

# Tackling HIV/AIDS through social and behavior change communication

FHI 360 works with local partners to develop interventions that motivate individuals and communities to make appropriate choices about HIV prevention and care.

Reducing the spread of HIV and improving care and treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS requires addressing social factors and behaviors that put people at risk. Social and behavior change communication (SBCC) goes beneath the surface to uncover the causes of the behaviors as well as the social structures that drive the epidemic and the factors that increase risk and vulnerability. Through media campaigns, peer counseling, community outreach and technology, FHI 360 works with local partners to develop evidence-based interventions that inform, equip and motivate individuals and communities to make appropriate choices about HIV prevention and care.

FHI 360 experts are longtime global leaders in both the response to HIV/AIDS and in the implementation of SBCC. In 1987, our experts launched AIDS Public Health Communication (AIDSCOM), the first global AIDS communication project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. We later managed two of the world's largest HIV prevention projects: AIDS Control and Prevention (AIDSCAP), which reached more than 14 million people with HIV prevention education, and Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care (IMPACT), which integrated SBCC into prevention, care and treatment interventions.

FHI 360 uses SBCC to reach specific audiences — such as men and youth — and to address issues that are pivotal to the response to HIV/AIDS, including gender norms, stigma, discrimination and structural barriers to change. We also provide training and tools to help governments, nongovernmental organizations and other partners develop SBCC programs that meet the needs of local communities.

## Engaging Men

Motivating men to get tested and adopt healthy behaviors is a key strategy for HIV prevention. In the United States, FHI 360 experts provided technical support to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by designing and implementing a media campaign promoting HIV testing among black men who have sex with men. Our staff also worked with the national government in Kenya and other local partners to encourage male circumcision and to educate communities about circumcision's role in reducing the risk of contracting HIV. The national program included radio spots, posters, discussion guides and other materials targeting men as well as women, religious leaders, business leaders and medical providers.

## Reaching Youth

Young people ages 15 to 24 accounted for 42 percent of all new HIV infections among individuals over 15 in 2010.<sup>1</sup> FHI 360 uses television, the Internet and other media to empower youth to protect themselves against HIV. In Kenya, our experts worked with MTV Networks International and MTV's Staying Alive Foundation to reach out to young people with HIV awareness and prevention information. The campaign included a television drama featuring young adults, an interactive website where youth could discuss issues and a peer education program. Our work with the "Break the Chain" campaign in Namibia included training local partners in using radio, television and other media to inform sexually active youth about the risks of multiple sexual partnerships.



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## Changing Gender Norms

FHI 360 uses SBCC to build partnerships between women and men and transform attitudes and beliefs about gender that fuel the epidemic. Our experts trained a local organization in Lesotho to help couples and communities discuss multiple concurrent sexual partnerships, which increase the risk of spreading HIV. For the “Break the Chain” campaign in Namibia, we also equipped local partners to use media and community conversations to address how intergenerational and transactional sex affects women and girls.

## Challenging Stigma and Discrimination

The stigma and discrimination faced by people affected by HIV/AIDS present major barriers to preventing HIV and accessing treatment and care services. Through the Strategically Managing AIDS Responses Together in the Workplace (SMARTWork) project, FHI 360 experts developed a materials database, a website and guides for management and labor leaders around the world to address stigma at the workplace. In Jamaica, we conducted studies on populations who are highly vulnerable to HIV infection and HIV-related stigma. Findings will inform HIV prevention and communication programs for sex workers, men who have sex with men and young adults in cross-generational sexual relationships.

## Strengthening Local Capacity

Ensuring that local organizations and governments are equipped to develop their own SBCC programs is essential to sustaining progress against HIV and AIDS. The Communication for Change (C-Change) project has developed several evidence-based SBCC tools, including training modules that explain how to plan SBCC interventions step by step. In Honduras, FHI 360 experts provided SBCC tools and training to help local nongovernmental organizations promote healthy behaviors, encourage young people to delay sexual relations and increase voluntary counseling and testing services. Our experts in Botswana equipped local organizations with training and resources such as communications guides to use in their HIV prevention efforts.

**About FHI 360:** FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research and technology — creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 60 countries, all 50 U.S. states and all U.S. territories.