

AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report – Guatemala and Honduras 04/05/10

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5 key words:

Peten, Izabel, Garifunas, HIV/AIDS, Networks

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

AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report

1. Scope of Work:

Destination and Client(s)/ Partner(s)	Guatemala City, Petén and Izabal, Guatemala Tegucigalpa, La Ceiba, and San Pedro Sula, Honduras
Traveler(s) Name, Role	Sarah Johnson, Project Director Yadira Almodovar-Diaz, Senior Program Officer Elden Chamberlin, Network Capacity Building Specialist (Guatemala only)
Date of travel on Trip	April 5-10, 2010 – Guatemala April 11-17, 2010 – Honduras
Purpose of trip	To meet with project staff to discuss progress to-date, challenges encountered and potential solutions; visit local partners and grantees to hear about the activities being implemented with the support of AS-Two; and to meet with local Missions to receive feedback on the implementation of the projects and discuss next steps.
Objectives/Activities/ Deliverables	<p><u>Guatemala:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited the networks in Petén and Izabal and conducted individual meetings with network affiliates to learn about their work, program activities, challenges and expectations. • Identified technical support needs and resources for the local staff. • Discussed and agreed on a plan to finalize the office registration, as required by USAID/Guatemala. • Met with Fidel Arévalo, AS-Two COTR in Guatemala and Brad Cronk, USAID HIV/AIDS Regional CTO to receive their feedback on the project, discuss their expectations and next steps. • Visit with REDNADS and to the South Western Network in Coatepeque. <p><u>Honduras:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed program activities with Garifunas, commercial sex workers, and MSM financed by USAID/AS-Two. • Facilitated brainstorming session in preparation for next year’s work plan. • Discussed new work plan and budget templates, performance-based financing small grant process and tools, and other technical resources such as the strategic planning training tool available at MSH. • Conducted debrief of site visits and discussed expectations for next year’s work plan with Dr. Ritza Avilez, AS-Two COTR in Honduras and Kellie Stewart, Director, Health Office.
Background/Context, if appropriate.	

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

On April 5-10, Sarah Johnson, Elden Chamberlain, and I conducted the site visit to the AS-Two project in Guatemala.

On April 5th, Eugenia, Sarah, Elden and I met Brad Cronk and Fidel Arévalo to receive their feedback on the project

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and discuss next steps. The Mission expressed their confidence in the field team and stressed the importance of accelerating the execution of grants and the implementation of activities with the networks and their affiliates. They also expressed satisfaction with the social mobilization component. We briefly discussed some of the challenges encountered so far and what has been done to address them.

Brad also informed us about the upcoming changes in the Mission. He will leave Guatemala in July to assume a similar role in the Ukraine Mission. No candidate for his position has yet been identified. The Mission is hiring a new COTR to take over the HIV bilateral portfolio.

Overall, this meeting was positive and the Mission is looking forward to seeing results prior to committing additional funding for FY 11.

On April 6th, Sarah and Fidel traveled to Petén; while Elden, Eugenia and I traveled to Izabal to meet with the networks. From our debriefing session, the team concluded that both networks are deeply committed to making a positive impact on the epidemic in their respective departments. However, we agreed that network structures and systems are nascent and that a lot of work needs to be done so they can begin functioning effectively on a long-term basis.

Before AS-Two began its activities in Petén and Izabal, the networks only met to plan activities for World AIDS Day. Although both multisectoral networks originated from a mandate of the Ministry of Health and are “formally coordinated” by the Heads of the local Health Areas, the decision making process and the involvement of local NGOs and CSOs vary dramatically between the two networks. For example, in Petén, civil society groups have a more active role in planning and deciding network priorities, while in Izabal this role is played primarily by the Head of the Health Area. In Izabal, most of the funding for network activities comes from a grant provided by UNDP, which ended in December 2009. Given the need to strengthen both – the networks themselves and their member organizations – the Guatemala team is working closely with them to set realistic goals that can be achieved this year. The team is also ensuring that USAID is aware of the issues facing the networks so they can provide additional support in the coming years.

AS-Two has made some good links with other stakeholders in Guatemala, particularly with Sister Dee Smith, the Executive Director of Proyecto Vida and the South Western Network. The AS-Two project is drawing from this Network’s experience and knowledge to shape our program activities and TA in Petén and Izabal. In addition, the project is currently documenting the lessons learned from the South West Network, and hope to use it as a case study for the network paper that Elden is developing.

