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**Strengthening HIV Prevention Services
For Most at Risk Populations**
SHiPS for MARPs

SHiPS News

Volume 2, Issue 2

April, 2016

SHiPS News is a quarterly publication of the Strengthening HIV Prevention Services for Most-at-Risk Populations project sponsored by USAID.

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Keeping Abreast of Global Trends and Strategies.

Population Services International (PSI) held its global HIV and Tuberculosis technical meeting from March 14th to 18th, 2016, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting was organised by PSI Washington and led by Nina Hasen, Director of HIV and TB Programmes for PSI Washington. This year's meeting was focused on trends in HIV and AIDS programming; specifically on improving treatment linkages for those living with HIV.

The meeting had about 50 participants across 20 countries, including Nigeria, who work on HIV prevention programmes with varying goals and targeting diverse population groups. Two HIV prevention projects represented Society for Family Health Nigeria in the meeting with the SHiPS for MARPs project aptly represented by the project's HIV Prevention Advisor, Chukwuemeka Chima, and Deputy Manager Documentation and Communication, Yvonne Ekpe.

Some of the key areas of discussion from the meeting that are of primary concern for the project include treatment as prevention (TasP) for HIV interventions, the UNAIDS fast-track strategy to step up HIV response along with the 90-90-90 targets, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, self-testing for HIV and programming for adolescents and young people.



The SFH Nigeria team, Chukwuemeka Chima, Berkisu Momoh and Yvonne Ekpe, at a break-fast meeting with PSI's Patrick Ndase, Senior Technical Advisor for HIV Clinical Services.

The meeting ended on a high note with countries represented drawing up plans of action for individual projects and their wider PSI affiliated organisations.



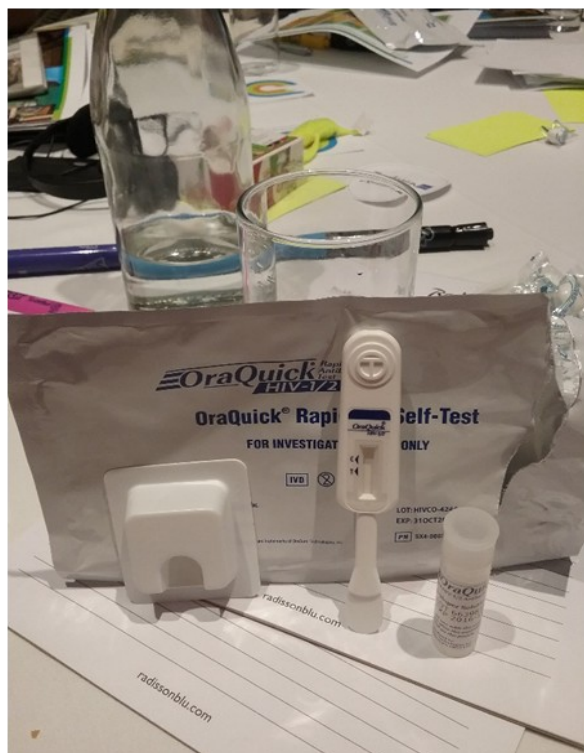
Cross section of participants at the meeting.



The Nigeria team, Chukwuemeka Chima, Yvonne Ekpe and Berkisu Momoh, settling in for the first day of the meeting.



SFH Nigeria's stand displaying the organisation's products and materials during gallery presentation.



A sample of a HIV self-test kit currently used in countries such as the USA, Canada, France and Kenya reviewed at

The SHiPS Project Meets to Rethink and Refocus.

In view of current global trends in HIV and AIDS programming as well as recent changes in PEPFAR/USAID programming priorities, the SHiPS for MARPs project management organised a three-day Strategic Programme Meeting to review project implementation, enhance staff capacity to manage organisational change and identify effective strategies to respond to emerging priorities for project implementation.

The meeting, which held from 30th March to 1st April 2016, had in attendance project staff from the headquarters and field offices, representatives from consortium partners and the project's Agreement Officer Representative (USAID). Discussions

during the meeting focused on changes in global trends as it affects project implementation, particularly the UNAIDS 90-90-90 cascade and increased focus on Treatment as Prevention. It also provided an opportunity to deliberate on strategies to improve peer retention, referrals/linkages to treatment, follow up and treatment adherence. Participants also had practical sessions on systems thinking, change management and improving staff performance.

The meeting ended on a high note with everyone having a well-rounded understanding of the project's renewed focus and implementation strategies.



Our very own AOR, Isa Iyortim, providing technical guidance during the meeting.



