



# PEPtalk

News you can use  
from PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire

No. 6, April 2009

## Ambassador's Corner

As the Obama Administration settles in, we are moving full speed ahead with the implementation of our 2009 Country Operational Plan. This year we anticipate leveraging innovative ideas and even greater dedication to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS in Côte d'Ivoire. The PEPFAR program has proven the power of partnerships by meeting or exceeding Phase I targets (2004-2008), including providing antiretroviral treatment (ART) for more than 2 million people living with HIV/AIDS.



The U.S. government's financial commitment and emphasis on tangible results will continue in Phase 2 (2009-2013) of PEPFAR, but the scope of the global program will change. What began as an Emergency Plan is becoming a long-term plan. The goal is not only to save and improve lives, but also to empower countries to create and support sustainable systems that will keep delivering needed services long after PEPFAR is gone. How can grass-roots, local organizations be nurtured and sustained? How are we measuring the quality of our services and their impact on people's lives? How can we scale up programs that are working well? Most importantly, how can we strengthen HIV prevention, our only real hope for conquering this pandemic?

PEPFAR 2 is committed to sustainability and country ownership. Under a new partnership model, it is our intention to join all other partners – international donors, the private sector, civil society, with the Ivorian government in the lead – in planning together and sharing responsibility for working toward a common vision: a strong and healthy Côte d'Ivoire. I look forward to working with all of you as we move into this new era.

**Wanda L. Nesbitt**  
U.S. Ambassador

## HIV in the military: Soldiers need more than courage

For years, Adjutant Chef Ibo Zeti Jean of the Côte d'Ivoire military suffered from frequent diarrhea and weight loss, finally pushing him to seek HIV testing.

"When I learned that I was HIV-positive, for me, death would be imminent," he recalled. Although he managed to share his result with his wife, Chef Ibo was afraid to tell his four children and his military col-

leagues, believing that "if you announced that you are HIV-positive to your supervisor, you would be kicked out of the military and lose your job." He stopped applying for promotion exams.

During an HIV education session on his base, he decided to join Espoir FANCI, the country's only NGO for military personnel infected or affected by HIV. Espoir FANCI is one of five local organizations providing HIV prevention and care services for the uniformed services and their families with support from PEPFAR partner Population Services International (PSI). As of September 2008,

PSI was providing care and support for 632 people living with HIV/AIDS, including 329 women.

Through PSI's military program, Chef Ibo became a trainer in palliative care and eventually gathered the courage to tell the rest of his family and colleagues that he was HIV-positive. Now president of Espoir FANCI, he works to educate military personnel about HIV prevention techniques, to promote HIV testing,



With peer support, Chef Ibo Zeti Jean (center) succeeded in disclosing his status to his family.

and to provide support to those who have tested positive, particularly in helping them disclose their status.

Today, at age 49, in good health after 15 years with HIV and seven years on antiretroviral therapy, Chef Ibo proudly declares, "I am treated no differently from my HIV-negative colleagues when it comes to work, thanks in part to the work of Espoir FANCI.

"Send me everywhere, to any military camp, so that I can tell others that I am not afraid to admit that I am HIV-positive and being HIV-positive is not a death sentence."

## Counseling and Testing makes big strides in Côte d'Ivoire

HIV testing is gaining ground in Côte d'Ivoire, with the imminent launch of the first National Counseling and Testing Day, scale-up of the new national testing algorithm, and the start of a four-country public health evaluation.

**National Counseling and Testing Day:** RIP+, JHU/CCP, and other PEPFAR partners are helping the Ministry of AIDS launch the first ever testing day in Abidjan (to be extended nationwide in coming years). With extensive mass media and door-to-door community outreach and prevention sensitization, imple-

menting partners aim to test 30,000 people.

**New Algorithm:** The new national HIV testing algorithm is beginning its extension phase in April. From 63 pilot sites already implementing the new algorithm, its use will be expanded to 652 sites by the end of 2009. The new algorithm permits finger-prick collection of whole blood, eliminating the need for a cold chain, a centrifuge, and extensive laboratory expertise and facilitating the rapid expansion of HIV testing.

**Public Health Evaluation:** CDC Côte d'Ivoire,

the Ministry of Health, and other PEPFAR partners are engaged in a multi-country evaluation that will compare models of provider-initiated HIV counseling and testing. PEPFAR-supported teams from South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, and Côte d'Ivoire will assess three models of counseling and testing in outpatient departments to determine the most effective model for increasing HIV testing uptake, identifying seropositive people at an earlier stage of infection to improve chances of therapeutic success, and producing the highest number of successful referrals to care and treatment services.

### Update

## Partner Profile

**Who: RIP+ (Ivoirian Network of PLWHA Organizations)**

Board President: Coulibaly Yaya

Project Director: Ako Yapo Cyriaque

**What:** With a three-year grant and technical assistance from the Academy for Educational Development, RIP+ is working to strengthen its national network and 50+ affiliate organizations to promote HIV testing, and provide care and prevention services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Key strategies include helping to organize the first National Testing Day (planned for June 2009), providing subgrants and training to PLWHA organizations in administrative and financial management, prevention for positives, and HIV care and support.



