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Provides funding for the
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Thérèse Maye Diouf and Dendi Kiye improve, expand their RH knowledge



Thérèse Maye Diouf



Dendi Kiye

Accra, GHANA— “My reproductive health knowledge has greatly improved because of my internship at AWARE-RH,” Thérèse Maye Diouf said. She and Dendi Kiye completed six months of their yearlong internship in July at the USAID sponsored project, Action for West Africa Region-Reproductive Health. Both will say they have “learned so many things about reproductive health, and it’s been intense and very knowledgeable.” Diouf and Kiye are participants in the West African Health Organization (WAHO) Young Professionals Internship Program (YPIP).

Diouf’s major work plan goal is to “acquire basic skills in the management of select AWARE reproductive health and family planning programs throughout West Africa. “As far as professional competencies, thanks to my AWARE training I can talk about a lot of professional knowledge linked to the reproductive health and family planning domains. For example my understanding of RH/FP has really improved. I have a best idea of the package of services that comprise reproductive health. I’ve also learned how to write a memorandum of understanding.

“So far, I’ve learned some tools in advocacy with the senior advisor in charge. I’m taking additional courses in management, and looking forward to get more familiar with AWARE’s basic concepts and way of working,” she said. “I’ve also learned a lot about practical skills just by observing and participating in workshops and meetings. ”

Kiye explained: “I learned so many things! At AWARE-RH, foremost in my work plan was the Intensive English training program. Now I can speak English and I am even working in English. I can read well, summarize what I have read, write activity reports in English, and I’m able to attend any kind of meeting in English.” His work plan is to “acquire practical skills and experiences on management of malaria and child survival issues in West Africa.”

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Interns on fast track at AWARE

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Kiye

“ I have acquired theoretical and hands-on public health knowledge. Before YPIP I was a biologist so I had general skills but now what I have an understanding of the issues and concerns in the health sector,” he said.

“Most important also in management and leadership issues, we have done training and acquired skills and tools to manage programs. I can even combine my pedagogical skills and help in management training,” Kiye said.

“As for computer and information technology, I have improved my skills. For example before YPIP I couldn't use Power Point and Outlook.”



Diouf

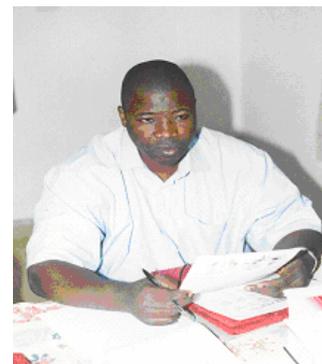
Lead mentors include AWARE-RH staff Dr. Alex Nazzar, Dr. Adama Kone and Dr. Fatimata S. Diabate. The interns complete the program December 2005.



“Interns gain professional experiences, personal training”

By **Abdoul Karim Kobre, YPIP/AWARE-HIV/AIDS Intern**

Accra, GHANA—The West Africa Health Organization Young Professionals Internship Program sponsored by USAID, AWARE-RH and AWARE-HIV/AIDS, is an initiative which makes it possible to equip me and other participants with competences and practical experiences in the area of health within the ECOWAS countries and to train as future West African leaders.



Abdoul Karim Kobre

We started our internship on 26 January 2005 at WAHO, in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, with an orientation workshop for the trainees and their mentors. From the onset of our placements at institutions in the West Africa region, the program has produced many results. For example, we continue to learn about HIV/ AIDS, receive English or French language instruction and participate in many training workshops.

I have an economics background and it is with due interest that I undertook assignments related to the question of financing community health in the fight against the HIV/AIDS in Central and West Africa. I am posted at the “Action for West Africa Region-HIV/AIDS” office in Accra, Ghana. Here are some highlights of my training experiences with AWARE-HIV/AIDS for the past six months.

On April 25-28, 2005 a workshop took place in Accra on analysis and validation of promising and best practices in community based financing of health in the fight in the against HIV/aids in WCA. During this process, I made a preliminary analysis on the experiences and practices presented by the representatives of the 18 countries that participated. This workshop helped me better understand community health financing systems. I also critically examined the conceptual aspects of community financing mechanisms in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Central and West Africa. These included activities such as conceptual framework, didactic questioning, (projected challenges), financing objectives, instruments, methods and techniques, data collection and analysis tools. I received practical application of these mechanisms during a pre-test conducted at Dodowa in the Volta region in Ghana from the 10-16 July 2005. Other related activities at AWARE-HIV/AIDS helped me strengthen my documentation, leadership and management skills. In all, the internship provides professional experiences and personal training.