Group presentation on implementation strategies aimed at achieving the 90-90-90 UNAIDS targets.



Bolaji Owolowo, Deputy Director, SFH Learning and Development Centre, giving a presentation on 'How to Improve Performance'.



Everybody at the meeting, well, except the person who took the picture.

Continuing Our Efforts to Build Local Capacity.

“Blackboard relay taught me about critical thinking and spontaneity, prompt thinking and working in teams. I was a rat now I’m a lion in advocacy. The facilitator did excellently” - Christy

One of the objectives of the SHiPS for MARPs project is to increase organisational capacity of local stakeholders to implement effective HIV prevention programmes. To achieve this objective, the project implements various capacity building activities including trainings, workshops, and other events. In the first week of March 2016, a four-day training on ‘Advocacy and Policy Influencing’ was organised for State Agencies for the Control of AIDS (SACAs) from priority states, partnering Civil Society and Community based Organisations and select members of the MARPs community. The training took place in two locations Akwa Ibom and Kaduna States for participants from the southern and northern regions respectively.

The training was part of the project’s sustainability strategies aimed at ensuring a critical mass of local stakeholders with the capacity to facilitate sustained multisectoral consultation and engagement for HIV programming. The training enhanced participants’ capacity to influence policy making processes within their own operating space and also engage with allies for effective collective action. A total of 85 participants were trained; 47 from Akwa Ibom state and 38 from Kaduna state. Participants were selected from diverse backgrounds including civil servants, nurses, legal practitioners, students and teachers.

The training was interactive and participatory, with a combination of presentations, plenary discussions, group exercises and role plays used as training methodology. At the end of the training, participants’ gave feed back and state-specific action plans were developed to facilitate achievement of training outcomes.



One of the groups presenting their work during the training.



Participants from Cross River state deliberating on their group task.



Participants at the training in Eket, Akwa Ibom state.

There Can Never Be Too Many HIV Counsellor-Testers!

..a total of 113 new Counsellor-Testers trained across the 3 states.

In 2015, the SHiPS for MARPs project trained over a 100 individuals as HIV Counsellor-Testers to provide HIV Testing Services (HTS) to beneficiaries of the project. In line with plans for service expansion, a total of 113 new counsellor-Testers were trained in March 2016, while the annual refresher training was organised for 101 previously trained counsellor-testers. The trainings (refresher and new), which held concurrently in Lagos, Cross River and Kaduna states, were aimed at improving the quality of service provision to key populations, reviewing field experiences/challenges and updating knowledge on current HTS practices in accordance with global trends.

With UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets to be achieved in 2020, which calls for a scale-up in HIV testing such that 90% of people living with HIV are aware of their HIV status, 90% of people who are HIV positive are linked to anti-retroviral treatment (ART) and 90% of those on ART adhere and achieve viral load suppression, the training facilitated the project's contribution to these targets by developing participants knowledge and skills to provide effective and efficient counseling and testing services, and appropriate linkage to treatment and care services.

The trainings were conducted by national Master trainers and observed by representatives of the Federal Ministry of Health to ensure modules used were guided by nationally approved curriculum. Participants who successfully completed the training and met all requirements were given certificates of completion.



Participants in a role play session on counseling guided by the trainer.



Participants setting up for practicum.



Putting theory into practice.

SHiPS Lagos Goes to WAR



In March 2016, Rubies Ink Initiatives for Women and Children organised the sixth edition of its campaign, Walk Against Rape (WAR). The campaign as the name implies is in protest against rape and encourages women affected by rape to speak out about and against rape. It also advocates for the opening of more help centers across Lagos state where women who have been raped can get the support they need.

This year's walk took place in Lagos on March 10th and coincided with the commemoration of International Women's Day. The walk was organised in partnership with the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation and had several celebrities participate in support.

The SHiPS for MARPs project was not left out as the project was aptly represented by its team in Lagos who participated in the Walk thereby reinforcing the project's stance on rape. The Walk came to a close with an address by Lola Akande, commissioner for women affairs and poverty alleviation followed by a 'question and answer' session.



Toba Babawarun, CRH Programme Officer M&E in Lagos, represented the project during the walk.



Supporters on the WAR trail in Lagos

OUR STORIES

Back To School.

*"I appreciate this programme so much.
Thank you for making me a Jambito."*

In Merenge (the biggest brothel in Kuje, Abuja), a female sex worker popularly called 'Mother Counselor' was recruited and trained as a peer educator by the Abuja SHiPS for MARPs project team to conduct peer education in her brothel. As a result of the training received, 'Mother Counselor' was able to not only provide HIV prevention education to her peers but mobilise peers for HIV testing services, Income generating activities and other services.

