



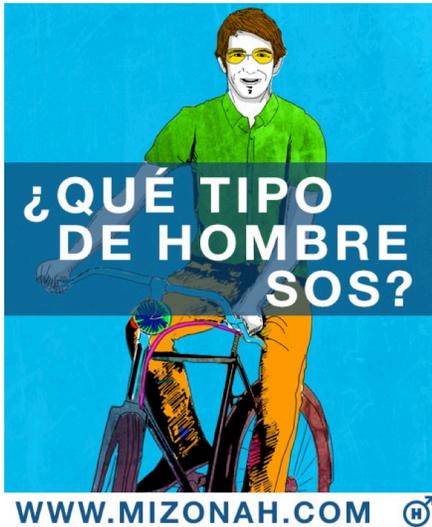
**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Combination  
Prevention for HIV  
Central America and Mexico



## Success Story

# Mi Zona H: a space in social media for men to address sexual and reproductive health issues



“I have spots on my skin in my genital area.. do you think I have an infection?”, writes Ricardo, one of more than 30,000 fans who actively participate in the *Mi Zona H* Fan Page in Facebook. This is one of approximately 30 messages received daily to the Fan Page and addressed by the Pan American Social Marketing Organization (PASMO) under the USAID Combination Prevention Program for HIV in Central America.

*Mi Zona H* is based on research conducted with men in the region to address issues related to masculinities and the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Based on the research findings, PASMO developed a multi-message, multi-channel campaign, including mass media, interpersonal communication activities and behavior change communication methodologies, in addition to the *Mi Zona H* website ([www.mizonah.com](http://www.mizonah.com)) and Fan Page in Facebook.

Under the Combination Prevention Program, the Fan Page was guided under a social media strategy known as *Research, Return and Relate*. For this strategy, the Program reviewed and gathered information and research on men at-risk for HIV, and developed key messages and posts aligned with a calendar of key dates and three levels for updates to the website and Fan Page. Additionally, Program “cyber-educators” who are trained in social media and outreach online, contribute to the frequent updates by posting information related to men’s sexual and reproductive health at least three times per week.

Messages such as that of Ricardo are received via public posts on the Fan Page or private messages to the Inbox which are responded by Program cyber-educators and HIV team members, depending on the type of query or comment. “Thank you for writing to us. The spots may be a symptom of an STI, but you should visit a doctor as soon as possible to discard an infection”, the Program responds to Ricardo.

The *Mi Zona H* Fan Page has grown exponentially into a highly active and participate space where men, regardless of sexual orientation, have found information and support on topics of sexual and reproductive health. In September of FY2013 alone, approximately 300 Fans joined per week and the sum of all posts from July to September had an estimated reach of 31 million people.

In parallel form, Program implements online outreach with men who have sex with men (MSM), including bisexual men, through the cyber-educators initiative. Cyber-educators work in online chat rooms, websites and popular social networking sites to target MSM who recur to these spaces to set up sexual encounters with other men given the high levels of stigma, discrimination and social marginalization suffered by this group in the region. Cyber-educators are trained and prepared to conduct combination prevention interventions in online channels, including behavioral outreach in the form of chats and behavior change communication methodologies adapted to online formats, and referrals to biomedical services through an online voucher which is sent via a link and available for download and printing. Additionally, and when applicable, men are referred to complementary or structural services such as treatment for alcohol and drug abuse, among others.

By the end of FY2013, the Program had reached 6,225 MSM in the region though the cyber-educators. And, in El Salvador, alone, 1 of ever 25 MSM who were referred to HIV testing and counseling services with the online voucher, effectively took an HIV test.

