

AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report

AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report – Tunisia and United Kingdom

June 30 – July 6, 2013

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Debrief

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AIDSTAR-Two
Management Sciences for Health
4301 N. Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
Telephone: (703) 524-6575
www.msh.org

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1. Scope of Work: Tunisia

Destination and Client(s)/ Partner(s)	<p>1. Association Tunisienne de Lutte contre les MST/SIDA (ATL)/ ATL offices in Tunis and Sousse.</p> <p>2. Alliance Secretariat, Brighton, UK</p>
Traveler(s) Name, Role	<p>1. Sarah Johnson, Project Director, AIDSTAR-Two sjohnson@msh.org</p> <p>2. Manuel Couffignal, AIDSTAR-Two Regional Advisor, International HIV AIDS Alliance mcouffignal@aidsalliance.org</p>
Date of travel on Trip	<p>June 30- July 6, 2013 (Sarah).</p> <p>June 30-July 4 (Manuel)</p>
Purpose of trip	<p>Sarah: Conduct monitoring visit to ATL & debrief at Alliance in the UK</p> <p>Manuel: participate in monitoring visit and follow-up ongoing programmatic and administrative issues</p>
Objectives/Activities/ Deliverables	<p>Tunisia (Sarah and Manuel):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct interview with Board President of ATL to understand organizational history and his role as Board president. 2. Met with ATL Program Coordinator and MSM Peer Educators in the Tunis office to discuss their work, successes to date and any current challenges. 3. Met with PLHIV staff working on the new AIDSTAR-Two PLHIV grant and discuss their experience with the grant, progress to date and additional support needed from their perspective. 4. Review spending to date and programmatic close out activities 5. Debrief ATL visit with ATL Program Coordinator 6. Manuel: reviewed ongoing programmatic and administrative issues with program coordinator and field supervisor; discussed alternatives for utilization of PLHIV grant carryover with coordinator of the PLHIV project. <p>Alliance Secretariat, UK (Sarah)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traveled to the International HIV AIDS Alliance in Brighton in the UK to debrief on visit to ATL and discuss the overall partnership between MSH and Alliance during the AIDSTAR-Two project.
Background/Context, if appropriate.	<p>The AIDSTAR-Two project has been working in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region since October 2011 providing technical assistance and grant support to local Civil society organizations (CSOs) serving key populations in Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.</p> <p>Association Tunisienne de Lutte contre les MST/Sida (ATL) is one of these CSOs. Founded in 1990. ATL began working in HIV prevention with MSM in 2004. Also working with PLHIV, other Key Populations e.g., sex workers and</p>

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people who inject drugs. Funding over the years has come from Global Fund, USAID, Japanese, and also the US Embassy which funded the construction of ATL's office, among others. Currently ATL has Global Fund and AS-Two/USAID funding. ATL has worked with the National AIDS commission and the MOH and other partners and has played a key role in bio behavioral surveys. Very active in advocacy against stigma and discrimination and human rights abuses. ATL is continually seeking additional resources, submitting proposals to donors and advocating with the MOH. The ATL Board chair reports that ATL has been a place of tolerance and capacity building for many. ATL's relationship with the Alliance and support from the Alliance has been fundamental to their work with key populations. Recently ATL opened a second office in Tunis for work with MSM which has become very active in a short period of time. ATL is creatively using social media to provide HIV prevention education (Facebook, etc); they also receive word of human rights abuses through social media. Stigma and discrimination have been on the up-rise in the country recently. During this monitoring visit to ATL in Tunis and Sousse, the MSM team in both locations made presentations about their progress to date and challenges/needs facing them and commented on additional supported needed. The PLHIV team also made a presentation about the newer PLHIV grant. The ATL coordinator and President of the Board spoke about accomplishments and challenges/needs. ATL actions include action-oriented research, capacity building and training, outreach and education, VCT, referrals, and care and support. They are the only CSO working with all Key populations in Tunisia. Global Fund funds their sex worker and IDU activities and USAID, through AS-Two, their MSM and PLHIV activities.

2. Major Trip Accomplishments of the Monitoring Visit to ATL and Visit to Alliance Secretariat in the UK

1. Increased awareness of accomplishments and concerns in ATL MSM programs in Tunis and Sousse supported by AS-Two:

Accomplishments: rapid and successful start -up of the Sousse office (Program Coordinator: "we had not anticipated such rapid growth") and established trust with MSM community there; continued progress with MSM program in Tunis; continued advocacy against stigma and discrimination and human rights abuses (e.g. Observatory on Ethics and Human Rights, many workshops, Group Zero, etc); strides made in financial monitoring system and compliance to USAID rules and regulations thanks to TA from AIDSTAR-Two (cited as the most useful technical assistance cycle this year); use of social media (Facebook, etc.) for HIV prevention. Etc. 11 peer educators in Tunis and 8 in Sousse. The site and team in Tunis manages work outside of Tunis. The Sousse team has established linkages principally in but also beyond Sousse.

Concerns expressed by ATL: Funding interruptions have in the past destabilized community programs; resource mobilization remains an organizational challenge; discrimination and stigma toward PLHIV/Key Populations on the up-rise; UNAIDS produced a guide that does not recognize contribution of USAID toolkit published last year ---more coordination needed as AS Two has produced a lot; USAID MENA project across the region still not sufficiently known according to ATL program coordinator. Testing needs to continue to be a priority. ATL has been advocating for community testing. Attention needs to be paid to continuum of care. ATL is just one element in the continuum.

