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**Capacity Strengthening of the National Response for the Prevention  
of HIV/AIDS Program**  
*Quarterly Report*

**January – March 2010**

**Submitted by  
Population Services International  
&  
PASMO El Salvador**

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**Executive Summary**

PASMO launched two new behavior change communications (BCC) methodologies targeted to men and clients of commercial sex workers (CSW) in January 2010. The methodologies, called “*Decisiones*” and “*XY*” are designed to build on the messages and the strategy of the “*Hombres de Verdad*” campaign. Both educators and the men who have participated in activities have responded positively to the new materials. In February, PASMO and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), supported by USAID and the Ministry of Health (MOH) disseminated the results of the ECVC study. The results were sobering with increased incidence of HIV infection and high levels of sexually transmitted infections (STI) among CSW and men who have sex with men (MSM). Youth have been a focus of PASMO’s work in the first quarter of 2010. PASMO is reaching youth on university and trade school campuses and professional soccer matches, as well as part of ongoing activities in community centers, religious youth groups and schools. PASMO met with the National HIV/AIDS Program (NAP) to consolidate plans for training nurses and HIV test counselors, and trainings will start in May. When the MOH approves the new materials designed for MSM, PASMO will coordinate facilitator trainings for partners and NGOs.

**Program Objectives**

With support from USAID El Salvador, PASMO implements HIV/AIDS prevention activities in El Salvador, which complement the USAID-funded regional HIV Prevention Program being implemented by PSI and PASMO. The project contributes to USAID El Salvador’s Strategic Objective No. 3 Investing in People: Healthier and Better Educated People, and specifically to the Intermediate Result No. 3.4: HIV/AIDS and other Infectious Diseases Contained and Impact Mitigated. PASMO’s activities are designed using lessons learned and research, and are implemented by trained staff. All the communication materials are developed by the technical team in PASMO’s regional office, and are pre-tested in El Salvador. Specific project activities include:

1. Increasing knowledge among most at risk populations (MARPS) about prevention of HIV/AIDS;
2. Strengthening the capacity of MOH personnel & key stakeholders to provide improved HIV/AIDS prevention and services; and
3. Development of new materials and approaches to address MSM populations.

## Description of Activities

PASMO continues to coordinate closely with the National HIV/AIDS Program (NAP) and USAID El Salvador for implementation of project activities. Interpersonal communications (IPC) activities and mass media campaigns are shared with the NAP to ensure the materials reflect the national strategies. PASMO trains local NGOs to use the materials, which increases the number of people and diversifies the populations reached. The NAP organizes the training of Ministry of Health (MOH) nurse and PASMO provides technical and administrative support. Development of the materials targeted to Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) slowed down during this quarter in order to incorporate guidance of the new Director of the NAP, Dr. Isabel Neito. Project activities financed by USAID El Salvador are complementary to PASMO's regional USAID support for HIV/AIDS prevention in El Salvador.

### **Project Objective 1: Increased knowledge of prevention of HIV/AIDS among most at-risk populations.**

In February, PASMO, USAID, the CDC and the MOH hosted an event to disseminate the results of the *“Encuesta Centroamericana de Vigilancia de Comportamiento Sexual y Prevalencia de VIH/ITS en Poblaciones Vulnerables”* or the ECVC study. The dissemination event was attended by more than 200 people including representatives of the media, of UNAIDS, UNDP and members of the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) of the Global Fund, representatives of NGOs, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), and CSW. Several key findings of the report include (All the data in the presented below is from the 2008 ECVC):

- Among MSM, the incidence of HIV increased from 3.6% en 2002 to 7% en 2008
- Young men between the ages of 15 – 24 years had the highest incidence of HIV, 9.5%
- Prevalence of Syphilis is 12.1% in 2008, which is essentially the same level as in 2002 of 12.3%
- Although knowledge among MSM that using a condom can prevent HIV infection is relatively high (88%), use of condoms at last anal sex was quite low (60.5%)
- Among commercial sex workers, condom use with clients was relatively high (86.5% in San Salvador), condom use with regular partners was quite low (45.5% in San Salvador)
- The study found high levels of STIs (13.7% of CSW in San Salvador with syphilis) which may put into question the high levels of condom use.
- Condom use among PLWHA was startlingly low at 73.3% at last sex.

