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**To Prevent and Treat HIV/AIDS, U.S. Government Seeks to Promote Behavior Change and Improve Access to Quality Services in Katanga**

→ USAID has issued a Request for applications for a program to respond to and prevent Sexual and Gender Based Violence in North and South Kivu. The closing date for applications is June 30, 2009. Please see [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) for more information. Or contact Mary Mwadime at [mawambugu@usaid.gov](mailto:mawambugu@usaid.gov)

→ USAID/DRC has issued a solicitation for a U.S. Personal Services Contractor for a Democracy and Governance Specialist. The solicitation closes July 3, 2009. Please see [www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov) for the full vacancy announcement.

**Annual PEPFAR Meeting**

USAID/DRC's Mission Director Stephen Haykin, Senior Health Officer Michele Russell, and HIV/AIDS Specialist Laurent Kapesa attended the annual President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) conference, including the Implementers' Meeting, from June 5 to June 14, 2009 in Windhoek, Namibia. The annual conference gathers together U.S. government agencies who administer PEPFAR programs and implementing partners to share best practices and lessons learned in the fight against AIDS. ■

In FY 2008, more than 71,000 people benefited from voluntary counseling, testing and referral under a three-year U.S. Government program implemented through USAID. The program is designed to contribute to the prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission by changing behaviors and improving access to quality services in Katanga, South Kivu and Bas-Congo provinces. This program is implemented by Family

and forth across the Zambian border. To date, FHI has established four new



Street theater is used to educate and encourage people to know their HIV status

Health International (FHI) and its local partners including *Avenir Meilleur pour les Orphelins (AMO-Congo)* and *Fondation Femme Plus (FFP)* in Katanga Province. Activities implemented under this program include the establishment a total of 16 new Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) sites and opening a regional VCT/learning center in Bukavu to offer practical training to service providers. The HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) and Care program began in October 2006.

FHI recently expanded activities in high prevalence urban centers in Katanga including Likasi, Kipushi and Kasumbalesa. These towns have high levels of commercial activity due to their concentrated mining populations, coupled with a large mobile population that moves back

VCT sites in Katanga that have provided counseling and testing to 48,305 clients, 13% of whom were HIV positive. Through this program, 87 service providers have been trained, including 34 counselors, 13 laboratory technicians, and 40 community volunteers.

The 2006-2011 United States Government's PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief) strategy for HIV/AIDS in the DRC highlights the importance of promoting VCT with a specific focus on continued technical support to develop appropriate VCT services. The strategy focuses on encouraging individuals to know their HIV status and to be able to take appropriate steps to remain HIV- or, if HIV+, to seek HIV services and live positively. ■

## HIV/AIDS Program Targets High-risk Groups for Behavior Change

Under the U.S. Government President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID HIV/AIDS prevention activities implemented by Population Services International (PSI) target Commercial Sex Workers (CSW) and other high-risk groups. This component of a three-year project encourages individuals to delay becoming sexually active and to promote a return to abstinence. The promotion of Abstinence and Be faithful (A&B) project also targets in-school youth, AIDS orphans, street children and young CSW.

CSW are reached through education sessions organized regularly by PSI animators. These education sessions cover several themes to encourage CSW to adopt safer behaviors. Each month, animators meet with CSW to reinforce messages and en-

courage consistent and correct condom use. These friendly exchanges are called "Muziki" (a gathering of people). This mode of communication during the



Testimonies and sharing of what works during a Muziki session

Muzikis has been very well received and is an effective means of communicating with this high-risk group.

During a February 2009 Muziki

session in Lubumbashi, southeastern DRC, a participant observed: "I have been a commercial sex worker for eight years. I have lived in five different hotels where I can easily find clients. I was part of a group of six experienced girls ; we were always together when we went to nightclubs. Today as I am talking to you my five friends have died of AIDS; I am now alone. I feel very bad. It's painful. Maybe I was spared because ever since I came in contact with the PSI animators many years ago I adopted the systematic use of condoms as my prevention method against HIV/AIDS."

Since October 2005, more than 8,000 CSW have been reached in the Behavior Change Communication activities in three project sites of Bukavu, Lubumbashi, and Matadi. ■

## USAID Food Security Project Addresses Malnutrition in Bas-Congo

Since September 2008, the Salvation Army World Service Office (SAWSO) has implemented a food security project that has already served more than 1,500 vulnerable people in Bas-Congo province, western DRC. SAWSO provides USAID/ Food For Peace-donated commodities to Tuberculosis (TB) patients, People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and children under five affected by Kwashiorkor, a severe disease in young children caused by chronic deficiency of protein and calories in the diet and characterized by stunted growth, edema, and a protuberant belly. USAID provided 56.25 metric tons of food commodities to SAWSO.

This one-year program is implemented in Massa (Kasangulu), Kisantu, and Kimpese health zones. The objectives of the project include achieving sustainable improvements in the health and nutri-

tional status of children under five and PLWHA, improving the Salvation Army response to Tuberculosis in Bas Congo in line with the Government of DRC initiatives, and increasing the rate of recovery time for people undergoing TB treatment.

Nutrition statistics in the DRC are among the world's worst. According to UNICEF, more than 31% of children under five are underweight, 13% are wasted and 38% are stunted. SAWSO—a non governmental organization—intends to improve the quality of life of the poor in three health zones in Bas-Congo through a

comprehensive supplemental feeding program integrated with community out-



Parents receiving commodities for sick children in Bas-Congo

reach for relief and sustainable development efforts.