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Priorities for future according to ATL MSM team: General: Program Coordinator expressed the need to consolidate achievements (across MENA- for AS Two projects). Need to consolidate common services. Suggested a country level brochure and a regional brochure. Specific to ATL: continue on-site TA and regional meetings. The Program Coordinator also expressed satisfaction with regional workshops this year (e.g., annual planning, results/communication; PLHIV, financial management). ATL would like to expand sites if possible.

ATL Program Coordinator said that the support from AS-Two Regional Coordinator, Manuel Couffignal, was very valuable. Manuel regularly communicates with ATL. ATL would like more support from Alliance on HIV AIDS technical best practices. The Program Coordinator also expressed satisfaction with regional workshops this year (e.g., annual planning, results/communication; PLHIV, financial management) and on-site TA. He expressed, as did the Board president, appreciation for USAID support: "This project has given the opportunity for an extremely marginalized community to meet and work together."

2. Increased Awareness of accomplishments and concerns with PLHIV orgs.

Accomplishments: New PLHIV grant well underway; Juan's TA to the new PL was fundamental. RAHMA is a PLHIV organization with legal status and GS++ a support group. Both are hosted by ATL. Given the lack of managerial and financial capacity of these groups, it was agreed that during this first phase the funding would be channelled through ATL, and administered directly by the finance officer of ATL. The initial partnership included two components:

- Organizational and technical support: RAHMA and GS++ received three technical support visits between October 2012 and June 2013;
- Small grant, which enabled them to implement initial pilot activities, focusing on the development and testing of a set of participatory tools and/or IEC materials. A local workshop to develop educational materials and participatory tools was facilitated.

Between April and July 2013, RAHMA and GS++ core team completed the activities of their first work plan and in particular developed and tested various sets of cards: on ARV adherence, on positive prevention, on co-infections and STIs. They expressed their strong interest and commitment in this project. They consider the development of their own educational materials as an important achievement: they documented this experience in a case study that they have entitled: "*our first collective success*". The team is anxious to learn more and progress.

Concerns: Group needs continued support. In the next stage they need the basics of project management. These groups have huge organizational development needs in order to strengthen organizational capacity to deliver programs: core capacity building, and sustained material and technical support is needed in the next funding cycle.

3 Increased understanding of current spending of ATL on AS –Two in the last stage of AS Two: Project was a little under spent for PLHIV at this stage in the funding cycle.

Alternatives were discussed with the coordinator of the PLHIV project (procurement of a computer, undertaking courses on Word and Excel), but the activity that was eventually agreed before the end of AS-Two was a roundtable on the work of the PLHIV "socio-health workers". The meeting took place on July 24 and gathered PLHIV and various key stakeholders/service providers. The PLHIV from GS++ presented their role and activities as "accompagneurs socio-sanitaires" ("socio-health workers"), and the obstacles in the collaboration with the staff of the infectious diseases services were addressed.

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4. Assurance of continuity of support for ATL and other CSOs under LMG: Manuel and Sarah assured ATL of continued funding under LMG.

5. Debriefing at Alliance Secretariat in UK: Sarah discussed ATL visit and overall Alliance support during AS-Two. Also Menahra deliverable.

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

Description of task	Responsible staff	Due date
1. Manuel and Alliance will close out AIDSTAR-Two ATL and other CSOs in MENA. The CSO contracts will continue under LMG	Manuel	July 2013
2. Query Alliance UK about support for Resource Mobilization, a chronic problem for HIV/AIDS CSOs in the region	Manuel, Alliance UK	July
3. Continue administrative/operational/financial support to ATL and other CSOs under LMG. Subgrant management, etc.	Manuel and consultants	During LMG
4. Consider more HIV technical training/support to ATL (their request) and possibly additional support for advocacy and social media efforts	Manuel	During LMG
5. Consider how Alliance can support bio-behavioral study (MOH very skeptical of the earlier findings)	Manuel	During LMG

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 Mahjoubi	mahjoubi_bilel@yahoo.fr	ATL	Program Coordinator
Badr Baabou	baaboubadr@yahoo.fr	ATL	Sousse Coordinator
Nadhem Ouslati	oueslati_nadhem@yahoo.fr	ATL	Nurse/VCT
Issam Gritli	issamgritli@yahoo.fr	ATL	Field supervisor
Prof. Kamoun	mohamedridha.kamoun@gmail.com	ATL	Founder and Board chair
Souhaila Ben Said	soubensaid@yahoo.fr	GS++	Coordinator of GS++ and ATL PLHIV focal point
Mazen Aouainia	mazen.aouainia@yahoo.fr	ATL	ATL Finance
Catherine Simmons	csimmons@aid alliance.org	Alliance UK	manager of MENA programme
Wilson Ashimwe	washimwe@aid alliance.org	Alliance UK	assistant of MENA programme
Alain Manouan	amanouan@aid alliance.org	Alliance UK	regional Manager for West & central Alliance UK Africa
Greg Munro	gmunro@aid alliance.org	Alliance UK	Alliance UK
Awo Ablo	aablo@aid alliance.org	Alliance UK	Alliance UK
Suzie McLean		Alliance UK	Alliance UK
Daniel Rogers		Alliance UK	Alliance UK

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.

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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.

File name	Description of file	Location of file