The study reported high levels of violence suffered by CSW and MSM, high levels of participation by MSM and PLWHA in commercial sex work, and high levels of stigma and discrimination suffered by all populations when seeking health care and services.

Plans for the upcoming quarter include PASMO and the ECVC team, working closely with the NAP, the UNDP as principal recipient for Global Fund, and partner NGOs, to lead **a series of 6 to 10 workshops** to disseminate the study results starting in May. The NAP requested that 3-6 workshops be held throughout El Salvador to share the data with regional directors of the MOH and other MOH staff. The final workshop will include participants from USAID, UNDP, NAP

and PASMO to design strategies to addressing the challenges highlighted in the report, and will take into consideration the input from participants in the previous workshops.

**As an immediate response to the results of the study**, PASMO began reprinting materials designed to assist prevention and promote treatment seeking for STIs. In order to more effectively reach young MSM, PASMO has hired several new outreach educators who represent the target group – young MSM – and has increased activities working with young MSM. PASMO is also emphasizing consistent condom use even with regular partners in work with CSW.

PASMO worked with the CDC team to further analyze the data to investigate whether PASMO’s activities had a significant and positive impact on knowledge and behaviors of study participants. As shown in the TRAC studies, participants in the ECVC study **who had been exposed to PASMO’s activities were more likely to use condoms** than participants who were not exposed to PASMO’s activities. The results did not show the same levels of impact on participants exposed to interventions implemented by other NGOs.

In January, PASMO **launched two new BCC methodologies called, “Decisiones” and “XY.”** Both methodologies build on the Hombres de Verdad campaign shown in 2009 and scheduled to air again in August 2010. The methodologies are targeted toward men and clients of sex workers, and offer “real-life” situation in which men have to make behavioral choices. The methodologies address condom use, stigma, commercial sex, and getting an HIV test. Response both by outreach educators and the target populations has been very positive.



PASMO conducted **training for all the outreach educators**, including some newly hired team members and employees of partner NGOs in January. The training was an opportunity to refresh facilitation skills including crowd management and participatory learning. PASMO has offered to train outreach workers from NGOs funded by the Global Fund. Above are two photos from the workshops.

PASMO is using these new methodologies in work with **the new target populations – mototaxi drivers and fishermen- and in expanded geographic areas**. In this quarter, PASMO conducted activities with fisherman in La Paz, La Libertad and Usulután, and reached moto-taxi

drivers in La Union, Santa Ana and Sonosante. Initially, outreach workers had a difficult time reaching the drivers as the nature of their work required that they leave in the middle of activities. However, PASMO outreach workers coordinated with the moto-taxi cooperatives to plan activities during meetings and in the cooperative offices, and late at night when the drivers finish their shifts. Both fisherman and drivers requested HIV testing activities as well.

**Outreach workers have started using social networking sites as a new way to organize activities with MSM.** By posting on popular MSM websites, Facebook and in chat rooms, and by putting advertisements announcing group activities (*Vive la Vida*) in saunas and private homes where MSM gather, PASMO has been able to reach new MSM and importantly, youth and MSM who do not identify as gay. PASMO will continue to use new media as the teams roll out the trainings and activities using the new materials designed by Omar Baños in June and July.



Arcoiris, an NGO founded by the transgender community, recently received their legal status, so was able to PASMO sign a contract directly with the NGO, instead of hiring their members as consultants. **PASMO is providing technical assistance to help Arcoiris** adjust the “*Vive la Vida*” methodology to address topics specific to the transgender community. This project is being funded by AMFAR, and PASMO provided technical assistance to Arcoiris to write the proposal. In the next quarter, PASMO will support Arcoiris’ activities to reduce stigma and discrimination within the government. The photo to the left shows Arcoiris’ educators, trained by PASMO providing information at CONCASIDA 2010.