CALENDAR

AWARE-RH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Date	Activity
TBD July 2005	Repositioning Family Planning Conference, Sierra Leone
TBD July 2005	Proposal Writing Workshop, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
28-29 July 2005	Repositioning Family Planning Conference, Niamey, Niger
01-05 Aug 2005	Regional Business Planning, Accra, Ghana
22-26 Aug 2005	Regional Consultants Meeting, Bamako, Mali
25-29 Aug 2005	Regional Proposal Writing, Burkina Faso
TBD September 2005	Commodity Security Regional Training, CESAC, Dakar, Senegal Dissemination Seminar on 3 AWARE-RH Best Practices with Mutuelles/13 countries, Cameroon
7-11 Nov 2005	Stakeholder Conference to submit first draft of the guide that may help countries to be more practical and systematic in their efforts to ensure that RH laws have effect on access and quality. Conference venue TBD.
TBD January 2006	Commodity Security Regional Training, CESAQ, Dakar, Senegal

Around The Region

Burkina Faso develops contraceptive security plan in Ouagadougou



Forty participants (above) attended the workshop, representing the Ministry of Health, WHO, the National Assembly, UNFPA, JHPIEGO, PROMACO, the Ministry of Finance, and other key organizations involved in reproductive health with technical assistance from AWARE-RH and DELIVER.

By Commodity Security Advisor Antoine Ndiaye

Ouagadougou, BURKINA FASO—AWARE-RH in collaboration with DELIVER provided technical assistance Burkina Faso in the development of strategic plans for contraceptive security 29 January to 04 February 2005 in Ouagadougou.

Objectives of the meetings were:

- Preparing CPTs for 2005 to inform the strategic plan development
- Organizing a workshop for adapting the SPARHCS tool to the Burkina context.
- Developing a scope of work and helping to identify a consultant to do the country assessment.

CALENDAR

AWARE HIV/AIDS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Date	Activity
1-8 August 2005	Regional STI Training Workshop on Syndromic Management Approach, Lomé, Togo
8-25 August 2005	Practical Training on Integrated Cross-Border VCT Activities, Lomé, Togo, Niamey, Niger, (simultaneously in both countries)
10-12 August 2005	Preparatory Workshop of the 2005 ICASA Caravan, Dakar, Senegal
5-16 September 2005	First Regional Training Workshop in HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment, Kumasi, Ghana
13-15 September 2005	Regional Workshop Against Stigmatization and Discrimination for Women's HIV/AIDS Networks, Accra, Ghana
24-28 October 2005	Regional Promising and Best Practices (PBP) Dissemination Workshop on Community Health Financing Model to Fight HIV/AIDS, Douala, Cameroon
5-9 September 2005	HIV/AIDS Community projects Management and Resource Mobilization for WANASO members, Accra, Ghana

Reinforcement of religious groups' political commitment in fight against HIV/AIDS

By Dr. Martin Laourou, AWARE-HIV/AIDS Senior Technical Advisor Policy

Nouakchott, MAURITANIA – CERPOD and AWARE- HIV/AIDS organized this regional workshop, held from February 8-10, 2005, in collaboration with USAID/WARP and WAHO. The workshop goal was to assist religious leaders in establishing a regional coordinative and consultative mechanism to facilitate agreement on policy dialogue and advocacy missions in their fight against HIV/AIDS in West and Central Africa.

The workshop brought together 40 religious leaders from 13 countries, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal. Experts from CERPOD, AWARE-HIV/AIDS, POLICY/Mali served as facilitators for the meeting. Representatives from ECOWAS and FAAPPD were invited as guests.

Significant results were achieved at the meeting including: a regional religious leaders action plan for advocacy and policy dialogue was adopted; a regional religious leaders network for advocacy and policy dialogue was created; a statute for the network was adopted, and; a regional bureau for the coordination of the network's activities was elected and tasked with implementing the plan. Additionally, countries that have not yet established national religious leaders network are expected to do soon, and will seek advisement from CERPOD and the newly created regional coordination bureau.