Moreover, we visited several NGOs that serve PLHIV, MSM, CSW and other at risk groups, as well as the HIV/AIDS treatment and care public clinics and the Health Area Office in both departments. Some of the key challenges identified by these groups are the limited availability of HIV tests for at risk groups, the prioritization of general populations rather than focusing on groups where the epidemic is primarily concentrated, the limited and/or lack of care services for PLHIV and internal management capacity constraints.

In the case of Izabal, most of the tests available in public facilities are being reserved for pregnant women. In addition, the financial resources of many CSOs that serve MSM and CSW are very limited. For example, the organization Nuevos Horizontes, which serves CSW in Izabal, may be closed once its only financial source ends in October 2010. If this project ends, there will be a vacuum of prevention services to this at risk group in this region. Similarly, most of the funding for ARVs of the Integrated Health Center in Izabal comes from the same source (World Vision’s grant with the Global Fund).

On April 7th, Sarah and Luis Fernando Arevalo, AIDSTAR-Two Guatemala Social Mobilization Advisor, visited REDNADS, a Guatemalan NGO formed by men and women with sexual diversity, which is leading the

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implementation phase of the social mobilization program.

On April 8th and 9th, Sarah, Yadira, Elden, Eugenia, Melinee Caal (AS-Two consultant hired to document the Network experience) traveled to Coatepeque to meet with Sister Dee and observe a regular meeting of the South Western Network. In addition to the AS-Two team, Dr. Lucrecia Castillo, HIV/AIDS Health Officer, Heidi Mihm, Central American PEPFAR Regional Coordinator, and Dr. Miguel Angel Marroqui from Capacity Plus, also participated in the meeting.

To ensure full participation of all their affiliates, the South Western Network is structured in four committees: 1) Coordination Committee is in charge of the overall programmatic, administrative and financial management of the Network; 2) Communications Committee is responsible for internal and external communication-related activities; 3) Epidemiologic Committee is responsible for collecting, analysis and developing a bi-annual bulletin to disseminate HIV-related data from the four departments that formed the Network; and 4) Human Rights Committee is in charge of following up on issues related to human rights violations.

The July-December 2009 Epidemiologic Bulletin was released and discussed during this meeting. In addition, two of the newest network affiliates presented a summary of their services and activities. From this visit emerged the idea of developing a Network 101 Development Guide as part of the Core activities of AS-Two, which will be discussed with USAID/Washington.

On April 9th, Sarah, Eugenia, Lilian and Yadira met with Noe Errazo Bautista, the lawyer contracted to complete the office registration process. Given the new requirements of USAID/Guatemala, all cooperating agencies must be registered in Guatemala by September 30, 2010. The Mission has authorized all CAs to use some project funds to cover part of the expenses. The rest of the costs will be covered by MSH corporate.

The site visit was concluded with a staff meeting to assess staff needs and obstacles, as well as to provide guidance on financial and administrative procedures.

On April 10-17, Sarah and Yadira visited the project in Honduras.

On April 11th, we were debriefed on the Business Planning for Health (BPH) TOT by the facilitators (Cecilia Boada and Eliana Monteforte) and Licida Bautista, AS-Two COP. Five AS-Two staff were trained to implement the BPH with the project's grantees during this project year.

On April 11-12, Sarah, Yadira, Licida, and Fressia Cerna (AS-Two HIV Manager) traveled to San Pedro Sula and Comayagua to observed prevention activities conducted by the following AIDSTAR-Two grantee NGOs:

- 1) *Comisión de Acción Social Menonita* (CASM) – youth theater play for the Garifuna community in Bajamar and a women's workshop on condom negotiation in Travesia, San Pedro Sula.
- 2) *Comunidad Gay Sampedrana* (CGSSI) – an educational game called Campeonsida (similar to Jeopardy but focused on HIV prevention, care and treatment-related questions) with MSM leaders in Chamelecón, San Pedro Sula.
- 3) *Asociación Hondureña Mujer y Familia* (AHMF) – VCT mobile van that serve primarily CSW and their partners in a hot spot of a local market in Comayagua.

These activities are financed through grant agreements with AIDSTAR-Two.

On April 14th, we had a staff meeting where Sarah and Yadira presented an overview of MSH and the entire AS-Two project. Each program manager also presented their respective programmatic areas (capacity-building activities under IR1, social mobilization under IR 2, AS-Two grantee activities under IR 3, M&E and financially-related activities for the overall project). These presentations were used as a basis to facilitate a brainstorming session for

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next year's activities.