Of all the peers in 'Mother Counselor's' cohort, only Priscilla, a 26 year old single mother and sex worker was able to successfully enroll onto the literacy programme at the FCT Agency for Mass Education, FAME, in February 2015. Priscilla, an indigene of Benue State, is the fourth child in her family. She lost her mother when she was 18 and her father, although financially stable, refused to support her schooling. Due to her circumstances, Priscilla left her 7 year old son with her aunt.

Through the SHiPS for MARPs project's peer sessions and support from her Peer Educator, Priscilla was motivated to go back to school and fulfil her dream of getting an education. She registered and passed the West African Examination Council exams and applied for admission into a sandwich programme with the University of Abuja. She got admitted to study English and commenced lectures in January 2016. She is planning to bring her son to live with her in Abuja.

"I appreciate this programme so much. Thank you for making me a Jambito."



Priscilla awaiting a lecture.



OUR STORIES

Rethinking My Position.



Ikom is a highly commercial local government area in the northern part of Cross River State with a vibrant sex work business. The SHiPS for MARPs project began project implementation in Ikom in January 2015 and upon community mapping, discovered that Ikom has a large number of Key Populations. With commencement

of project implementation, there was a need to train people who would provide HIV Testing Services on the project, a very key component of HIV prevention. It was during this process that Kenneth Ogar, an indigene of the community, was identified and trained as a counsellor-tester.

Prior to joining the project, Kenneth had very strong feelings about sex work and would readily stigmatise female sex workers (FSWs): *"I have never interacted with anybody who does sex work before because I usually feel that they are sinners."*

During his interaction with the project, he was sensitised on the importance of providing HIV prevention services to sex workers and the harm stigmatising and discriminating against them could ultimately cause.

"The SHiPS for MARPs [project] opened my eyes to know that FSWs are humans and most of them are in the business because of the circumstances in which they find themselves. I have also learnt that if we stigmatise

"I have come to understand that if one is not infected by the virus, he or she could be affected by it.

Working in this project has taught me to see HIV counseling and testing not as a job or a means to an end but as a necessity..."

them, most of them will not have access to HIV prevention information and this could also affect a lot of persons living in this community as most of the FSWs will go about spreading the virus."

The process of learning about and interacting with Key Populations was gradual for Kenneth Ogar and although there are possibly other individuals within the community who still stigmatise sex workers and Key Populations in general, the project hopes to continue to influence a decrease in discrimination and stigmatisation through its community interventions to prevent further spread of HIV.

"I have come to understand that if one is not infected by the virus, he or she could be affected by it. Working in this project has taught me to see HIV counseling and testing not as a job or a means to an end but as a necessity. I have also learnt to internalise counseling and testing because I can only be passionate about something that touches me personally"

Today Kenneth is a change agent within the community and can be considered a pioneer of the SHiPS for MARPs project in Ikom. His insight into the lives of the target populations makes it easier to impact the lives of FSWs with sincerity.

Respite At Last.



"I am very happy and will always make sure I use condoms for every sexual act I am involved in..."

Dorcas is a 26 year old in one of the tertiary institutions of higher learning in Kaduna. In addition to being a student, Dorcas sells sex on the side to enable her pay bills, buy books and take care of herself. In the course of sex work Dorcas would contract Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and for about four years she managed the infections with medication obtained from patent medicine vendors rather than visiting the nearest hospital for proper diagnosis and treatment. Unfortunately for her, the infections kept recurring.

According to her, things got so bad that she became the butt of jokes among her friends and her side sex business took a hit because of the pains she experienced during sexual intercourse. She lost many of her clients, which meant a loss in her income. *"I am tired of life and all my friends have deserted me and even when I have sex it used to be very painful and sometimes I tried to hide it from my customers but they think I don't want to serve them well. So many of them don't come back again; I have lost so many customers."*

In November of 2015, Dorcas joined the SHiPS for MARPs project as a peer on its HIV prevention peer education intervention.

Over time she came to see the value in being part of the project and became an ardent participant at peer sessions. One session in particular resonated with Dorcas because it addressed the prevention and treatment of STIs. Dorcas in her opinion, while the Community Facilitator was taking the session it felt as though the Facilitator knew every detail about her life and what she had been going through over the years. Fortunately for Dorcas, the SHiPS for MARPs project provides STI treatment and HIV testing services, which she was able to access at no cost.

