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# Healthy Choices for Youth



Source: OGAC

*“Uganda and other nations are applying a prevention strategy called ABC—Abstinence, Be faithful in marriage, and Condoms. “ABC” is balanced, effective, and reflects the moral teachings of African cultures. And no one is helped when outsiders try to impose a lower standard of responsibility.”*

President George W. Bush, June 30, 2005

*President George W. Bush’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is the largest commitment ever by any nation toward an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. The Emergency Plan is a five-year, \$15 billion, multifaceted approach to combating HIV/AIDS in more than 120 countries around the world.*

Each day in 2004, 14,000 people were infected with HIV. **To stem the rising tide of HIV infections worldwide, prevention must remain a key priority, despite the promise of expanded access to HIV treatment.**

As a key implementer of the Emergency Plan, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) implements a comprehensive ABC approach to HIV prevention. While each country program will include all three elements of ABC, individual interventions are appropriately designed to address the crucial differences among target groups.

Promotion of abstinence and faithfulness to young people is important, because half of all new infections occur in the 15–24 age group.

Last year, USAID announced **\$100 million** in new grants under the *Abstinence and Healthy Choices for Youth* program. This initiative will expand activities in support of abstinence-until-marriage, fidelity in marriage and monogamous relationships, and avoidance of unhealthy sexual behaviors among youth aged 10 to 24.

We are already seeing results.

**In 2004, the Emergency Plan allocated \$50.5 million to abstinence and be faithful programs and reached more than 120 million people with ABC messages and interventions in 15 focus countries.**

**“President Bush is a strong supporter of faith-based groups that bring help and healing to people who need it. We appreciate the work of people who are affiliated with churches or mosques and other faith groups. When our government can work together with faith-based organizations, we will.”**

First Lady Laura Bush, July 13, 2005,  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



Marc Douglas, USAID/Tanzania

To achieve President Bush’s ambitious goal of preventing 7 million new HIV infections by 2008, USAID’s office of HIV/AIDS works closely with the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. USAID believes that community- and faith-based partners are some of our best messengers to reach young people.

Since 2002, USAID’s Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives has sought to create a level playing field for faith-based and community groups to compete for USAID programs. The initiative reaches out to faith-based and other community organizations to increase their access to and knowledge of U.S. Government funding sources.

#### **Programs the Emergency Plan will fund in 2005 through USAID include:**

**Uganda: President Museveni’s Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth** is a school-based life skills and abstinence education program. Primary school training will provide 45,000 teachers with skills to establish effective anti-AIDS clubs that encourage peer-to-peer dialog on HIV prevention.

**Kenya and Tanzania: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)** will expand their current activities to reach more than one million youth, ages 10–24, with abstinence and be faithful messages by September 2009.

**Kenya, Haiti, Mozambique, and Rwanda: World Relief** is implementing its *Mobilizing Youth For Life*, with the goals of equipping more than 1.8 million youth ages 10–24 to choose abstinence before marriage and faithfulness in marriage and helping 200,000 “influencers” of youth—including parents, guardians, pastors, teachers, and youth leaders—to guide youth to make and sustain wise life choices about their sexual behavior.

**Mozambique, Malawi, and Haiti: Medical Service Corporation International** leads a three-country project with local partners to identify U.S. and local community- and faith-based organizations with experience or interest in implementing ABC projects and ensure coordination with USAID Missions and other ABC projects.

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