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

April - June 2010

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

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RFA No. 519-08-0A-007**

Executive Summary

This quarter, PASMO and USAID organized two meetings with Global Fund partners; first to analyze and develop a common strategy to address the alarming increase of HIV incidence among young MSM and transgenders and the second meeting to develop a gap-analysis of activities and to share materials and methodologies. During the 2010 National HIV Testing Day, more than 50 PASMO and NGO partner staff participated as pre- and post-test counselors, site managers, and event organizers. PASMO continued expanding its IPC activities targeted to most at-risk populations and reached taxi and moto-taxi cooperatives as well as fishing cooperatives. PASMO's local staff was also trained in a new methodology for IPC with CSW that will complement and reinforce the messages in the *Decisiones* and *XY* methodologies which are targeted to clients of commercial sex workers. PASMO printed and disseminated the new facilitators' guide for faith-based organizations; the Network of FBOs is committed to reducing the stigma and discrimination that PWH face when they join the FBOs. PASMO also trained five NGOs that received funding from UNFPA, launching a new collaboration to share methodologies and expand coverage of activities.

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 significantly expanded its partnership with the Global Fund partners during this quarter by developing a common strategy for HIV prevention work among the MSM and transgender communities. PASMO expanded interpersonal communications (IPC) and VCT activities with taxi, moto-taxi and fishermen. PASMO built the capacity of several local NGOs funded by UNFPA to implement proven IPC methodologies that were developed with support from USAID. In partnership with Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the results of the ECVS study were widely disseminated. Training with Ministry of Health (MOH) nursing staff to improve VCT counseling is on-going, and PASMO continues to provide technical and administrative support to the National HIV/AIDS Program (NAP). 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.

During this quarter, PASMO staff significantly expanded IPC activities targeted to most at-risk populations. Taxi and moto-taxi drivers in smaller cities such as Sonsonate were identified both as clients of CSWs and as gatekeepers to clients of commercial sex workers. In many locations, the drivers provide transport for sex workers and refer clients to them. The taxi drivers also provide referrals to auto-hotels – the hotels that charge by the hour and are often used for commercial sex – and PASMO staff have been successful approaching these hotel staff with the assistance of the drivers.



Figure 1: IPC with Taxi Drivers

PASMO initially began conducting IPC activities with the drivers at congregation points. The drivers then connected outreach workers to the taxi cooperative offices, where PASMO staff were able to coordinate several VCT testing nights and to get detailed information on where and when are the best times to conduct activities. The drivers' cooperatives that have worked with PASMO are now referring additional taxi and moto-taxi cooperatives to PASMO staff, **facilitating a rapid scale up of activities.** Many drivers report that PASMO is the first

organization to provide them information on HIV prevention, and VCT services are nearly always the main request. PASMO now conducts VCT in the offices of the taxi cooperatives on a regular basis.



A similar situation is unfolding in activities in the three main port communities. PASMO commenced IPC activities with fishermen directly, and the individuals then referred outreach workers to the fishing cooperatives in the main ports and in the smaller towns where the fishermen live. Activities are concentrated in and around Usulután, Puerto El Triunfo y La Libertad. **Ports tend to have sizable commercial sex activities, and CSW are both male and female.** Fishermen tend to engage in commercial sex in the ports where they are away from their homes and after they have sold their catch.

Reaching the fishing community has been challenging; generally, the fisherman work alone or in pairs, and clearly on boats not easily accessible to the outreach workers. PASMO has worked hard to make contact with the fishing and shrimping cooperatives, but the members rarely meet. In Puerto El Triunfo, outreach workers have been able to travel on the boats from island to island, conducting IPC activities. Additionally, outreach workers stay overnight in the port towns to reach the fishermen after work, when they come to port to sell their catch and to work in the bars where they congregate. **The fishermen consistently report that they enjoy the IPC activities, particularly the new methodologies, *Decisiones* and *XY*,** and they also report that PASMO is the first organization that has talked to them about HIV prevention.

In the next quarter, PASMO will conduct a small, informal study with the fishermen to better understand their needs. Research will ask about their HIV prevention knowledge, levels of high risk behaviors, and best time and place to conduct activities. The past two quarters, PASMO has focused on successfully building trust and establishing a positive reputation with the fishing community. **In the next quarter, PASMO will conduct VCT activities in the ports.**

Together with the CDC and the NAP, more than 13 day-long workshops were held to disseminate the results of the ECVC study. Participants in the seminars included: nurses and MOH staff in all the regions of the country; NGOs working on HIV prevention; representatives of government agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors. Heidi Mimh, the Central American PEPFAR coordinator attended a workshop as well. During the workshops with the MOH, PASMO took the opportunity to disseminate the results of the IRH study on stigma and discrimination in health services and VCT, which was funded by the USAID regional project.

During each workshop, the facilitators solicited programming needs and suggestions from the participants. PASMO and the CDC will compile a briefing of the recommendations to share with the NAP, USAID and the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM). The workshop was well received by participants, including the Director of the NAP. The final workshops will take place in July 2010.