On April 15th, Sarah, Licida and Yadira met with Dr. Ritza Avilez and Kellie Stewart to discuss their impressions on the project and their expectations for FY 11. Ritza and Kellie expressed their satisfaction with the overall project and team. According to Kellie, from the three intermediate results, the social mobilization component is the most exciting because “there is no experience like this in Honduras or in the Region.” The social mobilization activities are “driving a lot of attention from the local Mission as well as from the staff at OHA.” Kellie recommended that we document the process and the outcomes of this component.

Kellie also confirmed that AS-Two will receive the remaining \$525,000 obligation for FY 10 and approximately \$2.3 million for FY 11. The exact amount will be confirmed within the next 2-3 weeks. With regards to FY 11 activities, Kellie and Ritza recommended: (1) focusing on capacity building activities that can prepare some of the grantees to become contractors of the Ministry of Health (this is part of the service delivery model under the new Health Reform); (2) ensuring successful collaboration between the grantees that serve MSM and CSW and the VICITS (Vigilancia Centinela para las Infecciones de Transmisión Sexual) program in San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa and La Ceiba; (3) reviewing our technical assistance model to ensure a more systematic and continued support to the weakest NGOs located in the North-Atlantic region of the country; (4) in the upcoming RFP, include the implementation of the social mobilization plan and new prevention strategies under IR 3. The Mission would like us to keep the three IRs we are currently implementing.

According to Kellie, the original Microsoft Project (MSP) work plan template was hard to understand because no one “could pick it up and understand the overall project. That’s why we [the Mission] asked for a narrative.” Sarah presented the option of using the LMS work plan template (similarly to ULAT’s), and they seemed to be open to this option as long as we also submit a short narrative.

Ritza also informed us about the transition of ULAT’s HIV communication component for Garifuna communities to AS-Two. The component includes: youth theatre groups, radio-novelas, and community mobilization focused on HIV prevention activities. The Mission already discussed the request with ULAT and asked us to work on a plan to take over this component prior to the end of November, when ULAT is scheduled to close-out.

On April 16, we participated in the first part of the Social Mobilization Core Group meeting. This group is formed by MSH and trans leaders, as well as representatives of UNAIDS, the MOH, the VICITS program, and other health-related organizations. A group member presented a summary of the key sectors that have been prioritized and will be engaged in this social change process. After this meeting we visited another AS-Two grantee – *Programa para el Desarrollo de la Infancia y la Mujer* (PRODIM) to observe an educational session with CSWs that serve as mentors to other women and clients in Comayagüela. They also performed a portion of a play designed to encourage CSWs and community members to get tested for HIV. PRODIM also provide VCT services and is working closely with the VICITS program.

In the afternoon, Sarah, Licida and Yadira met with the technical team in charge of capacity building activities to discuss the outcomes of the MOST assessments and recommendations to prioritize and address the identified needs. We also discussed the work plan and budget template AS-Two would like to use for FY 11, as well as the elements of performance based grants. We closed the visit with a final debrief to discuss the outcomes of the meeting with the Mission, finalize the brainstorm session for FY 11 activities, and prepare a summary of next steps and action items.

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

Description of task	Responsible staff	Due date
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Coordinate an orientation session with the ULAT team regarding the Health Sector Reform in Honduras.	Licida	3 rd or 4 th week in April
Quarterly report	Licida and Eugenia	Week of April 19
Various tools and resources for both teams (e.g., strategic planning, etc.)	Sarah and Yadira	Week of April 19
Restructuring of the TA model of the project	Licida and team	Over the next quarter
Work plan for next project year	AIDSTAR-Two Honduras, with the support of the Arlington-based team	Over the next quarter

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	Title and Institution	Contact information	Notes
Dr. Miguel Angel Marroqui	Representante de Pais USAID/Proyecto Capacity Centroamerica	Tel: 502-2367-3073 miguelmarroqui1@gmail.com	
Milton Funes	Director, CHF International	Tel: 504-239-6815 Email: mfinest@chfhonduras.org	
Sister Dee Smith	Executive Director of Proyecto Vida and Advisor of the South Western Network	deesmithgt@gmail.com	
Heidi Mihm	Central American Regional Coordinator - PEPFAR	Tel: 502-2329-8421 hmihm@gt.cdc.gov	
Lucrecia Castillo	Especialista en Programas de Salud y VIH/SIDA USAID/Guatemala	Tel: +502 (2422) 4204 Email: lcastillo@usaid.gov	

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.

File name	Description of file	Location of file
Epidemiologic Bulletin – Guatemala	South Western Network document	P drive
Social Mobilization Core Group Presentation – Honduras		P drive
Program Managers' Presentation – Honduras		P drive