Coulibaly Yaya

**When:** Started activities in early 2007.**Where:** National and local levels in Côte d'Ivoire.

**What else:** RIP+, created in 1997, works to establish and protect the legal rights and improve the quality of life of PLWHA. Through fund raising, subgranting, mentoring, and advocacy at all levels (including the U.S. White House and other international forums), RIP+ seeks to strengthen international, national, and local responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.



Ako Cyriaque

**In the news:** Local PLWHA organizations obtained their first computers ever with RIP+'s recent donation of IT equipment to six grantees.

**How to contact:**

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[Rip\\_ci@yahoo.fr](mailto:Rip_ci@yahoo.fr)**More information about PEPFAR and its partners on the Web at**<http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/PEPFAR.html>

## Contribute to PEPtalk!

Do you have a news item, a story idea, a good photo, an insightful commentary on an important issue? Share it. Send it to us at [peptalk@ci.cdc.gov](mailto:peptalk@ci.cdc.gov). Please include your name, affiliation, and contact information.

Contributors to PEPtalk No. 6: Ernest Koffi, Patricia Dailly Ajavon, PSI (success story), Joan-Luis Njampo, Albert Gnapa, Versha Patel, Brian Howard

## 'This Is My Life': Radio diaries make their debut

**This Is My Life**, a radio diary production by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, puts the listener at the heart of everyday life of people living with HIV/AIDS. Mathurin Gue of Abidjan and Kady Tiao of Bouaké agreed to share their stories with thousands of listeners in Côte d'Ivoire. In 12 episodes, Mathurin and Kady offer snippets of memory from their adolescence as well as their lives as PLWHA. It is their contribution to reduce stigma against persons living with HIV and to give HIV/AIDS a human face.

**This Is My Life** is being broadcast March 16 - June 14 according to the following program:

- Radio Arc-en-ciel, 102FM, Abobo: Monday-Tuesday, 13:00; Thursday-Friday, 18:40
- Radio ATM, 90.50FM, Port-Bouët: Monday-Tuesday, 13:00; Wednesday and Friday, 16:00
- City FM, 106.10FM, Treichville: Monday-Tuesday, 10:00; Thursday-Friday, 17:00



Radio diarist Kady Tiao records her experiences living with HIV.

- Cocody FM, 98.50FM: Monday-Tuesday, 13:00; Thursday-Friday, 17:50
- Radio Yopougon, 96.80FM: Monday, 19:15; Wednesday, 19:15; Thursday, 9:35; Sunday, 16:00

Comments on the show are welcome. Please send them to [cestmavieci@yahoo.fr](mailto:cestmavieci@yahoo.fr).

## News in Brief

The U.S. Embassy's HIV/AIDS Caravan is hitting the road again after three recent tours that tested about 420 people for HIV and taught hundreds more how to protect themselves.

The Embassy's Public Affairs Section is planning stops at high schools in Anyama (April 29) and in Man (May 13) to show films, lead discussions on HIV and stigma, conduct radio call-in shows, and offer HIV testing in collaboration with PEPFAR partners.

The tours follow successful caravan stops in the far North (Korhogo), the East (Aboisso), and near Abidjan (Dabou) that involved more than 1,300 students, local and regional government officials, religious leaders, security forces, members of women's groups, and traditional chiefs.

Six PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire partners will present 11 abstracts at the 2009 International HIV Implementers' Meeting June 10-14 in

Windhoek, Namibia. Congratulations to Care International, FHI, CDC/Retro-CI, JSI/MMIS, EGPAF, and the N'zrama Association of Bouaké.

The HIV/AIDS workplace program led by FHI and the Ministry of the Fight Against AIDS (MLS) has published a best-practices document highlighting lessons learned in HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment in the public and private sectors. The document is available from the MLS.

"I Promise to Stop Tuberculosis" was the theme of International Tuberculosis Day celebrated March 24 with a national observance in Koumassi. The Ministry of Health along with the National Program for the Fight against Tuberculosis conducted outreach activities to inform surrounding communities about the seriousness of TB, its frequent association with HIV, and

access to care and treatment.

Côte d'Ivoire's next Demographic and Health Survey Plus (DHS+) will be under way nationwide in June. The DHS+, which will provide essential health, nutrition, and demographic data, will contain modules on malaria and HIV/AIDS, including HIV testing to provide national prevalence estimates. It will also cover key questions that UNICEF asks in its regular Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

Quality improvement was the focus of 60 participants in a recent workshop to develop national service standards for care and support of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Part of a quality-improvement initiative led by the National OVC Program with assistance from the University Research Co. (URC), the service standards will be piloted in three to five sites and reviewed again with stakeholders before being scaled up.

## Comings &amp; Goings



New Save the Children UK Program Manager  
**Yann Grandin**



**Jean-Baptiste Appia**, new MEN/PEPFAR Project Coordinator



New PEPFAR OVC Technical Adviser  
**Adouko Irene M'bahia**



**Dr. Diarrassouba Mamadou**, new PEPFAR Technical Adviser on highly vulnerable populations



**Thanks and best wishes:**  
**Abdou Salam Gueye**, PEPFAR Strategic Information Branch Chief, leaving to become CDC Resident Adviser for the President's Malaria Initiative in Benin