Strengthening West African Network of AIDS Services Organizations

By Alpha Bah, AWARE-HIV/AIDS Senior Capacity Development Officer

Bamako, MALI—The West African Network of AIDS Services Organization (WANASO) in collaboration with AWARE-HIV/AIDS organized a workshop at Hotel Columbus in Bamako from 24-27 May 2005. Thirty-one leaders attended from AIDS services networks and associations of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cap Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo- attended the meeting. The workshop goals were to strengthen the organizational and management capacity of WANASO networks members as well as to build a consensus on the roles and responsibilities of the West African Network members would have to play on their respective national HIV/AIDS program.

During the workshop network leaders shared their organizational and management experiences and discussed challenges they face by becoming more involved and efficient responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Commitment and participation of members, national recognition, communication and information were cited as the main challenges. The network's role and responsibility vis-à-vis to its members was largely discussed. It was highly recommended that WANASO develop an ethical behavioral charter to be enforced to any members of the network. For crafting WANASO's guidelines, African Council of AIDS Services Organizations (AfriCASO) charter was suggested as a good reference.

The WANASO board members also took the opportunity of the workshop to welcome the network's new executive team. WANASO Executive Director Bobo Keita, will lead the team and is in charge of the coordination of the partnership between the organization and AWARE. A visit was made at the end of the workshop to the new WANASO office, acquired by AWARE. WANASO announced that it will soon launch its website. This website will allow the members to share ideas and experiences. It will be certainly a valuable source of information where the members will be updated on the new development of the fight against the HIV pandemic.



Network leaders attend organizational and management capacity workshop session.



INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

How marketing contributes to African institutions' development

By Fara Mbodj, AWARE-RH Institutional Strategy Specialist

Accra, GHANA—According to the 2005 “Client-Based Scanning Study,” the data show that African organizations are technically competent but lack capacity in leadership, management and marketing. This study, conducted in seven West African countries, assessed perceptions and opinions that partners have of African institutions. These findings justify the support that the AWARE project has been giving to these institutions in marketing domain.

The AWARE support was launched via a regional marketing workshop, April 4-8, 2005. Representatives CEFOREP/Senegal, CREDOS and CERPOD/Bamako, MWANGAZA/Burkina Faso, CAFS/Togo and GIMPA/Ghana participated in the workshop, which focused on the role of marketing in the development of institutions regarding organizational, programmatic and financial viability.

This regional marketing workshop was also a launching point of a series of activities currently undertaken with each institution to develop a marketing action plan for the next three years. The process used a participatory approach with several steps.

At the first step, institutions chose their strategic option(s) that might be ensuring the financial stability of the organization, growing or withdrawing from the market. They also have to set up the current focused activities and developed new ones, in relation to the internal resources available and environmental constraints and opportunities.

Secondly, key clients involved in the activities were identified. This task is critical since it allows knowing in advance the clients that order or finance activities.

The third step defined the marketing objectives per activity in terms of expected income for each year. According to the strengths and weaknesses related to the implementation of the priority activities, the following step defines the specific objectives, the strategies and the marketing-mix that details the characteristics of activities as products, price, placement and promotion.

The implementation of the marketing plan will be accompanied by information research and the development of databases that may gather the following information: priority needs, key persons, eligibility criteria of decision makers; priority needs, procedures, key persons, eligibility criteria, proposals guide of donors; products, prices, clients, strategies of placement and promotion of competitors; motivation, perception, expectations of internal public and consultants; notoriety and image of the institution.

Other capacity needs could be identified during the process as human resources development. Fortunately, the AWARE project has already planned regional workshops to meet these needs such as consulting for results, consultant management, business planning and proposals writing.

Lessons learned in community-based HIV/AIDS financing models *Targeting and validating experiences for West, Central Africa*

By Gilles Bokpè, AWARE- HIV/AIDS Regional Economic Advisor

Accra, GHANA—AWARE-HIV/AIDS in collaboration with AWARE-RH, WAHO and USAID/WARP organized a regional workshop, 25-28 April 2005, to support a series of functional experiences on the health insurance system being implemented in the 18 project countries. This includes the 15 ECOWAS countries, plus Chad, Cameroon and Mauritania.