Presently, Dorcas is doing much better. She said she learnt a lot about preventing HIV and other STIs, and now uses condoms at every sexual act. She added that the project saved her life, took away her shame and made her feel like a woman again. *"I am very happy and will always make sure I use condoms for every sexual act I am involved in. I want to tell many other girls, who are also suffering from STI popularly called Toilet Infection, that they should not hide like I foolishly did but to come and join us so that they too can benefit from the expert and free treatment."*

OTHER INFORMATION

Understanding Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).



When someone is on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) it means that person is taking daily doses of HIV drugs to reduce their risk of contracting HIV. A person on PrEP is HIV negative but is at very high risk of HIV infection, hence their placement on PrEP. Usually people on PrEP are at very high risk for several reasons ranging from being in a relationship with someone living with the infection; to having multiple sexual partners; to inconsistently or incorrectly using condoms with people whose HIV statuses are unknown and are themselves at high risk of the infection; to working in a job that exposes you to HIV (medical doctor, paramedic, nurse, sex worker, etc); and to having shared injecting equipment among others.

Currently, PrEP comes as a combination of two medications, Tenofovir and Emtricitabine, and is sold under the trade name Truvada. Truvada is a single pill recommended for daily use by HIV negative persons to prevent them from contracting HIV infection from a sexual partner or an injecting drug using partner who is HIV positive. PrEP has been scientifically proven to be 90% effective in reducing the risk of contracting HIV from sex and 70% from injecting drug use. However, Truvada is only

“Daily PrEP use can lower the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90% and from injection drug use by more than 70%.” - CDC

effective if used as prescribed. Since PrEP is not 100% effective, it is recommended to be used along with condoms, clean needles and other HIV prevention approaches.

“Daily PrEP use can lower the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90% and from injection drug use by more than 70%.” – CDC

“If you take PrEP daily, the presence of the medicine in your bloodstream can often stop HIV from taking hold and spreading in your body. If you do not take PrEP every day, there may not be enough medicine in your bloodstream to block the virus.”- CDC

Like most medication, PrEP has side effects, which include, nausea, vomiting, dizziness and fatigue. However, these side effects are said to dissipate over time. The CDC advises people on PrEP to report any side effect that persist or are severe to their health care provider.

Globally, only 7 countries offer PrEP. They are the United States, Canada, France, South Africa, Kenya Peru and Israel.

Read more about PrEP [here](#) and [here](#). Stay tuned for our next

ANNOUNCEMENT

Our Mass Media and Online Campaigns are LIVE!

The SHiPS for MARPs project has a Mass media campaign on television, radio and social media platforms. This Condom Social Messaging Campaign was created to remind us of the importance of correctly and consistently using condoms to prevent sexual transmission of HIV, which is still very much a public health concern.

The campaign is expected to run for an initial period of 6 months in all project implementation states with one month break in-between for assessment. Across our 7 states and the FCT the condom messages are aired on TV from 10pm and on Radio from 8pm based on APCON recommendation for condom advertisement. See the table below for stations.



You can also follow the campaign's online version, Yes I TWET (TWET: **Think** condoms. **Wear** Condoms. **Every Time**) via Twitter, [@TWETnaija](#), and on Facebook, [Yes I TWET campaign](#). Like, Tweet, retweet, make comments, and share your experiences with us. Remember to tell your friends about the campaign for we want as many people out there as possible discussing and using condoms!!!

| States | Akwa Ibom | Benue | Cross River | FCT | Kaduna | Lagos | Nasarawa | Rivers |
|--------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| TV | AKBC Uyo | NTA | CRBC | NTA | DITV | ONTV | Nasarawa TV | NTA |
| | AIT Network across all project states | | | | | | | |
| Radio | AKBC Uyo Planet FM Atlantic FM | Radio Benue Joy FM Otukpo | CRBC, Calabar CRBC, Ikom Hit FM | Wazobia FM Cool FM Love FM | Liberty FM KSMC | Wazobia FM Cool FM Bond FM | Raypower FM Nasarawa Radio Keffi Nasarawa FM | Wazobia FM Treasure FM Family Love |

The Strengthening HIV Prevention Services for Most at Risk Populations (SHiPS for MARPs) project is a five-year HIV prevention project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and implemented by a consortium of partners—Society for Family Health (www.sfnigeria.org), Population Services International (www.psi.org), Population Council (www.popcouncil.org) and Centre for the Right to Health (crhnigeria.org); of which Society for Family Health is managing partner.

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Disclaimer: This publication is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the SHiPS for MARPs project and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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