



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

DEC 18 2007

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of October 5 requesting information on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Track 1.0 prevention activities for youth. We regret our delay in responding to you. The detailed information which we solicited from Track 1.0 partners in the field caused a delay, but was critical to respond fully to your request.

The Track 1.0 Abstinence and Be Faithful for Youth (ABY) partners have significantly adjusted their programs to reflect the recommendations made by MEASURE Evaluation in March 2007. These adjustments have been documented in the partners' Fiscal Year 2008 (FY 08) Annual Work Plans submitted in mid-September to the Office of HIV/AIDS at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and in responses from each partner that we solicited to respond to your request. The implementation of these recommendations will continue to be monitored in FY 08 by USAID headquarters, and USAID field offices through site visits to partners and sub-partners. Additionally, USAID held an annual ABY partner meeting in August 2007, during which partners were further encouraged to implement the MEASURE Evaluation recommendations, especially those highlighting the need to include messages for sexually active youth and older youth in all ABY programs.

MEASURE Evaluation identified five broad areas of recommendations for the 14 ABY partners. The recommendations fell into categories of: 1) Cross-Cutting Recommendations, 2) Curriculum-Based Program Recommendations, 3) Peer Education Program Recommendations, 4) Training Recommendations, and 5) Other Recommendations. While not all partners had recommendations in each category, all were provided with the overall recommendations and additionally given recommendations

The Honorable

Henry A. Waxman, Chairman,

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform,

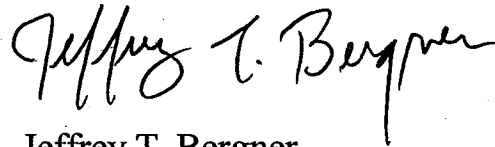
House of Representatives.

specific to their particular programs. Each of the USAID project managers requested that the ABY partners incorporate the recommendations into their programs.

In response to an USAID query, 12 of the 14 ABY partners have detailed the steps they have taken to address the MEASURE Evaluation Recommendations. In addition, all ABY partners were asked to provide feedback on their policies and procedures with regard to addressing the needs of sexually active youth (see section 2(d)). For your convenience, we have summarized the information in the enclosed document. Additionally, we are exploring the feasibility of different methodologies for evaluating Track 1 ABY partners over the next year, and will be pleased to share any information that comes out of that process.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions regarding this or any other issue.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey T. Bergner
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:

As stated.

Appendix: Overview of Recommendations made to strengthen Abstinence and Be faithful for youth (ABY) programs in response to the 2006 MEASURE Evaluation

1. CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

The first category of recommendations targeted the overall strategy and start-up of the ABY interventions. MEASURE Evaluation observed the importance of establishing a logic framework that links interventions with desired outcomes as well as the necessity to perform a needs assessment and obtain community support before implementation of the intervention.

a) Logic Model

- The two ABY partners that were given this specific recommendation have since trained all staff at the local level in logic models and created indicators to monitor the model.

b) Community Buy-In and Needs Assessment

- One partner instituted a community conversation program that creates dialogue with community members and leaders on the ABY activities being conducted.
- Another partner is now working on sensitization seminars with local government offices, schools and community leaders to solicit their support in implementation of project activities.
- This same partner has also conducted a baseline survey on beneficiaries and technical capacity assessment on local partners to determine needs and program direction.

2. CURRICULUM-BASED PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

For curriculum-based programs, MEASURE Evaluation suggested a focus on skill-building activities, as opposed to an exclusive focus on knowledge-building activities. MEASURE Evaluation suggested a standardized programmatic framework with curricula that are adapted to the local country context and language and for specifics for various populations and age groups. To maintain the skills of peer educators, MEASURE Evaluation called for refresher courses for youth, as well as follow-up for programs that have ended. Finally, they identified a gap in messages for sexually active youth on partner reduction and mutual fidelity.

a) Skill-based Lessons

- The three ABY partners that did not have skill-based activities now have incorporated such activities in their curricula.