# USAID Improves the Livelihoods of Vulnerable Populations in North Kivu

Pauni Sindja, 50 years old, is one of several beneficiaries of a cash-for-work project implemented in Masisi, North Kivu by a USAID partner Concern. On May 3, 2009, Pauni Sindja went to the Concern Office to get paid. Ms. Sindja—dancing—entered in the office with her hands in the air. She said this was the first time she had ever worked, meaning worked for pay.

Several years ago, Ms. Sindja’s husband passed away. As a widow with five children, she had no financial means. She received food from a local church and housing from a host family. She pointed to the clothes she was wearing and said “even these have been given to me by the church.” Ms. Sindja was identified for the cash-for-work, road and bridge rehabilitation programme by the chief of the village, who recognized that she was vulnerable as a widow supporting five children and dependent on the support of the local population. She worked for two weeks on the road, opening up the gutters to allow rain water to funnel off the road as well as transporting rocks to fill holes in the road. When asked if the work was difficult, Ms. Sindja said that it was not more difficult than working in the fields.

Working on the road did not take away from her normal daily activities. She continued to work in the fields on other people’s land in return for small amounts of seeds to eat or plant. While she was working on the road, she asked her oldest daughter to work in the field. Ms. Sindja’s children are of school age, but thus far have not been able to go to school. She said that the money she earns

will be used to pay school fees for her children, and the remainder will be used to buy them clothes.

The cash-for-work road and bridge rehabilitation program is a component of



Ms. Pauni Sindja

Concern’s overall project to provide emergency assistance to internally displaced people (IDP) and host communities in the lowland areas of Masisi, North Kivu with funding from USAID/DRC’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. The aim of the project is to improve the food security of displaced people and host communities in villages and camps between Lushebere and Loashi by providing essential non-food items and seeds and increasing households’ access to income. The project’s activities respond to immediate economic and access needs by en-

gaging in 36 kilometres of road repairs via the cash-for-work program that targets key access roads between Lushebere and Loashi and within three IDP camps in Lushebere and Masisi. This program will support 2,000 vulnerable households from both IDP camps and host communities. Displaced women are specifically targeted for the camp maintenance work.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “since January 2009, repeated FDLR attacks in North and South Kivu have forced more than 370, 000 people to leave their homes.” In May 2009, UNHCR estimated that there are 930,000 IDPs in North Kivu Province. ■



Mr. Victor Mangindula is the Senior Foreign Service National staff member at USAID/DRC. He began his career with USAID as an Assistant Program Economist in the late 1970s. After six years he moved on to become Program Specialist in the Mission’s Program office. He was the Foreign Service National (FSN) of the Year in 2004 for USAID in Africa. Mr. Mangindula is currently serving as the Senior Program Specialist and is the Mission’s budget expert. Between 1994 and 1997, when USAID’s development assistance was suspended, he was retained to assist with the coordination of the USAID/ OFDA-funded emergency assistance program. During this time he also supervised the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s program for the surveillance of hemorrhagic viral fever. Mr. Mangindula holds a bachelor’s degree in Economics from the University of Kinshasa.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
IDPs in North Kivu Province	930,000	UNHCR – May 2009
IDPs in South Kivu Province	450,000	Commission on Population Displacement –April 2009
IDPs in Orientale Province	207,000	OCHA – April 2009
Congolese Refugees since August 2008	63,000	UNHCR – March 2009
Total Congolese Refugees	336,170	UNHCR – May 2009



**Barbara Reed** is the Acting Food for Peace Officer at USAID/DRC until September 2009. Previously, Ms. Reed served as Food for Peace Officer in USAID/ Zimbabwe for five years. From 1993 to 2003, Ms. Reed worked as a freelance consultant with United Nations agencies and international non government organizations. She also worked with the Academy for Educational Development on the Food and Nutritional Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project. Ms. Reed holds a PhD in International Nutrition and a Master's degree in Human Nutrition from Cornell University.



In April and May 2009, **Amanda J. Eichelkraut** assisted USAID/DRC's Office of Democracy and Governance (DG) with the development and submission of the DG portion of the Operational Plan, to provide training to new staff members and provide office coverage during the absence of the DG Team Leader. Ms. Eichelkraut is based in Washington and provides short-term temporary duty (TDY) support to a number of USAID missions through the year.



**Thomas J. Sigler** is a new intern at USAID/CARPE until the end of August 2009. Mr. Sigler will assist USAID partners such as Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) by creating and implementing plans for sustainable land management in the region. Previously, he worked for a non-profit organization "Global Brigades" in Honduras and Panama. Mr. Sigler has a master's degree in geography from Pennsylvania State University and a bachelor's degree in geography and international relations from the University of Southern California.



**Nick Cox** is assisting USAID/DRC's Food for Peace Program for one month. Mr. Cox is a Regional Food for Peace Officer in USAID/East Africa where he has served since December 2005. He has managed and assisted food aid programs throughout the East and Central Africa region. At USAID/DRC, he is providing one-on-one training to Foreign Service National (FSN) staff managing Food for Peace (FFP) programs. He will also travel to eastern DRC to meet with FFP implementer partners and review progress on their programs.



### USAID PEPFAR HIV/AIDS Program in DRC Highlights in FY 2008:

- Supported 16 voluntary counseling and testing centers and 107 Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS (PMTCT) sites.
- Provided counseling and testing to 71,000 clients, 30% of Congolese tested nationally in FY 2008.
- Distributed 10,000,000 condoms through a social marketing program; 25 percent of all condoms distributed nationally.



An HIV/AIDS Counselor supported with USAID funding

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