



PEPtalk

News you can use from PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire

No. 19, July 2012

In Our Corner

I would like to thank everyone for the warm *akwaba* upon my return to Côte d'Ivoire as USAID/PEPFAR country program manager in May. As my very first post in Africa back in 2000, Côte d'Ivoire holds a special place in my heart. It continues to serve as an important point of reference for my public health work throughout the world, which has included contributing to the development of a successful national HIV/AIDS program in Rwanda, serving as PEPFAR coordinator in Vietnam and Ethiopia, and overseeing HIV care and treatment programs in nine African countries with Columbia University.



Valerie Koscelnik
USAID/PEPFAR
country manager

When I left Abidjan in 2002, Côte d'Ivoire was a trailblazer in HIV in Africa. The government launched one of the continent's first treatment access programs with UNAIDS, and Ivorian experts published groundbreaking research on PMTCT and the use of cotrimoxazole for prevention of opportunistic infections. I would like to take this opportunity to express my admiration to the committed leaders and experts in Côte d'Ivoire who have advanced the fight against HIV/AIDS since 2002.

Ten years later, we must take stock of a hard reality: While great strides have been made with \$644 million in PEPFAR investments, Côte d'Ivoire has fallen behind other PEPFAR countries in areas that impact success and sustainability, including cost-efficiency

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Under a microscope

CDC Director Dr. Thomas A. Frieden (above at right, with CDC Care and Treatment Branch Chief Dr. Alexander Ekra), was among recent high-level visitors who got an up-close look at PEPFAR CI activities. **More PEPFAR Potpourri: Page 2.**

'A better dad'

Parents learn to protect their kids by talking, listening

Paul Ban is a busy man. A natural leader, he is chief of his neighborhood in Abidjan, traditional chief of the Dan community, and president of the local Community Improvement Committee and School Management Committee. He's also head of a family of nine children, including seven daughters, but family time wasn't always his top priority.

"I got home late at night and left early in the morning," the 50s-something Ban said. "I didn't have time to talk to my daughters – I hardly knew what they were up to. I assumed they were doing OK as long as they didn't come see me."

Even during his rare times at home, his kids found him difficult to approach.

"Our father was hard to talk to, because he has a temper, so we were afraid to talk to him," daughter Diane recalled.

Diane's pregnancy at age 16 didn't help matters; she and her father pretty much stopped talking and went their separate ways.

Diane's took her to the Institute of Feminine Education and Training, where local NGO Secours Plus, a sub-partner of USAID/PEPFAR partner Johns Hopkins University, was implementing Sports for Life (SFL), a program that uses soccer as a vehicle to transmit HIV prevention information and skills to young people. About 60% of participants are female.

"Before joining SFL, I didn't know much about HIV/AIDS and STIs (sexually transmitted infections)," Diane, now 19, said. "I didn't know about what they call risky behavior," an ignorance that she blames for her unwanted pregnancy.



Diane and her father, Paul Ban, talking at last.

When Secours Plus added a parent-child communication component to its SFL program, it sent parents a notice asking them to come to the school.

"If I'd known that's what it was about, I wouldn't have come," Paul Ban said. But after listening for a while, "I found it was a very good program. I really asked myself a lot of questions. And I haven't missed a single session since."

Ban is among 800 parents who have participated in the program since 2010, learning to help protect their children from risky behavior by talking and listening to them.

"It was a very good experience for me – too short, even," he said. "I became a different person, a better dad for my children, with whom I now often have friendly exchanges. We even joke together, which never happened before. I take advantage of this to give them some advice about life."

Success Story

PEPFAR CI results show continued growth

Results for the first six months of FY 2012 show the PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire program continuing to grow and improve after a period of recovery from the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis.

Highlights (see table) include a 10% increase from a year ago in the number of pregnant women tested or served, 11% more adults and children receiving HIV-related care, and 6% more patients receiving antiretroviral treatment.

Continuing challenges include scaling up pediatric care and treatment and implementing and reporting on TB/HIV services. The program is on track to meet most of its annual targets.

PEPFAR in Côte d'Ivoire, October 2011-March 2012	Results	% of FY 2012 target
Pregnant women with known HIV status (i.e. tested or, if known to be HIV-positive, provided services)	191,566	54%
HIV-positive pregnant women receiving ARV prophylaxis	4,651	47%
People tested, given results	353,124	36%
People with HIV receiving care	195,041	84%
People newly enrolled on ART	9,782	41%
People currently receiving ART	70,818	87%
Orphans and vulnerable children receiving care and support	81,896	80%

Open for service

Blood transfusion center, social centers, mobile libraries, labs extend their reach

Côte d'Ivoire celebrated World Blood Donor Day with a parade, a successful blood drive, and the inauguration of a regional blood transfusion center renovated and equipped with PEPFAR support.

