technical assistance to improve staff knowledge and organizational capacity of data management, quality, and reporting accuracy — all of which play a key role in Tebelepole's ability to meet funder requirements and secure future support.

"In support of Tebelepole's twinning partnership with Liverpool VCT in Kenya, my main activities focused on training staff on relevant data management software, including Access, Excel, and a new data application that Tebelepole would like all the centers to use moving forward, the Statistical Package for Social Science," Diep explains. Through formal training workshops, as well as more informal on-the-job training activities, Diep worked with staff to upgrade their knowledge and skills. She also helped Tebelepole develop new

standard operating procedures, implement quality assurance measures to better ensure accuracy in reporting, revised client intake forms and assisted with roll out to all centers, and spearheaded efforts to establish a text messaging referral tracking system in collaboration with a local nonprofit. Other accomplishments she achieved during her assignment included cleaning more than 600,000 data encounters logged from 2005 to 2009, recovering 26,805 data entries that had been corrupted during the input process, and developing a data dictionary to accompany the new intake forms.