**Youth have been an important focus during this quarter.** In February, PASMO facilitated a workshop for five NGOs that conduct activities to reach youth with sexual and reproductive health information and education. The three NGOs that PASMO has contracts with are: Association *Vida Nueva*, FUNDASIDA, and Foundation Seraphim. PASMO incorporated the MOH materials which were created with USAID financing into training program.

In collaboration with the *Secretaria de Inclusion Social* (SIS) PASMO and 17 of the youth leaders who were trained by PASMO, led workshops for out-of-school youth throughout greater San Salvador and in San Miguel. In this workshops, facilitators lead activities to educate youth on sexual and reproductive health, including HIV prevention and violence reduction. PASMO and the SIS are working together to identify leaders in communities and evening programs that take place in school buildings allowing PASMO to expand youth activities into new communities. Security of PASMO personal continues to be a concern as the outreach workers operate in many communities at night where gang violence is a threat.

PASMO worked with the *Subsecretaria de Desarrollo Territorial y Decentralizacion*, whose members include the national child welfare institution (ISNA), municipal governments and mayors, as well as Office of the Roman Catholic Archbishop, Caritas, Libras de Amor,

Committee for Public Security, the National Police, FUNDESAL and representatives of youth networks, **to conduct a situation analysis to understand the high levels of violence in San Martín, Ayutuxtepeque and Apopa.** The goal of the situation analysis was to coordinate the NGOs and organizations working with youth in these municipalities. PASMO will lead the training on sexual and reproductive health for youth in these areas, working closely with other institutions that are leading programs targeted to youth.

In February, **students from four universities graduated from PASMO’s community leader training program.** These students, who are working with PASMO to complete their social service requirements, will replicate the trainings among their peers. The students came from the technical health and communications programs and PASMO’s methodologies gave them the skills to facilitate sexual and reproductive health activities with their peers. PASMO continues to coordinate with the university departments of “*proyeccion social y cultura*” to offer the training various times during the academic year.

The students, in coordination with PASMO, organized a series of “health days” on campuses at Universidad Francisco Gavidia, Universidad Tecnológica, Universidad Pedagógica de El



Salvador and the Universidad Modular Abierta. Activities included VCT, interactive BCC activities, informational kiosks and promotion of condoms, oral contraceptives and other family planning methods. These event days were an opportunity for PASMO to reach MSM youth, and to reach youth with integral sexual and reproductive health information and education.

VIVE, PASMO’s socially marketed condom brand, is a sponsor of the professional soccer team, Althetico Marte. After attending several matches, PASMO realized that the stadium was filled with fans who are young, lower income and a captive audience. At each game, PASMO’s youth educators and educators from 5 partner NGOs including a Scout troop, set up kiosks with information on HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health. During the matches, several “*Hombres de Verdad*” spots are aired on the Jumbo-Tron screen, and “*Hombres de Verdad*” and other USAID supported campaign banners are strategically places along the playing field. **Athletico Marte is proud to participate in this public-private partnership** and offers PASMO space for kiosks and information stands free of charge.

VIVE, PASMO’s socially marketed condom brand, is a sponsor of the

**During this quarter, PASMO and the MOH conducted 600 HIV tests**



Youth Educators at Marte soccer match



**for CSW, their clients, MSM and youth.** The MOH continues to provide the HIV tests and the laboratory technician, while PASMO creates demand and conducts pre- and post-test counseling. In February and March, the team organized VCT activities specifically for moto-taxi drivers, who had requested HIV testing during PASMO's outreach activities with this new target population. Together with NGO, *Orquideas del Mar*, PASMO organized a large HIV testing day for street-based CSW in parks in downtown San Salvador. Additionally, PASMO conducted HIV testing at the

Universities (explained above) and for CSW who work in night clubs and bars throughout the city. The team in San Miguel organized several VCT events reaching CSW and youth who had never been tested previously.

As PASMO has earned the trust and confidence of night club and brothel owners, as well as the CSW and MSM themselves, PASMO is able to use HIV testing as a way to increase levels of personal risk perception. PASMO's partnership with the MOH continues to be strong, and in keeping with the growing demand for HIV testing activities, PASMO has appointed one of the HIV supervisors as point person for VCT. PASMO intends to second a lab technician (using KFW funding) to the MOH for the next 9-12 months as a way to increase the availability of MOH personnel to conduct VCT activities in the evenings in other parts of the country outside of San Salvador.