Under a theme of "Every donor is a hero," Minister of Health and AIDS Prof. Thérèse N'Dri-Yoman and the National Blood Transfusion Center (CNTS) honored regular blood donors and donor clubs during the national observance in Abengourou.

The Abengourou blood transfusion center is one of seven newly functional CNTS sites that will open this year. In addition to extending services nationwide, CDC/PEPFAR support helps the CNTS test all donated blood for HIV and other agents, after donor screening that has reduced the proportion of HIV-positive donations to about 0.5 percent. With technical assistance from USAID partner Johns Hopkins University, the CNTS has launched a multimedia campaign to promote regular blood donation, which still falls short of meeting national needs.

Renovated social centers open

Social centers in three more zones are able to serve the most vulnerable children and families in their communities after rehabilitation with PEPFAR support.

Centers in Bouaké, Korhogo, and Tiassale were inaugurated in April, with a national ceremony in Tiassale attended by Minister

Minister of Families, Women, and Children Dr. Raymonde Coffie Goudou, right, and DCM Julia Stanley, center, joined in celebrating the inauguration of three renovated social centers.



Blood donor clubs from schools and private industry paraded in celebration of World Blood Donor Day.

of Families, Women, and Children Dr. Raymonde Coffie Goudou and U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Julia Stanley.

PEPFAR Potpourri

As an entry point for all community vulnerabilities, social centers are the hub of the national strategy for care and support for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), with OVC platforms that coordinate NGO, public, and private service providers.

Through CDC and USAID grants to the National OVC Program, international and national NGOs, and local subpartners, PEPFAR supports direct services for more than 100,000 HIV-affected children and their families, as well as systems-strengthening work that has included renovation, equipment, motorcycles, situation analyses, and other technical assistance benefiting 43 social centers throughout the country.

Microbiology training services

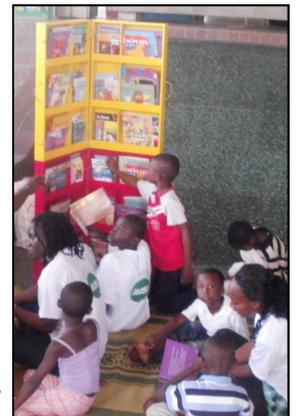
Microbiology training and services are advancing with the recent validation of a national training document for microbiologists developed with assistance from CDC/PEPFAR partner Institut Pasteur de Côte d'Ivoire, training of 20 trainers, and the PEPFAR-

supported equipping, staffing, and planned opening of three regional microbiology laboratories at the regional hospitals in Yamoussoukro, Korhogo, and Abengourou.

Mobile libraries bring books to kids

The world is coming to vulnerable children via mobile libraries – basically books in a box, painted in bright colors and easy to carry – distributed to 46 local NGOs and six social centers by USAID/

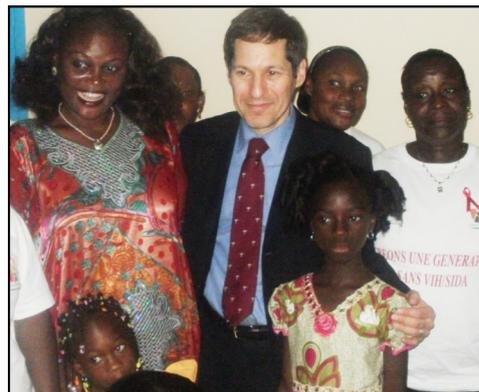
PEPFAR partner AVSI Foundation. The 225 libraries, co-funded with AVSI's European Union project for youth, will be used in community activities that include orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) supported by AVSI and its subpartners in Abidjan and Bouaké. The initiative, based on AVSI's finding that reading was the most popular part of its socio-recreational activities, was launched with the Ministry for Employment, Social Affairs, and Solidarity and the Ministry for Families, Women, and Children in May at the National Library.



Reading is the most sought-after part of AVSI's socio-recreational program.

High visibility

High-level guests who learned about the work of PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire in April included a delegation of five U.S. senators (among them, from right in top photo, Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Michael Enzi (R-WY), who toured the National Blood Transfusion Center, a CDC/PEPFAR partner. CDC Director Dr. Thomas A. Frieden visited PEPFAR sites and met with PEPFAR staff and the Minister of Health and AIDS during a one-day stop. Dr. Frieden is shown below with activist Semi Lou Bertine and other members of Femmes Actives, a veteran support group for women living with HIV, during a visit to Marcory General Hospital.



Contribute to PEPtalk!

Do you have a news item, a story idea, a good photo? An insightful commentary? Share it. Send it to us at peptalk@ci.cdc.gov.