Workshop objectives were turned into results of identifying nine health insurance scheme promising practices evolving in the AWARE 18 countries, analyzing identified promising practices, and defining criteria and conditions for the replication of the practices.

Additionally, four future steps were envisaged:

1. Validation of promising practices by a consultative technical committee
2. Documentation of selected promising practices
3. Dissemination and sharing workshop of the results with decision-makers (political, civil, and other networks)
4. Begin replication process



Workshop Launching Ceremony

From the left, Professor Moussa Adama Maiga, WAHO Deputy Director; Dr. Mokowa Adu-Gyamfi, Deputy Director, Ghana National Program for the Fight Against AIDS, Dr. Félix Awantang, USAID/WARP representative, and AWARE-HIV/AIDS Director, Fatimata Sy

Brainstorming in Cotonou

Conveying STI/HIV/AIDS prevention to West, Central Africa border migrant populations

By Marie Louise Baleng, AWARE-HIV/AIDS Senior Technical Advisor Cross Border Interventions and WAAF
and Dipoko Degrande, AWARE-HIV/AIDS Technical Officer Cross Border Interventions

Cotonou, BENIN—The “Harmonization of Communication Strategies and Messages for the prevention of STI/HIV/AIDS along Cross Border routes of West and Central Africa” workshop was held 29 March to 01 April 2005. AWARE – HIV/AIDS organized the workshop in collaboration with West African Health Organization (WAHO), the CORRIDOR project and with the technical support of Academy for Educational Development (AED).

Fifty-seven representatives of 16 AWARE countries and WAHO and the Corridor, Raillink and PSAMAO/PSAMAC projects attended. Their attendance also demonstrated the group’s commitment and active participation in cross-border interventions. Participants from many countries including Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mauritania recognized and expressed the need to have cross border interventions in their countries.

Building on the experience of the PSAMAO/PSAMAC project, the Corridor project and the RAILLINK project the following results were achieved:

- A Consensus on communication Strategies and Key Messages for Cross Border Communication targeting migrant populations in the West and central African region is reached.
- A framework for collaboration and exchange between players implementing cross border interventions is developed.

AWARE-HIV/AIDS will build on the results of this workshop to continue to promote the extension of the cross border initiatives in the West and Central Africa region.

AWARE-HIV/AIDS West African Ambassador's Funds

Mohammed Akser and the Hed Tamat HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Theatrical Troupe in Niger

PROFILE



Mohammed Akser

Photo and Text By Betsy Raymond, AWARE-HIV/AIDS, Pfizer Global Fellow FY 2004

Agadez, NIGER—How is HIV/AIDS prevention taught in communities where sex is a taboo topic? “By the neighbors, if you want to get the discussion off the ground,” would be Mohammed Akser’s reply.

Akser, a founder of the Niger NGO Hed Tamat and director of Hed Tamat’s AIDS prevention education theatrical troupe is doing exactly that. Hed Tamat performs in the towns and villages of Niger’s remote north, a territory bordering the Sahara desert. This is the region where Akser and his actors and musicians grew up. As a result, they find that wherever they go at least one member of the troupe was born there or has family there

“When I was a student in Niamey (Niger’s capital city) I acted in a university cultural troupe,” says Akser. “I saw that people are much more receptive to information when it is presented through music, drama and humor.” Although HIV prevalence is .47 percent in Niger, Akser worries that this will change rapidly if people don’t learn how to protect themselves from the virus. His fear is based on northern Niger’s new status as the “Doorway to the West” for Africans willing to take their chances crossing the Sahara in an effort to reach Europe. Agadez, the region’s capital city, is filled with people from all over West Africa waiting an average of two months before securing their passage across the desert, most on the back of large, flatbed trucks. Many of these people come from countries with higher HIV prevalence rates and less conservative sexual practices than the Agadez region’s predominantly Muslim population.

When developing skits and writing songs for the troupe, Akser collaborates closely with Maman Sani, a male nurse at the Attre medical clinic, located 30 kilometers from Agadez and a five-to-ten kilometer walk for the residents of many of the region’s villages. Answering patients’ questions every day, Sani knows what the villagers understand and what they don’t. Hed Tamat’s challenge is to explain that HIV is sexually transmitted without going into detail. If villagers were to decide that Hed Tamat’s presentations are indecent, word would quickly spread and local communities would no longer welcome the troupe. To ensure that they get the word out, Akser and his troupe inform villagers that HIV is primarily spread “by the sexual path.” In their songs and skits they promote abstinence for the single, fidelity for the married and urge people unable to adhere to these to visit Sani at the clinic for detailed information on how they can protect themselves. They also emphasize the importance of sterilizing needles and scissors to avoid exposure to blood.