- Seven of the partners have further focused their curricula and enhanced their skill-building activities by incorporating skill lessons into every lesson plan.
- To sustain the skills learned, two partners have instituted assignments to be done at home by youth to practice new skills, while other partners incorporate practice within group classes.
- Particular emphasis has been placed on skills for improving communication among couples, addressing sexual responsibility, and negotiation.

b) Refresher Trainings and Follow-up

- All ABY partners that provided information are conducting refresher trainings for their trainers annually, and some partners are doing so semi-annually or quarterly.
- As new curricula are developed or revised, partners are updating their trainings with local sub-partners and facilitators to familiarize them with the new curricula and to enhance uptake.
- Three partners have conducted follow-up meetings and monitoring for youth groups that have finished their curricula. In the case of other partners, as the first cohorts of youth end their programs, partners are being encouraged by USAID to perform follow-up visits to track youth retention of the training.

c) Culturally Appropriate, Local Language and Target Populations Curricula

- The ABY partners who received recommendations to make their curricula more culturally appropriate are taking steps to meet this requirement.
- Many have undergone review of their curricula and have added in country-specific stories and case studies in the new versions.
- Six partners are working on or have completed translations into local language in revised curricula editions.
- One partner has created additional fact sheets and supplements to their curricula in the local languages used in their project sites.
- One partner is adapting their curriculum to be more easily accessible to the low literacy groups they serve. They have hired a consultant to adapt the curriculum to a more understandable format.
- Many partners have separate trainings that target age-specific youth (the 10-14 year-old and 15-29 year-old age groups). Those that do not have such targeted training materials have begun adapting materials from other partners with such curricula.

d) Messages for Sexually Active Youth

MEASURE Evaluation's recommendation for messages targeting sexually active youth garnered significant response from all ABY partners. The 12 partners we heard from are all adapting curricula, adding supplemental materials or providing trainings to incorporate comprehensive messages, and all provide linkages for sexually active youth.

USAID supported these recommendations by encouraging the ABY partners during the August 2007 ABY partner meeting to enhance activities for sexually active youth. Additionally, in October 2007, USAID requested information from each partner on their activities in this area. The focus has been on increasing information for youth on fidelity, comprehensive information about condoms and linkages to services, and the role of transactional and trans-generational sex in HIV/AIDS infection. While many ABY partners had existing programs for married couples that focused on fidelity, a gap was demonstrated in reaching sexually active youth who were not married. MEASURE Evaluation found that seven of the 12 curricula being used by partners at sites visited had some condom information, but only four provided comprehensive information. Further, recognizing the role gender dynamics play in the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the role that trans-generational and transactional sex plays to increase the risk of HIV/AIDS infection, USAID has also queried the ABY partners about their programs and messages on these topics for the youth they work with.

i) Fidelity

- All 12 of the ABY partners we heard from now have created skill-building supplemental classes or whole new sections of curricula on fidelity for youth. For those that have not been able to reprint revised curricula, they have created fact sheets to be distributed.
- One partner is working with groups to address male sexual behaviors to change norms of male faithfulness in marriage.
- In FY 08, one partner plans to supplement curriculum material with Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on fidelity that will enhance the curriculum. Another partner has used radio messages to reinforce themes about youth sexuality.
- One partner is a participant on the National AIDS Council (NAC) in the country where it is operating, and through the NAC is working to create a national campaign on fidelity and partner reduction.
- A national peer educator conference was organized by another partner to discuss issues relating to partner reduction, fidelity, trans-generational and transactional sex.

ii) Condoms and Linkages to Comprehensive Services

- The partners that did not already have a curriculum on condom use and referral information, have printed their own fact sheets or used a condom fact sheet developed by the U.S. Government to quickly get the messages out. The fact sheets include comprehensive facts about condoms and referrals to locations where condoms can be obtained by sexually active youth. These sheets have been distributed to partners and youth participants.
- Peer educators and adult facilitators that did not previously have information on condoms are being trained on condom facts in order to

ensure that correct and consistent information is shared with youth and to discourage peer educators from sharing myths or inaccurate opinions.

- One partner trains religious leaders, teachers and community leaders in methods of counseling to address the needs of sexually active youth.
- Many partners incorporated mapping exercises in their trainings to help participants locate services that sexually active youth need.
- All partners that responded have created referral systems for youth to access condoms (often free of charge at local health clinics), Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) clinics, Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) treatment sites, family planning information, pregnancy testing, risk counseling, and locations for antiretroviral treatment (ART) provision.
- For some partners, accessing services in remote geographical areas of implementation is a challenge. To address this problem, one partner has joined with another NGO to provide mobile VCT services and another has supported mobile VCT services with their own funds.
- Many partners have formed formal relationships with other NGOs or the Ministry of Health that can provide these services to sexually active youth.
- One partner, with lesson plans on condoms, conducted a pre- and post-test on their first cohort of youth. They found that there was a 47% increase in the proportion of youth in the program who know of a place where they could obtain a condom, rising from 59% at baseline to 87% after training (p-value < 0.05).