PASMO surpassed project objectives for numbers of IPC activities completed during this quarter. IPC activities are programmed to be on-going nation-wide throughout the project.

Number of IPC Activities Achieved:

Target Groups	No. of Activities Financed by Current Bilateral GOAL	No. of Activities Financed by Current Bilateral ACTUAL	No. of Activities Financed by Current Bilateral ACTUAL
	(Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)	(Jan - March 2010)	Cumulative (Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)
MSM	1,770	396	
FSW	2,700	608	
Clients & Potential Clients	840	531	
PLWHA	440	22	
Youth	1,500	520	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,250</b>	<b>2,077</b>	

Number of Individuals Reached:

Target Groups	No. of People Reached Financed by Current Bilateral GOAL	No. of People Reached Financed by Current Bilateral ACTUAL	No. of People Reached Financed by Current Bilateral ACTUAL
	(Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)	(Jan - March 2010)	Cumulative (Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)
MSM	25,000	5500	
FSW	36,000	8593	
Clients & Potential Clients	16,000	8207	
PLWHA	7,000	289	
Youth	15,000	8082	
<b><i>Totals</i></b>	<b>99,000</b>	<b>30,671</b>	

(Source: PASMO MIS)

### **Project Objective 2: Strengthening the Capacity of MOH Personnel & Key Stakeholders to Provide Improved HIV/AIDS Prevention and Services**

**Five PASMO staff attended the CONCASIDA conference in March, four of whom were financed by this project.** Ricardo Hernandez presented a poster on training sex workers to use the Female Condom. Manuel Beltran presented on PASMO El Salvador's successful public/private partnership to make VCT available to MARPs. Susan Padilla and Gerardo Lara represented PASMO El Salvador in several roundtable meetings organized by UNFPA, KFW and GTZ, showcasing the work supported by USAID. Maripaz Callejas, whose trip was financed by REDCA+, represented PASMO in the workshops for PLWHA.

PASMO met with Dr. Nieto, Director of the National HIV/AIDS Program, together with USAID, to plan the activities for the nurse trainings in January 2010. **However, due to the dengue epidemic, all trainings with the MOH staff were suspended.** PASMO will begin trainings in May with the support of consultant, Margarita Monroy.

Dr. Nieto requested that PASMO train NGO and MOH staff in VCT pre- and post-test counseling as quickly as possible in order to prepare for the 2010 HIV Testing Day. PASMO will use these training as an opportunity to introduce the new checklist for VCT counseling, designed by IRH with USAID funding. The checklist is an easy to use job aid designed to improve counseling by reminding counselors of the important steps in counseling protocols.

In the next quarter, PASMO will introduce the update VCT manual with the MOH, continue trainings for nurses and MOH personnel, and introduce the VCT counselor accreditation program on a larger scale. In addition to working with the MOH, PASMO will commence workshops with church leaders and church youth group leaders in order to give them skills and methodologies for counseling youth on sexual and reproductive health, and for reducing stigma towards MARPs and PLWHA.

### **Project Objective 3: Improved Materials and Approaches to Address MSM Populations**

At the end of this quarter, the MOH had not yet approved the materials designed by and for MSM. PASMO will move forward to print half of the number of materials without the MOH logo, and will commence training of NGOs and partners to use the facilitation guides. Additionally, PASMO will use the dissemination of the ECVC study results as a call-to-action for NGOs working with MSM communities. Once the MOH has approved the materials, PASMO will print the rest of the guides with their logo.

## **Conclusions**

During this quarter PASMO has made significant progress toward achieving the objectives of the cooperative agreement. Activities with youth are proceeding successfully and PASMO has expanded into the new geographic areas and is reaching the new target populations. While training of MOH staff has been stopped due the dengue epidemic, PASMO was able to program future trainings and finalize the updated training guides.

The results of the ECVC study will drive PASMO's interventions and focus messages and activities to reach those communities most at-risk for HIV infection. Advancing with the MSM materials designed by Omar Banos is an important first step in doing more to reach MSM and especially young MSM.

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