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Faith-Based Partnerships



Source: Marc Douglas, USAID/Tanzania

“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

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.

The U.S. Government has made the fight against HIV/AIDS a top priority, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also because the HIV/AIDS crisis threatens the prosperity, stability, and development of nations around the world. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is one of the key partners that put into action the President’s Emergency Plan. The President’s Emergency Plan goals include: support for the prevention of 7 million new HIV infections, treatment for 2 million people living with HIV/AIDS, and care for 10 million people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children.

Since its inception, USAID has partnered with faith-based groups. Faith-based and community organizations continue to play a critical role in the provision of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment. They possess an extensive geographic reach and a well-developed infrastructure in the developing world, which, in addition to their unmatched staying power, make them an invaluable asset in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. USAID’s Office of HIV/AIDS works closely with the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to rapidly expand programs and to engage new partners.

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, with increased funding, technical support, networking, capacity building, and information outreach, including workshops and new publications. Through this initiative, USAID is reaching out to faith-based and other community organizations to increase their access to and knowledge of U.S. Government funding sources.

Working with more than 800 faith-based and community organizations in 40 countries, USAID has engaged religious communities as critical partners in the fight against AIDS.



Janet Korutaro, a Ugandan widow who uses micro-loans from Opportunity International to run a grocery store from her house. Her daily net profits of \$1.15 enable her to care for her two children, a grandchild, and three AIDS orphans. Source: Opportunity International

“Across Africa, we’re working with local health officials to expand AIDS testing facilities, to train and support doctors and nurses and counselors, to upgrade clinics and hospitals, to care for children orphaned by AIDS, and to support pastors and priests and others who are teaching young people the values of respect and responsibility and prevention.”

President George W. Bush, June 28, 2005

A few examples of USAID partnerships with faith-based organizations:

Nigeria: The Church of Christ has an estimated 3 to 4 million members across 26 states in Nigeria. With this impressive reach and with funding from USAID, the church has expanded its social mandate to include HIV/AIDS work in response to the overwhelming community need. Church staff are now highly active in training health workers, increasing male involvement and peer education, offering voluntary counseling and testing for couples intending to marry, and providing medical screening, sensitization, and advocacy activities to reduce stigma.

Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, and Rwanda: With USAID funding, World Relief is implementing its *Mobilizing Youth for Life* program, with the goal of equipping more than 1.8 million youth ages 10–24 to choose to practice abstinence before marriage and faithfulness in marriage. The program is also helping 200,000 parents, guardians, pastors, teachers, and youth leaders to guide youth to make wise life choices about their sexual behavior.

Kenya: USAID supports training for members of the Imams and Preachers Council of Kenya as change agents. Using local physicians, this group developed plans to integrate HIV/AIDS messages into their sermons and religious curricula. These influential individuals are uniquely suited to address the normally taboo subjects surrounding HIV/AIDS and to mobilize their communities in HIV prevention and care for those infected.

Swaziland: In June 2005, more than 500 Swazi pastors participated in a USAID-funded HIV/AIDS prevention conference. The conference was led by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, Chairman of Dream for Africa, a faith-based organization that mobilizes volunteers to work in sub-Saharan Africa on many issues, including AIDS. As a well-known pastor and author, Dr. Wilkinson has trained pastors on ways of talking appropriately and effectively to their congregations about abstinence until marriage, fidelity to one’s partner, and reducing stigma. Unequal treatment of women contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS, so he challenged pastors to make clear to their congregations that men and women are, according to their own sacred text, created equal.

Cambodia: USAID supports Norea Peaceful Children, an orphan assistance organization established by Wat Norea Buddhist monastery, in expanding its care and support to orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS. The organization is also reaching out to the community to help people cope with HIV/AIDS through the teachings of Buddhism, practiced by 95 percent of Cambodians.

Please contact these USAID staff for more information:

Ms. Megan Petersen, New Partners Advisor, Office of HIV/AIDS, Bureau for Global Health;
mpetersen@usaid.gov or (202) 712-1683

Mr. Chad Hayward, Senior Advisor, Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives; chayward@usaid.gov or (202) 712-1564