

## **AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report – Tunisia Jan. 14 – 24, 2013**

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5 key words:

HIV  
RAHMA  
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Draft IEC

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**1. Scope of Work: Building capacity of RAHMA and GS++ in the use of participatory methods, and draft production of focused IEC materials for PLHIV**

Destination and Client(s)/ Partner(s)	Tunis, Tunisia. RAHMA and Groupe de Support Plus (GSP++)/Association Tunisienne de Lutte contre le Sida et les MST (ATL)
Traveler(s) Name, Role	Juan Jacobo Hernández, Consultant
Date of travel on Trip	14 – 24 January 2013
Purpose of trip	To provide technical support to PLHIV organizations in Tunisia.
Objectives/Activities/ Deliverables	<p>Main Objectives:</p> <p>A) To design, prepare and conduct a rapid training on participatory approaches for PLHIV members of RAHMA and GS++ focusing on the transferal and practice of a set of practical tools for managing group dynamics, organizing participatory sessions and improving self-help group interactions.</p> <p>B) To design, prepare and facilitate a participatory workshop aiming at producing a set of draft IEC materials that will be used to improve basic information for PLHIV in the framework of the positive health, dignity and prevention approach. Draft materials to be subsequently tested by PLHIV members of both organizations.</p> <p>C) To provide virtual follow-up with the purpose of ensuring RAHMA and GS++ accomplish the initial draft production stage.</p> <p>Activities: Organizing and executing two hands-on workshops on the use of a set of participatory tools to improve group interaction; and to produce draft IEC materials on use of ARV adherence; HIV and other co-infections; stigma and discrimination of positive MSM, women and PWID. Agreeing follow-up with RAHMA and GS++. Debriefing with ATL (Bilel Mahjoubi).</p> <p>Deliverables: Workshop agendas, workshop materials; 2 workshops facilitated, technical support provided; follow-up action plan, recommendations and next steps, mission report.</p>
Background/Context, if appropriate.	This technical assistance is part of the approved work plan for RAHMA and GS++ under the MENA Project.

**2. Major Trip Accomplishments:** Should include the major programmatic goals realized, relevant metrics, and stories of impact from the trip.

**Workshop on participatory method.** Preliminary conversations with ATL, RAHMA and GS++ indicated the need to provide members of these PLHIV groups with practical tools and skills to manage and facilitate interaction within a self-help group setting. Consultant witnessed the way discussions were held among members: generally no preliminary agenda was prepared, emerging themes and specific worries, needs and problems were addressed without specific order; people spoke at the same time and couldn't listen to each other, thus the atmosphere quickly deteriorated and became tense; many expressed anger and frustration and shouting each other out was a normal way to make oneself heard... The result: ineffective group work generating frustration, tensions and stress among involved parties.

After a rapid assessment of the situation, the consultant led a conversation with group leaders to provide PLHIV leaders with feedback and orientations which could help them be more aware of the negative impact a disorganized approach had on them personally and on their work with other PLHIVs, highlighting the fact that this chaos was a

key element that blocked the road to identify their needs and problems, to focus on important issues, to gain peer credibility or to reach consensus on any issue. RAHMA and GS++ leaders agreed that a way to move forward in this respect could be eased if they had access to a set of user-friendly techniques for facilitation.

Changing group dynamics could help them to improve their discussions and to be more aware of how a different way to relate to each other might change their approach, stimulate dialogue, manage group dynamics, organize participatory sessions and improve self-help group interactions. This process would also modify and improve the environment and their personal relations, for everybody's benefit.

A group of 12 participants from RAHMA and GS++ were present in both training events, supported by a staff member of ATL: 5 women, 4 male former IDUs, 2 heterosexual men and 1 MSM. The workshop on participatory methods was implemented over two days with a simplified training program which included five working sessions: a) setting the stage, b) rapid notions of participatory approaches, c) how to organize an activity, d) examples of participatory techniques, and e) practicing facilitation.

A couple of highlights during the training process indicated full understanding and ownership of facilitation techniques:

a) Participants demonstrated their practical skills by using very effectively a set of color cards provided to each person to manage in a friendly manner group interactions: the four color-coded card sets were distributed at the beginning of the workshop as a tool to collectively "control/facilitate" group dynamics (the red card was instructed to be used when an infraction to agreed workshop norms was identified), to stimulate participation (the green card was used when a participant liked something that another participant said or shared), to manage time (the blue card was used to indicate a person was taking too much time talking or to indicate coffee break), and to focus on the issues discussed (the yellow card was used to acknowledge the importance of something a participant was saying, but indicating that it was out of the subject).

b) Presentation of typical characters - a descriptive technique used to depict typical characters renamed as "Someone like us" - was another opportunity to observe how different facilitation skills started to become more visible. During the presentation of the characters portrayed collectively in small groups, oral narratives were quite rich and illustrated unknown and/or intimate aspects of PWID, MSM or women that many of the participants didn't know, thus gaining insights on the differences and similarities among the diverse universe of PLHIV; questions or comments made by the group to the presenter were dealt with and addressed accurately, having other group members contribute with further information or clarifications as needed. Participation was duly managed by the use of color cards.

The use of very simple, friendly visual tools worked well and were fully accepted by participants who embraced them warmly and gradually helped them to improve the working atmosphere making it easy-going, responsive and very productive. All participants recognized this throughout the training process and acknowledged its usefulness to facilitate future group work. During the feedback session, Bilel Mahjoubi, ATL's Executive Director, also acknowledged this and expressed his surprise and satisfaction on how group dynamics had so ostensibly changed in a positive way.

