



# SUCCESS STORY

## HIV/AIDS Program Turning Into Model

### Taking a multi-pronged approach to prevent, detect and treat HIV/AIDS in China



Heil Lipper, USAID

*Pingxiang's vice mayor Pan Shao Fang (center) escorts U.S. Consul General Robert Goldberg (left) and HIV/AIDS expert Hu Bin to a crossing along the China-Vietnam border.*

As a child growing up during China's Cultural Revolution, Pan Shao Fang was taught to distrust the American people. Now, as vice mayor of a city on the China-Vietnam border, Pan is embracing Americans as partners in her fight against HIV/AIDS.

Two years ago, a USAID-funded NGO began helping health officials in Pingxiang City and Guangxi Province formulate a plan to prevent, detect and treat HIV/AIDS. It is hoped the program will be replicated throughout China.

"The spread of HIV/AIDS would have people panicked if it weren't for USAID and its programs," Pan told U.S. Consul General Robert Goldberg in Pingxiang in May 2007.

Guangxi Province, where Pingxiang is located, has the third-highest number of HIV infections in China. Most are in cities and border towns where drugs are smuggled from the Golden Triangle. Heroin's impact has been grave: 80% of people living with HIV/AIDS in Guangxi Province have contracted the virus by sharing needles. The highest-risk groups are injecting drug users, sex workers and men having sex with men.

USAID, local and provincial officials have taken a multi-pronged approach to combat HIV/AIDS. Posters promoting safe sex are displayed at border crossings and in hotels. Free HIV testing is available. Condoms are stocked in hotel rooms. Outreach workers counsel sex workers and their clients.

Two years ago, USAID funded a clinic at Friendship Pass, a truck stop known for its sex trade. At the Puzhai Health Clinic, women learn about hygiene. They can get medicines and be tested for HIV. More than 1,000 sex workers and 5,000 others have been counseled since the center opened.

After touring the clinic, Pan told Goldberg that her childhood view of Americans was wrong: they are warm, charitable, and concerned about people half the globe away. Goldberg returned the compliment, saying that if women in China hold up half the sky, Pan was doing more than her share.

"And with your help," she said, "those skies are blue."