



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Youth Line up for HIV Tests



Photo: USAID/Richard Nyberg

Behind the dust kicked up from a soccer game in the sand lies the Guédiawaye Youth Center. Here, USAID has helped a local organization integrate voluntary HIV/AIDS counseling and testing services into the center's activities. Inside, boys and girls practice kung fu in the main hall, while elsewhere a group of girls sit, braiding each other's hair. Under a shady tree in the central courtyard, youth from all around Dakar's sprawling suburb of Guédiawaye await their turn to see the HIV/AIDS counselor.

***Youth are learning the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention and its key messages of abstinence, being faithful to one partner, using condoms, and being tested for HIV. USAID's program is part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a \$15 billion program to halt the spread of AIDS and care for people affected by the disease.***

This is a typical day at the center, where USAID supports youth-friendly testing and counseling services. Elsewhere, counseling centers for youth have failed to get young people to show up, but this one seems to be working.

"I think the success resides in the integration of activities, which minimizes the stigma around testing for HIV," said Dr. Ngagne Mbaye, whose organization partners with USAID. The HIV/AIDS center is located within a reproductive health clinic, which in turn is part of a sports and cultural activities facility. "Nobody knows who's coming for what," Dr. Mbaye noted.

This has encouraged youth to get counseling and testing. In 2005, the center counseled and tested over 800 Senegalese youth, up from 485 in 2003. These services are helping Senegal maintain a low HIV rate — the national prevalence among adults is 0.7%, one of sub-Saharan Africa's lowest.

As part of its HIV/AIDS strategy, USAID is always seeking to work with others to ensure that prevention and response efforts are comprehensive enough to win the battle against AIDS. USAID has forged partnerships with others, including Senegal's Ministry of Youth, to expand the range of activities. This strategy has worked — the ministry has been so impressed with the innovative model of integrating HIV services within youth centers that it is replicating it in eight more centers.