iii) Trans-Generational and Transactional Sex

- Many ABY partners now provide lessons in their curricula that deal with child abuse. Some also provide information on other forms of sexual violence, as well as skill building sessions on how to say “no” to unwanted sexual advances and methods of negotiating for safer sex and condom use.
- Eight partners have created curricula chapters or whole new curricula dedicated to discussing transactional or trans-generational sex.
- One partner has reoriented their program by shifting one of their strategic objectives to focus on equipping youth to resist and avoid transactional and trans-generational sex.
- One partner has designed radio programs and discussion programs on transactional and trans-generational sex, partner reduction, and fidelity, in addition to incorporating some of these themes into a revised curriculum. They also address these issues in community meetings where HIV/AIDS is discussed and the factors that lead to transmission are analyzed.
- One partner is working to enhance male involvement in the programs about trans-generational and transactional sex.

- Another partner has created a newsletter which covers topics of faithfulness, sex for gifts, and sex with older men or women. This partner is also creating a comic book that will address these issues through a popular youth character.

3. PEER EDUCATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

All but one of the Track 1.0 ABY partners use peer education as a strategy for implementation of their programs. MEASURE Evaluation found that while peer education programs can be quite successful, there is a need for close monitoring and additional support. They recommended specific selection criteria for the youth educators, as well as the enhanced involvement of out-of-school youth. They also noted the need for retention and motivation of the peer educators by providing incentives, transportation reimbursements and opportunities for professional development. To improve message retention and accuracy, MEASURE Evaluation suggested providing peer educators with brochures they can distribute and use as a reference. They also encouraged partners to improve the knowledge and skills of those who are poor performers, partner young peer educators with older peer educators, and train all peer educators in counseling skills or provide a trained counselor for youth. Finally they encouraged partners to avoid the “cascade approach” to training, whereby trained peer educators train the next cadre of peer educators, who in turn train the next cadre of peer educators, and so forth. This approach enhances chances for dilution of message.

a) Selection Criteria for Peer Educators and Out-of-School Youth Participation

- Three ABY partners had recommendations to implement specific selection criteria for peer educators and all three have done this.
- In a revised curriculum, one partner incorporated the full set of selection criteria for peer educators suggested by MEASURE Evaluation.
- Community members and leaders are also used by these three in selecting peer educators.
- Two partners are working to increase participation of out-of-school youth.
- One partner responded by providing out-of-school youth clubs with radios, tape recorders and sound systems to enhance their activities.
- One partner is exploring additional incentives for out-of-school youth, such as creating links with other organizations that provide vocational training, art clubs, and micro-credit loans.

b) Incentives, Travel Expenses and Professional Opportunities for Peer Educators

- Six ABY partners were encouraged to provide incentives for peer educators and all six have done this.
- The six partners now provide travel reimbursements for peer educators.

- Five ABY partners use non-monetary incentives such as t-shirts, caps, pins, stickers, certificates, and lunches.
- One project provides a monthly stipend as an incentive to first-level trainers. The second-level trainers are provided with t-shirts.
- One partner has provided high-performing peer educators with bicycles which will become their property once the project has ended. This same partner, working in a coastal district, is discussing providing groups of youth with low-cost boats for outreach. Instead of reimbursing youth for their full cost of travel, 10% of the travel costs would be withheld for the cost of the boat which would become their property at the conclusion of the program. The boat could then be used for a future business project.
- Another partner is exploring the feasibility of sharing the tuition fee for peer educators for computer training at a community school.

c) Brochures for Peer Educators

- Four ABY partners were encouraged to create and distribute brochures and these four have responded with materials.
- Three partners are providing brochures and pamphlets with AB messages.
- Four partners created condom fact sheets or discussion sheets on condoms to be distributed.
- One partner has created discussion cards, playing cards and other outreach support materials.
- Another partner has drafted and distributed banners, stickers, fact sheets, CDs and videos with AB messages.

d) Supervision of Peer Educators and Partnering Older Peer Educators with Younger Peer Educators

- Four partners have taken steps to further supervise their peer educators by increasing monitoring visits and/or funds for supervisors.
- Two partners also provide monitoring tools to track the ability of peer educators to present the material accurately.
- Another partner has hired a National Youth Coordinator and inserted a tier of district coordinators to further supervise peer educators.
- Four partners have enhanced support through older peer educators partnering with younger peer educators.
- In FY 08, one partner will partner ABY peer educators with OVC kids club leaders as a mentoring strategy.

e) Counseling Skills

- Three ABY partners have incorporated counseling into their training or curricula.

- One partner invited staff from their sub-partners to attend training sessions to build counseling skills.
- One training curriculum for peer educators has been revised to include counseling skills.
- As a result of the recommendation and frequent requests from the peer educators, one partner developed a facilitators' guide for counseling and is using it to train youth leaders on the basic principles and steps involved in counseling. This partner is considering sponsoring a few youth leaders who have shown an aptitude for counseling to participate in advanced counseling training.

f) Cascade Approach to Training

- Five partners are reworking their approach to training of peer educators.
- One partner has limited cascade training to only one tier and offers booster trainings, as well as supportive supervision to ensure consistent quality.
- Two partners have switched from the cascade model to a training-of-trainers model (TOT), which will allow for greater quality control.
- Two partners have instituted checklists for each facilitation class and conduct random monitoring visits to assess the skills of peer educators.

4. TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

MEASURE Evaluation suggested that peer and adult educators be trained to respond to questions about condoms and sexuality and be given time to practice skills during lessons. A further recommendation emphasized the need for manuals to have a structure including objectives and outlines and to be implemented in their entirety.

a) Peer Educators and Adult Facilitators Trained about Condoms and Sexuality

- All 12 partners that responded to our query have enhanced training of peer educators and adult facilitators on condoms.
- Four partners have distributed condom fact sheets.
- Seven partners already have condom information in their curricula and are working to make it more comprehensive and to better train their peer educators.
- Two partners have retrained their peer educators in condom facts.
- One partner has a "Question and Answer" booklet on condoms that they are in the process of distributing to all project sites.
- Many partners now give peer educators regularly updated referral lists of locations where youth can access condoms.
- One partner's facilitators carry condoms and demonstrate the proper use as well as address myths associated with condom use.

- One partner will train 60 religious leaders to work with the community on youth sexuality topics.

b) Standardized Format for Curricula and Full Implementation of Curricula

- One ABY partner has developed a program implementation guideline with specific objectives, strategies and activities to direct the program.
- Another partner has incorporated curriculum sections with all the core elements suggested in the recommendations -- introduction, objectives, outline and skill- building activities.
- One partner in FY 07 had a quarterly review meeting with trainers-of-trainers to help align overall strategic intervention approaches. They will provide first-level trainers with training in the same manual and then follow up to ensure consistency and standardization.
- Another partner has selected one curriculum for uniformity of implementation in two countries with local adaptations to address the needs of specific audiences.
- The partner who was encouraged to ensure full curriculum implementation will conduct training with all project staff and first-level trainers on facilitation, and will underscore the need to use the guides in their entirety.
- One ABY partner has developed guidelines that state that a peer educator is not considered trained if he misses more than 2 modules of a curriculum course.

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

MEASURE Evaluation recommended that adult-led programs have a structured training with a curriculum that has skill-based lessons in local languages. They also saw a need for peer educators to work more in community interactions events. In addition to the general MEASURE Evaluation recommendations, a few partners received specific recommendations that are discussed below, such as scope of work and targets.

a) Structured Training and Curriculum for Adult-Led Program in Local Language

- Two ABY partners were given this feedback and have provided their adult facilitators with curriculum.
- As referenced previously, all partners that were recommended to put materials into local languages are taking steps to do that either through updates to curriculum or additional fact sheets in local languages.

b) Community Interactions

- Four ABY partners have increased or initiated community interactions.

- These activities include drama groups, radio listener groups for both in- and out-of-school youth and adults, theater days, parents' days, abstinence and faithfulness campaigns, and debates.
- After a community interaction, one partner hosted follow-up meetings in the communities, inviting key government, religious and civil society leaders to discuss HIV/AIDS.

c) Target Populations and Scope of Work

- One partner has reduced target numbers in order to enhance quality of the program. They have focused on reducing the number of youth trained but kept the same numbers of youth-reached targets. They have also focused on reducing the target numbers for certain partners that were struggling to reach the numbers and shifted those targets to other partners who had surpassed their goals of numbers reached.
- Another ABY partner has increased focus on in-school and out-of-school youth aged 10-24, with a reduction in focus on in-school youth in tertiary institutions.
- To enhance the quality of their program, one partner limited the geographic spread of the program and eliminated one sub-partner.
- One partner was encouraged to examine the role of one of its sub-partners in achieving their objectives. As a result of the findings, the ABY partner ceased its relationship with the sub-partner.
- As mentioned previously, one partner has reoriented their program by shifting one of their strategic objectives to focus on equipping youth to resist and avoid transactional and trans-generational sex.