

Press Release



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HIV PREVENTION PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATED INTO HIGH SCHOOL BASIC SUBJECTS

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, September 17, 2015 – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) today transferred its successful In-School Youth HIV Prevention Program to the Ministry of Education. Through the program, people in high schools, colleges and universities received peer education, life-skills training, mentorship, school/campus-wide events and social media HIV interventions to reduce new infections. Because there is a great need for continued HIV prevention interventions for young people in the school system, the Ministry of Education and regional education bureaus will expand the program activities into other schools where the program was not implemented.

The Ethiopian educational system encompasses more than 20 million people that could be at risk of HIV infection. In previous years, youth focused HIV prevention activities were disorganized. This gap was taken into account when designing the USAID program. Funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the program was unique because it integrated skill based HIV prevention activities into the basic curriculum subjects, standardized prevention messages, and linked students to HIV and sexual reproductive health services, all in a cost effective manner.

“Equipping secondary school students with not only academic knowledge but also with practical life skills will aid in maintaining a sustained decrease in HIV prevalence in Ethiopia,” said USAID representative Jeanne Rideout.

The main objectives of the two-year program, implemented by FHI 360, were to increase behavior change communication ability at secondary and tertiary schools, improve behavioral outcomes in HIV/AIDS among youth, disseminate high-impact behavior change tools and approaches, and strengthen the education system to enable the government manage the program.

In strong collaboration with the Ministry of Education, integrating HIV prevention activities was successful in 62 high schools. In addition, 9,000 peer educators were trained to use skill-based peer education manuals, 40 universities and colleges implemented the program, over 210,000 peer educators and students received social and behavioral communication messages, more than 67,000 high school, college and university students participated in community wide events such as HIV risk assessment, HIV testing and counselling and red card activities. When the holder of a red card is pressured to do something they don't want to do, they simply show the red card to the offender, like a referee in football. The red cards have gained popularity among many young people in schools.

After participating in the program, students improved their negotiation skills, and experienced increased self-confidence to make safer decisions.

For more information, see <https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia>