

CORE GROUP, SUDAN, FINAL REPORT

October 2001–September 2006

USAID'S IMPLEMENTING AIDS PREVENTION AND CARE (IMPACT) PROJECT



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BHR	Bureau of Humanitarian Response
CORE	Child Survival Collaborations and Resources Group
IMPACT	Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care Project
OHA	Office of HIV/AIDS
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PMTCT	Preventing mother-to-child transmission
PVO	Private voluntary organization
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VCT	Voluntary testing and counseling

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2001 and 2006, the Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care (IMPACT) Project provided technical assistance to the Child Survival Collaborations and Resources Group (CORE Group). In 2002, IMPACT produced technical reference materials on an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS for the CORE Group's members. It later drafted voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) and preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) guides for use by local community health providers. The CORE Group adapted and field-tested these guides, but under guidance from US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA), the guides were abandoned since the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and USAID intended to issue similar guides. In their stead, the CORE Group, under a subagreement from IMPACT, developed a community- mobilization document, "Improving Access to and Use of Quality Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Services: A Checklist for Community-Based Health Projects."

PROGRAM STRATEGIES, IMPLEMENTATION, AND RESULTS

Introduction

In 2001, the Bureau of Humanitarian Response (BHR) requested that IMPACT provide technical assistance to the CORE Group to strengthen the private voluntary organization (PVO) response to HIV/AIDS. The CORE Group is a network of more than 35 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working together to promote and measurably improve the health and well-being of children and women in developing countries through collaborative nongovernmental organization (NGO) action and learning. BHR allocated a total budget of \$500,000 to the IMPACT project for this activity. This obligation was later reduced to \$460,000 in order to shift funds to a BHR/OFDA obligation to provide technical assistance to a pilot project in Southern Sudan.

Program Strategies and Activities

In consultation with the CORE Group, IMPACT's technical assistance focused on preparing technical reference materials for a comprehensive HIV/AIDS response and developing guides for VCT and PMTCT programming.

The reference materials produced by IMPACT provided an overview of what is required to implement an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS and described the corresponding technical interventions needed to carry out such a response. The materials covered issues such as community programming, implementing technical prevention strategies, VCT, PMTCT, implementing care and support strategies, psychosocial support, and home-based care.¹

In collaboration with the CORE Group, IMPACT developed drafts of the HIV, VCT, and PMTCT guides. After consultation with USAID/BHR, it was determined that IMPACT would develop a subagreement with World Vision/CORE Group to adapt the guides to meet the specific needs of the CORE Group's membership.

With input and feedback from IMPACT and USAID/OHA, the CORE Group further revised the originally drafted guides. The CORE HIV/AIDS and Safe Motherhood/ Reproductive Health Working Groups, along with the Umoyo Network of Malawi, held a week-long field-testing workshop of the guides in Malawi between January 24 and 28, 2005. Forty participations from CORE NGOs and their partners in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Benin, Rwanda, Angola, and the United States took part. The workshop included site visits to PMTCT and VCT programs in Malawi, presentations, and discussions. Overall, the participants provided positive feedback on the guides, finding them informative and valuable, particularly for implementers.

¹ This document can be found on the CORE Group website:
http://www.coregroup.org/working_groups/hiv_resource_materials.pdf

The CORE Group and Counterpart International then held a workshop to field test the guides in Gujarat, India from May 16–20, 2005. Twenty-five NGO participants attended the workshop, including representatives from two networks of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA), together with two representatives of the Gujarat AIDS Control Society, and nine expert presenters. Thirteen Indian partner organizations were represented. Technical presentations addressed issues such as the role and function of HIV/AIDS counseling and testing centers and strategies for PMTCT; the value and quality of pre- and posttest counseling; infant feeding options in the postnatal period; and legal and ethical issues related to community-level HIV/AIDS programs and conversations with HIV-positive clients. Participants also took part in field visits. The workshop provided participants with an opportunity to study the guides and to discuss ways to tailor them for local use in Indian communities.

Given that similar efforts were taking place within USAID, IMPACT was advised not to finalize the VCT and PMTCT guides developed by the CORE Group. In lieu of this activity the CORE Group developed “Improving Access to and Use of Quality Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Services: A Checklist for Community-Based Health Projects.”² This checklist is meant to be used by technical backstops and managers of community-based health projects who wish to increase the demand for, access to, and use of quality VCT services in their project areas. The main purpose of the checklist is to give NGOs an overview of the main questions they may need to ask as they consider working with Ministries of Health or other organizations to expand VCT services in their project areas.

The guides were written for district health staff or PVO field staff at an eighth-grade reading level, with a focus on practical, easy to use, content-rich information for locations with minimal access to health services and are presented in a visually easy-to-read format. The intention was for the guides to be produced in English and French. However, as a result of discussions with USAID/OHA, these guides were not produced. Through this sub-agreement the CORE Group developed a checklist to be used by technical backstops and field managers of community-based health projects who wish to increase the demand for, access to and use of quality VCT services in their project areas.

² This checklist can be found on the CORE Group website
http://www.coregroup.org/working_groups/Checklist_Linking_VCT_may8.pdf

ATTACHMENTS

Country Program Financial Summary

Between 2001 and 2006, USAID committed \$460,000 for IMPACT's technical assistance to the CORE Group.