**The training workshop on production of draft IEC materials** took place during the following three days, with the same group of participants; its purpose was to jointly design and develop IEC materials. The workshop was based on the framework of positive health, dignity and prevention approach. Draft materials produced will be subsequently presented in preliminary formats and tested by PLHIV members of both organizations. The process followed the same plan -in a more simplified manner- of the one that took place in Beirut with Vivre Positif.

**Program activities** included the following steps: a) identifying target populations through the development of a typical person richly describing his/her needs, the interactions with his/her environment (family, community,

society), his/her knowledge and attitudes towards HIV, ARTs, prevention, sexuality, etc.; b) identifying information needs of these sub-populations: women, men, PWID, and MSM; c) identify communication objectives for each (obstacles, what's in for the audience -promise/benefits-, creativity, etc.); d) propose specific messages for each target population identified (PLHIV, +MSM, +IDUs, +women); e) develop draft materials

A detailed action plan with roles, responsibilities, calendar and products was agreed, including virtual follow-up support with the purpose of ensuring RAHMA and GS++ advance the initial draft production stage which will be finalized with direct technical support by consultant in late March.

Deliverables: Workshop agendas, workshop materials; 2 workshops facilitated, technical support provided; follow-up action plan, recommendations and next steps, mission report.

**3. Next steps:** Key actions to continue and/or complete work from trip.

Description of task	Responsible staff	Due date
Virtual follow-up and technical support to RAHMA and GS++	Consultant	1 March 2013
Hands-on workshop to finalize IEC drafts ready for validation	Consultant, RAHMA, GS++	Last week of March 2013 (TBD)

**4. Contacts:** List key individuals contacted during your trip, including the contacts' organization, all contact information, and brief notes on interactions with the person.

Name	Contact info	Home organization	Notes
Bilel Mahjoub	mahjoubi_bilel@yahoo.fr	ATL	Executive Director of ATL provides proximity support to GS++ and RAHMA. Key stakeholder whose decision making and backup of the program are necessary to ensure program activities' success
Anis Ben Jemaa	benjemaa_anis@yahoo.fr	Groupe de Soutien Plus (GS++)	Directeur du GS++. He expressed his satisfaction for being able to have now more practical tools and a better understanding on how they can improve GS++ work and interactions within the group and with newcomers
Ferdaous Srarfi	rahmaferdaous@yahoo.fr	RAHMA	President of RAHMA, also acknowledged how in a short period of time she was able to know and use some of the techniques transferred during both workshops and hopes to have further training to improve her leadership skills
Souhaila Ben Said	soubensaid@yahoo.fr	ATL/GS++	A key person in the response to PLHIV, collaborates with all parties involved as a staff from ATL, but as an active member of GS++ and supporter of RAHMA

**5. Description of Relevant Documents / Addendums:** Give the document's file name, a brief description of the relevant document's value to other staff, as well as the document's location in eRooms or the MSH network. Examples could include finalized products and/or formal presentations, TraiNet Participant List, Participant Contact sheet, and Meeting/Workshop Participant Evaluation form are examples of relevant documents.

<b>File name</b>	<b>Description of file</b>	<b>Location of file</b>
Annex 1. SUIVI atelier de janvier	Agenda of the workshop on participatory methods	Attached
Annex 2. Atelier_CCC_SantePositive	Agenda of the workshop on production of IEC materials	Attached
Annex 3.A. ProgrammeAtelierPLA Annex 3.B. Key issues to be addressed during Interviews with key stakeholders Annex 3.C. Questions clés -revise	Documentation of the results of the 2 workshop with detailed instructions about next steps for the PLHIV partners	Attached

## Annex 1

### Technical support to PLHIV organizations in the MENA region

Hammamet, Tunisie. 14 – 21 Janvier 2013

#### CHRONOGRAMME DU SUIVI

##### a) Formation rapide sur les approches/méthodologies participatives

##### b) Renforcement des capacités des membres de RAHMA / Groupe de Soutien++ en production des matériels IEC dans le cadre de santé positive, dignité et prévention

QUOI	QUI	QUAND
Saisi, documentation du processus des deux ateliers Systématisation préliminaire des produits proposés	JJH (à réviser par RAHMA-GS++/Bilel/ATL)	8 Février
Feedback des dossiers de systématisation	RAHMA/GS++ (Zied, Ferdaous, Anis, Souhaila) ATL	22 Février
Révision et feedback du trousseau d'outils participatifs pour la gestion de groupes de parole	RAHMA/GS++ (Zied, Ferdaous, Anis, Souhaila) ATL	5 Mars
Révision, identification et sélection des formats IEC, développement des premières versions des matériels. Support à distance	JJH envoie des formats suggérées – RAHMA/GS++ / ATL	5 Mars
Envoi de la version finale du trousseau d'outils participatifs...	JJH	5 Avril
Révision et raffinement et préparation des drafts pour la validation. Support à distance	RAHMA/GS++ / ATL. Support à distance de JJH	5 Avril
Envoi du guide pour la validation des GF Validation sur le terrain (4 groupes focaux -GF)	JJH. RAHMA/GS++ / ATL	22 avril
Intégration des changements, adaptation et version finale des drafts. Support à distance	RAHMA/GS++ ATL. Support à distance de JJH	17 mai
Rapport final du processus	JJH	30 mai