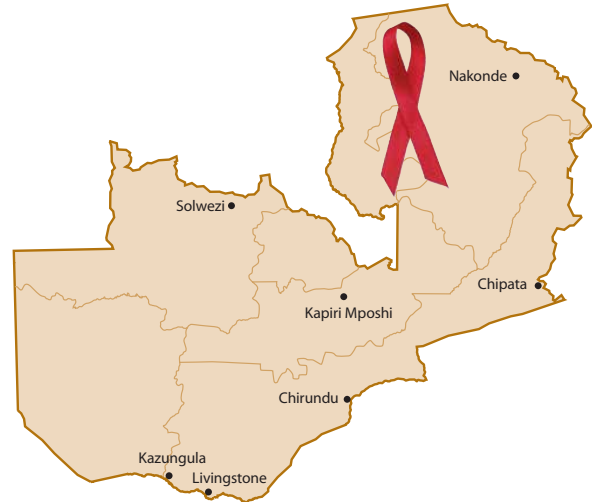


Stopping HIV/AIDS in High-Risk Transport Corridors and Border Towns in Zambia

Much of Zambia's urban population is concentrated around transport corridors that are heavily used by Zambia's two major industries, mining and agriculture, and by companies carrying exported goods to Zambia and neighboring countries. Communities along these borders and transportation routes are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

RTI International and partner Family Health International (FHI) are implementing the Corridors of Hope II (COH II) project, developed to support Zambia's National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework. With funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), COH II is working to prevent HIV/AIDS in seven of Zambia's border and transport corridor communities with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Zambia Health Education and Communications Trust (ZHECT), Afya Mzuri, and the Zambia Interfaith Networking Group on HIV/AIDS (ZINGO) are local partner organizations helping to conduct, coordinate, and manage site-level activities for this 3-year project.



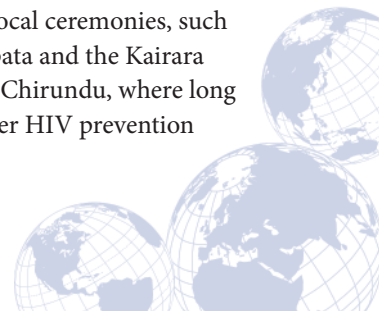
Expanding HIV/AIDS Prevention Services

Since 2007, COH II Service Centers have been established in seven communities—Chipata, Chirundu, Kapiri Mposhi, Livingstone, Kazungula, Solwezi, and Nakonde. The Centers provide a comprehensive range of prevention services including voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), screening and management for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), condom distribution, behavior change activities, and strengthening referral networks for care and treatment, education, and economic improvement opportunities.

The project has also created mobile outreach units to bring services to a wider population, especially those in remote communities. With a national HIV prevalence of 14.3%, it is critical that services are made more accessible to those who are hard to reach. Demand for the mobile services has been extremely high with frequent requests for the units to extend their typical day-long stay in villages. Eighty-four percent of people tested by COH II have been reached through the mobile units. Invited by traditional leaders, COH II also offers services during local ceremonies, such as the Khulamba Ceremony in Chipata and the Kairara Ceremony (harvest celebrations) in Chirundu, where long lines formed to access VCT and other HIV prevention services.



COH II Chirundu Site Manager Mrs. Honester Lungu makes a formal presentation on the project and its goals and services to a local chief and asks for her blessing and support. [Photo: COH II Staff]



Engaging Communities in Behavior Change

Community stakeholders and beneficiaries are involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of COH II activities to build capacity, improve results, and foster an enduring partnership for sustainability beyond the life of the project. COH II Center managers and staff from ZHECT, Afya Mzuri, and ZINGO proactively engage with local leaders, organizations, district health management teams, and district AIDS task forces to serve as catalysts within their communities with the goal of changing community norms of sexual behavior. Behavior Change Communication Steering Committees, comprising local organizations, have also been created in all seven project sites to create a formal structure for community engagement and to help vulnerable groups voice their opinions.

The project uses the ABC approach (an appropriately targeted mix of Abstinence, Being faithful, and Correct and consistent use of condoms and other prevention interventions) to reach people in their schools, places of worship, markets, bus depots, and night spots.

The project has trained over 800 peer educators and outreach workers to provide other prevention messages beyond abstinence and faithfulness and make VCT and behavior change activities more accessible. More than 31,000 people have accessed VCT services through the project. At the same time, COH II, primarily through ZINGO, has trained nearly 700 peer educators, including youth, to deliver abstinence and faithfulness messages to almost 207,000 individuals across all seven sites.

From October 2007 through June 2008, COH II

- Provided VCT to more than 31,000 people and STI screening to more than 7,800 people
- Trained 800 peer educators to provide other prevention messages beyond abstinence and faithfulness, reaching more than 310,000 people
- Trained 700 peer educators to deliver abstinence and faithfulness messages, reaching more than 218,000 young people



Eighty-four percent of people tested by COH II have been reached through the mobile units. [Photo: COH II Staff]

Creating Networks and Sustainability

COH II works closely with donors, international and local NGOs, and public and private health facilities that address gender, economic livelihoods, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS care and support services that are outside of the scope of COH II to successfully refer clients to the services that they need. These linkages allow the COH II team to develop a fully functional referral network in each border and corridor community for a more complete and family-centered approach.

COH II is also committed to building the capacity of ZHECT, Afya Mzuri, and ZINGO so they may continue activities with direct funding from donors after the project ends in 2009. The project is providing technical assistance in organizational planning, human resources, finance, fund raising, grants management, service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation so that local partners may gradually assume leadership of the project.



This project is funded under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Contract no. GHS-I-08-03-00028-00, RTI no. 0208954-008, September 2006–September 2009.

For more information about COH II, please contact

Shawn Aldridge, Project Manager
E-mail: saldrige@rti.org

RTI 0000 102008



RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. We have more than 3,800 professionals providing research and technical services to governments and businesses in more than 40 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy, and the environment. For more information, visit www.rti.org.

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.