Contributors to PEPtalk No. 17: PEPFAR implementing partners, Dr. Roger Lobognon, Thérèse Orsot, Aimé Nicoue, Dr. Micheline Aka, Dr. Marie-Thérèse Nobah, Dr. Djénéba Coulibaly-Traore, Dr. Konan Ehoussou, Ernest Koffi, Joan-Luis Njampo, Brian Howard

Thousands dial 106 for new HIV/AIDS hotline

Thousands of young Ivoirians dialed 106, the country's new toll-free InfoSIDA hotline, within days of its launch in April by the Minister of Health and AIDS and the U.S. Ambassador.

The hotline's 16 counselors talked to 3,835 callers in the first two weeks, two-thirds of them young people ages 15-24, who sought information about HIV transmission, prevention, testing, and care, as well as other sexually transmitted infections and reproductive health. Counselors referred 546 callers for HIV testing and 82 for care.

The hotline is hosted and managed by the local NGO Ruban Rouge with technical assistance from USAID/PEPFAR partner Johns Hopkins University, in a partnership involving the cell-phone giant MTN Foundation, U.S. State Department, and Ministries of Health and AIDS and of Communication.

Free to callers on any cell-phone network, the hotline operates 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays. While calls are confidential, data on



U.S. Ambassador Carter listens as Minister of Health and AIDS N'Dri-Yoman explores a counselor's skills with a test call during the launch of the HIV hotline.

callers' location, age, sex, and concerns can be analyzed via a database. The project was designed to be self-sustaining, with income-generating projects to help fund the hotline's costs.

In launching the hotline with Minister of Health and AIDS Prof. Thérèse N'Dri-Yoman, U.S. Ambassador Phillip Carter cited the project as a model of multi-partner collaboration and public-private partnership, adding that "the time for seeking formal engagement with the private sector is now."

New booklet to improve mother-child health care

Three years in the making, Côte d'Ivoire's new mother-child health booklet finally saw the light of day in June with a launch by the Prime Minister's office and the Ministers of Health and AIDS, of Labor, and of Families, Women, and Children.



The new booklet, developed with PEPFAR support in response to a recommendation by a 2008 mission on PMTCT and pediatric care, is an important step forward in the care of women and children, particularly of women and children living with HIV. It allows improved continuity of maternal, fetal, and infant care, covering areas ranging from gynecology and family planning to nutrition and pediatrics, and contains a wealth of information for parents. Unlike its predecessor, the new booklet discreetly includes information about HIV status, which will improve providers' ability to follow mother-child pairs affected by HIV. The government plans to sell the booklet for \$1.

"It was a difficult birth," said CDC/PEPFAR technical adviser Dr. Marie-Thérèse Nobah. "But it's a wonderful tool."

Challenges

Continued from Page 1

and task-shifting.

The PEPFAR global average ARV drug cost per patient is \$127 per year, while a preliminary analysis suggests that per-patient ARV cost in Côte d'Ivoire is substantially higher. Whereas other PEPFAR countries have effectively shifted service provision tasks from physicians to nurses to increase access to HIV treatment, care and PMTCT, these tasks remain the exclusive domain of medical doctors in Côte d'Ivoire, who cannot cover the needs of the country.

The new authorities have communicated their commitment to health with a draft strategic plan that contains ambitious targets for universal access to treatment and the elimination of MTCT by 2015. These targets can only be met with rapid implementation of a rational task-shifting strategy and attention to cost-efficiency. PEPFAR stands willing to support Côte d'Ivoire to make these critical changes to improve the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Comings & Goings



Valerie Koscelnik, new USAID/PEPFAR country manager



Dr. Joseph Kouakou, new CDC/PEPFAR monitoring and evaluation



Wassia Assemien, new USAID/PEPFAR financial analyst



Simplicie Kamdem, new USAID/PEPFAR supply chain adviser



Dr. Delphine Achi, new Care and Treatment Branch deputy chief for CDC/PEPFAR



Heidi Jugenitz, new USAID/PEPFAR technical adviser



Appia Adou Koffi, new trades helper for CDC/PEPFAR



Dr. Hortense Angoran-Benie, new country director for FHI360



USAID/PEPFAR project manager **Stephan Zoukou**, leaving for Canada



CDC/PEPFAR project manager **Anselme Bombo**, leaving for Columbia ICAP

In Memoriam

Agnès Akoua Adom, nutrition technical adviser for CDC/PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire, died on April 5, 2012, after a long illness. She was 38. Agnès, a good and amiable social worker, started her career at CDC's Projet Retro-CI in January 1998 and was deeply involved in PMTCT and HIV care and treatment activities. Our thoughts go out to her husband, her son, other relatives, and the many friends all over the country who will remember Agnès with affection and gratitude.