PASMO printed and disseminated the new facilitators' guide for faith-based organizations (FBOs). FBOs and churches are the main places that recently diagnosed HIV positive people seek support, including MARPs. The Network of FBOs is committed to reducing the stigma and discrimination that PWH face when they join the FBOs. Capacity building working for church and group leaders commenced with training for 85 people. So far, we have engaged 17 facilitators members of the FBO network of El Salvador. The training covered the following topics:

- Exploring culture, religion and gender
- Sexuality
- Stigma and discrimination
- Diversity and Human Rights
- Tools for effective communication and facilitation

During the dissemination workshop, the network of FBOs composed mainly of churches, requested that PASMO support them to write a strategic plan for their activities. PASMO will support this effort through technical assistance, facilitation of the workshop, and support for the location, refreshments and materials, including printing more facilitators' guides.



In June, Karla Oliva, BCC expert from PASMO's regional office in Guatemala, came to San Salvador to build the capacity of PASMO's local staff and to develop a new methodology for IPC with CSW. The methodology will complement and reinforce the messages in the *Decisiones* and *XY* methodologies which are targeted to clients of commercial sex workers. Using the results of the 2009 TRAC study, the team identified key messages including consistent condom use with sentimental partners, negotiating condom use with clients

and the importance of regular HIV and STI testing. The new materials will use a similar, story-based methodology to inspire reflection and increase self-risk perception among CSW. **One of the most important aspects of this activity is the transfer of technology and capacity to the local PASMO team.** While the regional office team's strategic guidance is essential and their expertise is unparalleled, the El Salvador staff, which is closer to the program beneficiaries, will

have increased technical capacity to contribute to the design and develop effective, evidence-based methodologies.



Teaching CSW to use a female condom



Teaching CSW to use a male condom

Outreach workers continue IPC and VCT activities with CSW throughout El Salvador. With referrals from taxi drivers in smaller cities around the country, PASMO staff is working in new bars (*cervecerias*) and clubs. In San Salvador, during a meeting with CSWs and representatives from the Mayor's office, the CSW recognized PASMO, and in particular, one of the outreach workers, Karla Rivas, as being the organization that consistently provides services to them. In the next quarter, PASMO will pre-test the new methodology for CSWs and will participate in a series of health fairs sponsored by the municipality of San Salvador for the CSWs.

Youth continue to be an important focus of PASMO's HIV prevention activities. PASMO staff is directly implementing activities with youth throughout the San Salvador metropolitan region and in San Miguel. In collaboration with *escuelas de padres*, community centers, sports groups, scout groups, church youth groups and NGOs who work with young people, PASMO staff lead IPC activities to give youth knowledge and skills on HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health.

In May, PASMO trained five NGOs that received funding from UNFPA, launching a new collaboration to share methodologies and expand coverage of activities. The NGOs learned how to use PASMO's materials and how to report activities using PASMO's MIS template. Upon

successful completion of the training, PASMO gave each NGO a small supply of materials and promotional items. In the future, UNFPA will support the reproduction of materials for the NGOs. PASMO committed to provide technical assistance in the form of supportive supervision and work planning, and UNFPA committed to report on the activities implemented by the NGOs.

PASMO will continue the successful partnership with the local professional soccer team, *Atletico Marte*. PASMO began coordination with *Marte* manager to train several of the soccer players to be youth facilitators. PASMO staff, together with the *Marte* players, will lead IPC activities both for fans and for the young men who are in the *Marte* training program. After the World Cup, PASMO will resume airing *Hombres de Verdad* spots and conducting educational activities at the *Marte* games.

In early next quarter, PASMO will launch a media campaign targeted to youth, entitled “*Tienes? Pídelo!*” The campaign promotes condom use among sexually active young people. In addition to the TV and radio spots, PASMO will launch the new [Club en Conexión](#) website, which is an important part of the strategy to reach more young people using social networking and new media. Both of these media activities were produced with the support of KFW, and PASMO will share the materials with USAID for approval.

Outreach workers continue to work with support groups for PWH throughout El Salvador. Based on the results of the ECVC study, PASMO staff is emphasizing consistent condom use with all partners, and specifically with sero-discordant couples. PASMO staff continues offering referrals for STI testing and have increased the use of IPC materials for STI prevention.

In May, PASMO supported USAID to obtain information from PWH regarding the quality and type of HIV and reproductive health services provided by the MOH. PASMO staff organized a series of in-depth interviews and hosted the USAID team. In continuing efforts to improve the quality of HIV and reproductive health services provided by MOH staff, PASMO worked with the MOH to design a technical bulletin which will be circulated to all hospitals and health units to remind staff of the MOH’s policies that promote voluntary and informed decision making, especially related to family planning. PASMO’s researcher, with technical support from the Regional Office in Guatemala, designed a focus group guide and terms of reference for a research agency to conduct a series of focus groups with PWH to assist the MOH in identifying areas of improvement in the provision of HIV and reproductive health services. .

