

The National AIDS Commission

One Response E-Bulletin



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Public Health Care Receives Significant Boost Toward Performance Improvement through a Central America Capacity Project Initiative



More than 30 participants gathered at the Caracol Room at the Radisson Fort George Hotel & Marina for the Performance Improvement Workshop facilitated by Dr. Jose Perera and co-facilitator Dr. Yadira Villasenor under the USAID/Central America Capacity Project from February 16 to 18, 2011.

Key representatives who attended the workshop included Hospital Administrators, Chiefs of Staff, Regional Managers, Lab Technicians and nurses from across the country as well as other representatives from civil society organizations including members of the HIV positive community.

The purpose of this successful workshop was to introduce all participants to 18 performance enhancement tools for improved performance in the healthcare service delivery, among key players, while providing an excellent opportunity to strengthen collaboration within and between the health care providers and health care recipients focusing on HIV and AIDS related services. The tools, which meet international performance criteria, were shared with the participants for further revision and modification for increased implementation and ownership by service providers. Key items on the agenda included: performance measuring instruments, review of standards and verification means, plenary sessions to discuss instrument findings, instrument use simulation practice, gap identifications, cause analysis and intervention planning.

The National AIDS Commission's Executive Director, who addressed the participants, emphasized the importance of strengthening horizontal and vertical communication processes within the different layers of the public health service. He welcomed the many professionals in our public health system into the national response to HIV by acknowledging how much their willingness to be more human rights based, gender responsive and inclusive in their work raises the national standards of

performance and thus helps the NAC accomplish its overarching goals of harmonization, mitigation, care and treatment.

Quality Assurance Coordinator at the KMHM, Nurse Edith Lizama said, "I believe that all learned these past days will have a positive impact on the quality of service delivery. Participants will go and apply what was learnt to the benefit of their patients including persons living with HIV/AIDS. I am encouraged by the increased networking experienced this week of training with the participation of the director of medical services and other relevant personnel in management toward increased policy implementation. I am optimistic of this movement in M&E culture which has began and will go many miles in strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation structures at KMHM. We look forward to using these tools and merge them with the existing M&E toward the development of a more comprehensive structure in place."

Equally enthusiastic about the broad-based benefits of the performance enhancement workshop was Head Nurse at the Punta Gorda Hospital, Ms. Jessica Nunez, "I am very optimistic about these tools which will be useful for all areas, not only within the Hospital but also in our personal lives as it becomes an M&E mind set. It is important to establish a national standard that will allow each administration entity to be more aware of our short comings to be better able to improve the quality of service and optimize patient satisfaction. I feel motivated toward positive change and look forward to the next assessment that reflects progress. What also impacted me at this workshop was the collaboration and support of all the participating organizations in the struggle against HIV/AIDS."

The recurrent theme of inspiration, progress toward performance and cohesion among participants is also captured and summarized by the non-health experience of Eva Burgos, workshop participant, "I love how this training was able to bring people together - NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, relevant public health administrations and front line personnel under one roof in a highly interactive work week. The workshop was smooth. The tools were practical as they focused on evaluating the services and not the individual institutions or persons involved. Greater awareness of concerns among the regional managers was evident and the facilitators did a great job in bringing across key messages among the participants."

One participant, living with HIV, commented, "As user of services being enhanced, I stand to gain from a better understanding of the M&E process involved that will also ensure the protection of my rights. Whenever I have any issues or concerns with the health care system, I would now know where to go, who to approach, and how to get a better response and share this with the rest of our support groups. I feel fortunate to be able to contribute in a participatory process where my voice and concerns can be heard not just for myself but for the many unheard voices."

Quality Assistant Coordinator Lizama, among many others, reiterated the need for more trained staff in all district hospitals across Belize toward the improvement of vital data collection that translates to better data analysis resulting in improved patient case management and overall health care delivery as a catalyst to national health care progress.

Dr. Perera concluded the work session by stating that a final document, reflecting all recommended changes to the instrument, will be provided to all participants for the continuous improvement of assessing service delivery as well as a schedule for the month of March for the continuation of these performance enhancement assessments in the districts.

New Doors are Open to Survivors of Domestic Violence in Cayo.

The National AIDS Commission takes great pride this month in highlighting the good work of one of our small but impacting members of the national response - Mary Open Doors.

Not many partners may be familiar with Mary Open Doors, an organization committed to empowering and improving the well being of women and children affected by domestic violence in the Cayo District by providing a safe shelter, support and domestic violence education. The staff at Mary Open Doors impact the NAC's work in the education it provides to women about the connection between domestic violence and HIV. They also provide shelter to HIV+ women who are survivors of domestic abuse. Mary Open Doors is targeted to join the NAC Cayo Committee.

Located on the Corner of Bullet Tree Road and Church Street in San Ignacio, Cayo, Mary Open Doors, as the name implies, has its doors wide open to welcome survivors of domestic violence especially in the Cayo District. The affected women not only have a shelter but a supportive environment for self empowerment.

