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Angola community health agents empowered to share a Recipe for Happiness

Launched in 2010, the USAID-funded Building Local Capacity for Delivery of HIV Services in Southern Africa Project (BLC) strengthens government, parastatal, and civil society entities to effectively address the challenges of the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Throughout the Southern Africa region and with specific activities in six countries, BLC provides technical assistance in organizational development, including leadership, management, and governance in three key program areas: 1) care and support for orphans and vulnerable children; 2) HIV prevention; and 3) community-based care.

Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo (ADPP)

Cunene Project Objectives: To create a base for consistent home-based key message awareness and support for behavior change in households in Cunene by training Community Health Agents, and to improve access to HIV testing facilities for the 150,000 people in living in the province.

Since beginning implementation in November 2012, ADPP has reached 11,079 people with HIV prevention messages. In addition, 4,657 people have been tested for HIV.

For more information on ADPP, visit:
www.adpp-angola.org/



A trainer demonstrates child care to community health agents in Cunene

The first five years of life are the most important in human development, establishing the foundation of a person's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional capacity. Chronic illness, including HIV, as well as inadequate nutrition and a lack of opportunities to learn compromises this development and can result in a child falling behind, with life-long results.¹

Angola's under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 158—three times higher than the global average.² The leading causes of death among this age group include malaria, diarrheal diseases, and pneumonia, and are directly related to poor hygiene: using untreated water, inadequate handwashing, and improper sanitation. These are national concerns, but become even more urgent in the province of Cunene, one of the areas most affected by drought in 2013; the lack of water has further complicated hygienic practices.

However, simple home practices can save lives and improve the overall development of children, particularly those under five years old.

1 UNICEF. 2013. http://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_40748.html

2 World Health Organization. 2011. <http://www.who.int/countries/ago/en/>

In 2010, Angola's Ministry of Family and Woman Promotion (MINFAMU) and UNICEF created the National Committee for Family Competencies. The Committee includes representatives from MINFAMU, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Assistance and Social Affairs, the National Institute for Children, ten churches, four civil society organizations (CSOs), and UNICEF. The Family Competencies program promotes essential practices at the household level, using a communication package called Recipe for Happiness (A Receita de Felicidade in Portuguese), promoting 12 key behaviors that can help prevent some of the major diseases that kill children, as well as support early childhood development.

To bring this program to Cunene, the USAID-funded Building Local Capacity for Delivery of HIV Services in Southern Africa Project (BLC) and its CSO partner Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo (ADPP) collaborated with UNICEF Angola and MINFAMU to train 113 of ADPP's community health agents (CHAs) involved in health promotion activities in the Cuanhama and Cahama municipalities in Cunene. The training addressed education, protection, and health practices at the household level, especially essential behaviors related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); nutrition of children under five; and HIV testing. It included practical exercises such as:

- Water treatment
- Detecting malnutrition
- HIV rapid testing

Following the training, ADPP's CHAs have sensitized more than 5,000 families on the important behaviors from the Recipe for Happiness.

The Recipe for Happiness is implemented according to three strategic components: stakeholders' advocacy, social mobilization by community and religious leaders, and dissemination of communication material promoting behavior change.

For more information, visit:

www.unicef.org

In Angola, BLC is supporting targeted civil society organizations (CSOs) to deliver improved evidence- and community-based HIV prevention services that promote healthy behaviors among families. BLC identifies and improves the capacity of local CSOs to deliver on USAID-funded performance-based grants to work with communities, traditional leaders, community health advocates, and local churches to improve individuals' HIV prevention practices—where possible in collaboration with local municipalities and health care facilities.

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