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	Percentage of Goal Achieved
	(Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)	(April - June 2010)	Cumulative (Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)	Cumulative (Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)
MSM	1,770	795	1,228	69%

FSW	2,700	889	1,791	66%
Clients & Potential Clients	840	974	1,674	199%
PLWHA	440	183	309	70%
Youth	1,500	626	1,501	100%
<i>Totals</i>	7,250	2375	5,411	75%

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	Percentage of Goal Achieved
	(Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)	(April - June 2010)	Cumulative (Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)	Cumulative (Dec 2009 - Dec 2010)
MSM	25,000	5029	21,185	85%
FSW	36,000	8343	23,867	66%
Clients & Potential Clients	16,000	9173	26,719	167%
PLWHA	7,000	289	14,563	208%
Youth	15,000	8082	31,912	213%
<i>Totals</i>	99,000	30916	92,787	94%

(Source: PASMO MIS)

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

PASMO continues to provide logistical and administrative support to the MOH for training of nurses and MOH personnel on reduction of stigma and discrimination. In addition to the MOH's nurses training, PASMO launched the training program to improve the quality of HIV pre- and post-test counseling. During the ECVC dissemination workshops, Margarita Monroy presented the results of the study on HIV test counseling to the MOH. PASMO, with Margarita Monroy, will train the nurses or the people responsible for HIV counseling and testing on the updated MOH counseling manual and to use the counseling checklist. During this quarter, PASMO printed the updated HIV Test Counseling manual and the checklist on behalf of the MOH.

More than 50 PASMO and NGO partner staff participated in the 2010 National HIV Testing Day as pre- and post-test counselors, site managers, and event organizers. PASMO's BCC managers coordinated logistics and counseling in three of the primary centers, while 20 outreach workers, trained as VCT counselors, provided pre-and post-test counseling. El Salvador's National HIV Program Director appointed Susan Padilla, Manager of PASMO's HIV Prevention Department to be the site manager for one of the largest testing sites, MetroCentro. At each of the three sites, PASMO staffed kiosks to answer questions and provide information on HIV prevention including delayed sexual debut targeted to youth, sexually transmitted infections and correct and consistent condom use. During the past several months Susan Padilla has been deeply involved in planning and organizing the event in partnership with the National HIV

Program. She and her team trained more than 60 MOH and NGO personnel to be VCT counselors in preparation for the day.



Maripaz Callejas organizing testing in Centenario Park; VCT counselors working in MetroCentro.

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

In May, PASMO and USAID organized the first of several strategic meetings with Global Fund partners, UNFPA, PAHO, the NAP and PASCA to analyze and develop a common strategy to address the alarming increase of HIV incidence among young MSM and transgenders, as indicated by the ECVC report. The first meeting was dedicated to data analysis. Dr. Maria Elena Guardado, one of the authors of the ECVC report, presented the results of the study related to MSM and transgender. Dr. Ben Andrade, from PASMO's regional office, presented a triangulation analysis of the PASMO TRAC data and the ECVC data as well as presenting

preliminary results from the 2009 TRAC with MSM. By the end of the first meeting, all participants agreed to develop a common strategy and coordinate efforts for HIV prevention among MSM. The second meeting of all the participants was focused on what actions should be taken. The participants developed a gap-analysis of activities and shared materials and methodologies. A third meeting will take place in August.



PASMO increased activities with the MSM and transgender communities, with emphasis on reaching young MSM. Outreach workers consider that “*Viviendo la Vida (VLV)*” is the appropriate methodology for working with MSM for the following reasons: 1) VLV offers comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention and builds a full range of prevention skills, including correct condom use and condom use negotiation strategies; and 2) VLV builds community integration through the 4 meetings each lasting four hours. Participants become friends and supportive of each other, which is essential for building social support for healthy sexual behaviors.

(Photo Right) VLV participants taking the pre-test



PASMO’s local NGO partner, ASPIDH Arcoiris, an NGO managed by and for the transgender community, played an important role in advocacy for the presidential decree number 56 that prohibits discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation in government services. The First

Lady, Vandana Pignato, announced the decree during a well-attended press conference. ASPIDH



staff has been trained as outreach workers by PASMO and with ASPIDH, PASMO is developing IPC materials specifically for the transgender community

(Photo Left) First Lady Vandana Pignato with ASPIDH staff.

Facilitator guides and activities developed for the MSM community by consultant Omar Banos, are being printed. The first printing will not include the MOH logo, as the approval process within the MOH is delayed. Once the MOH receives

approval, PASMO will print additional materials that include the MOH logo. PASMO’s Regional Office is developing complementary materials and promotional items.

Conclusions

During this quarter PASMO has made significant progress toward achieving the objectives of the cooperative agreement. Increased emphasis on the MSM community at both the strategic level and in the implementation of activities is a positive, proactive response to the alarming data from the ECVC Study. PASMO has strengthened collaboration with the Global Fund implementing partners and has been elected to represent the iNGO community on the CCM. In the next quarter, PASMO will launch phase two of the Hombres de Verdad campaign, introduce the materials designed for the MSM community and disseminate the results of both the TRAC and MAP studies.

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