Mary Open Doors is also pleased to announce the following upcoming events in March:

1. A food stall and information booth will be available at the Annual Easter Fair
2. Visiting women in the month of March will receive an opportunity to choose from a list of inspiring mentors in Cayo for a visit with them. They will also receive a ticket for a chance to win a fun day package for a mother and child to be announced on the last Friday of March.

For further information on Mary Open Doors or on any of their activities, please feel free to contact Ana Silva at office number 501-804-4562.



IEC Sub-Committee meets to review and approve current revisions to the Belize Red Cross's Together We Can Peer Education Materials

The NAC's sub-committee of Information, Education and Communication met on Monday February 21 to review the revisions made to the Together We Can (TWC) Program, undertaken by the Belize Red Cross, to assess the existing training, monitoring and evaluation materials and provide recommendations that inform the development of a comprehensive HIV peer education package. This education package which includes sexual and reproductive health issues targeting youths between 11-19 years, includes the Peer Education Handbook, the Activity Kit and Guide to conducting a Peer Education Training and monitoring and evaluation documents. Succinct recommendations were made by members of the sub-committee for the further development of the HIV peer education package. This validated set of training documents will be used in the roll out of Global Fund Round 9 youth education activities.

GoJoven Fellows - Raising Awareness of Healthy

Sexual Lifestyles Among Corozal Youth

Contributed by GoJoven Fellows

'The Hummingbird,' is a unique group of GoJoven Fellows, graduates of GoJoven's one year leadership and SRH educator training course, based in Corozal whose primary goal is to strengthen the decision making and planning skills of 20 Corozal youths between 17-21, as it relates to their sexual and reproductive health.

Starting last October, the group, directed by Nancy Leiva (CEMJC Teacher), Daisy Magana (youth volunteer of the Progreso 4H Youth Group) and radio personality Elmer Cornejo, have been holding well-attended and exciting 2-day training in fulfillment of the objectives of the leadership development in sexual and reproductive health program.

The dynamic training which is held on weekends include numerous recreational activities and cover topics such as Sex, Sexuality, Gender Roles, Human Sexual Anatomy, Myths and Truths about Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and the importance of a healthy sexuality.

Some specific learning objectives of the training are to:

- Enhance the value system of leadership in participants
- Encourage team work as an important asset of leadership
- Build the communication skills of young leaders
- Nurture a spirit of visionary leadership in participants
- Distinguish between the concepts 'sex' and 'gender'
- Help youth define their own sexuality
- Identify and define the many forms of sexual diversity
- Identify truths and myths about sexual and reproductive health in relation to topics like HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, masturbation, gender roles etc.
- Identify at least 3 sexual and reproductive health rights
- Define the concepts of Stigma and Discrimination in relation to SRH

As can be noted from the above mentioned topics of discussion, the training proves to be educational, inspirational and exciting! Some people believe that we learn through others' experiences and the healthy interaction among the participants has been refreshing and helps to broaden our horizons.

Here are some of the powerful testimonials of the youth:

Marla Magana... I feel more aware about HIV/AIDS, I feel more eager in helping others, want to be a facilitator like you (Elmer) in the future. You guys have a passion for educating and I admire it so much, you show that you care. Many others do it because as a job while you truly want to positively impact other's life. Now I know that I do much harm when I discriminate and stigmatize them.

Jose Gonzalez...I have learnt that being a leader is something very interesting. It makes you realize what it takes to be a leader and to be a guide for them. Working with other people teaches better ways of sharing information. Most importantly, you better appreciate the importance of being more consistently sexually responsible while also protecting others. I can also appreciate the

importance of couples revealing their status to each other. This helps to create a healthier environment in which we think twice about our sexual activities. This is a very interesting and thought-provoking program which I would recommend to other teenagers too and let them know that they have support here.

Rashida Fergusson...instead of just looking at people and judging, I now try to understand them since each person is unique. I have learned useful tips in approaching others in the session of communication skills. Young people are very sensitive so that means that we need to find the right time when you can speak to them... my patience has increased since I came into this program and feel that I have been learning a lot. I use to keep to myself and now I am socializing with others creating a network. I also learnt that some things I have been hearing since childhood are lies or myths. It feels good to know facts about STIs.

The most recent training was held this weekend February 19 and 20, at las Palmas Hotel in Corozal Town. This time around, participants were joined by Dr. Martin Cuellar, Executive Director at the National AIDS Commission, who spoke on "Facts about SRH in Belize in relation to HIV/AIDS transmission."

The program, with training primarily held over weekends, will continue until August 2011 with some funding from the GoJoven Youth Leadership in the Sexual Health Program. Interested funders of partner organizations who are interested in working with GoJoven may call any of the three Fellows at 631-6559, 600-6590, 631-6512 or e-mail them at cornejoelmer@hotmail.com, nancyleiva23@yahoo.com, or daisy4b1@yahoo.com respectively.

Partners are encouraged to keep sharing with the National AIDS Commission outcomes of your workshops, major activities and special announcements for further dissemination to the national response.

Please feel free to forward any comments to the below email address.

Sincerely,

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