A Hed Tamat performance is a major event. In the village of Tchintabouragh, the troupe was greeted by men racing white camels, waving swords over their heads, ululating women in sparkling shawls and gowns and a welcome committee headed by the Marabou, the village headman. The troupe set up their stage and lighting and sound systems and waited for the sun to set before beginning. The wait would give village shepherds time to settle their flocks for the night and the dark would make it possible for performers and audience alike to avoid the intense desert heat.

Working with a village management committee, Akser tailors performances for each audience, emphasizing different themes during repeat visits. In Tchintabouragh, the troupe began with five young women singing “AIDS is Very Dangerous” and “AIDS Attacks the Organism,” accompanied by drums and an electric guitar. For many in the audience, this was the first guitar they had ever seen. For many it was the first time they had heard of HIV/AIDS. While everyone laughed uproariously at a skit showing the predicament of a philandering husband, they led off the Q&A session asking why HIV/AIDS, a blood-borne disease, isn’t carried by mosquitoes like malaria. Sani, the clinic nurse, participated, warning the audience “You must practice prevention like we have explained here. Being Muslim will not protect you from AIDS.” After responding to a question about how to live safely with someone infected with HIV, Sani declared: “Our religion says we are not permitted to reject someone because they are sick. The whole village should give that person love until the end.”

Akser knows that for Niger, the second poorest country in the world, an informed population is the most effective weapon against HIV/AIDS. He also knows that, like people everywhere, the population around Agadez will only accept information from people they trust. In villages like Tchintabouragh, that means the information must come from someone they know. So, Akser and Hed Tamat will continue taking their message throughout the region.

Around The Region continued

Situational Analysis: Organizational and Technical Capacity of NAP+ West Africa Results Released February 2005

By Abo Kouame, AWARE-HIV/AIDS Technical Officer

Accra, GHANA—AWARE-HIV/AIDS conducted a situational analysis, December 2004, to strengthen the organizational and technical capacity of networks of people living with HIV/AIDS in West Africa. The goal of the situational analysis was to evaluate the capacities available within the network and identify areas that needed to be strengthened.

Specific areas of focus of the analysis included: structural and functional organization, human resources, equipment, organizational management, technical management, and collaborative relationships.

A meeting was held in Accra in February 2005, which brought together members of Network of African People Living with HIV/AIDS—West Africa (NAP+/WA) and AWARE-HIV staff to discuss the results of the analysis and identify areas of focus. An action plan was developed and AWARE-HIV assisted NAP+/WA to establish a fully functioning office in Abidjan. Others key areas identified for reinforcement included:

- Improve the functionality of the board
- Provide support to two existing national networks
- Support four countries in the development of a national network
- Reinforce the communication system
- Add appropriate personnel for communication and financial management

Réseau Ivoirien des Personnes Vivant avec le VIH / Ivorian Network of PLWA (RIP+), Côte d'Ivoire, and Réseau pour une plus Grande Implication des Personnes Infectées par le VIH (REGIPIV), Burkina Faso, were also assessed on their organizational and technical capacities. Support is being provided to strengthen their financial, marketing, monitoring and evaluation management. Support is also being given to Niger and Ghana to help associations of PLWA put in place national networks.

To continue these efforts, a board meeting was held on May 16-20 in Burkina Faso to assist PLWA regional committee to become more functional. The meeting was opened by Burkina Minister of Social Affairs and of National Solidarity Mariam Lamizana, who is also second vice-chairwoman, Burkina National AIDS Council. Also present at the opening was the Eric Benjamenson, US Embassy Deputy Counsel. The key results of the meeting are as follows:

- Revision of the organizational structure of the network to more operational. The regional coordination committee was reduced from 16 to 5 members to facilitate its regular meeting.
- Guidelines for setting up a network were developed
- Finalization of an advocacy tool, PowerPoint presentation developed by AWARE, be used at the country level.

In addition to the key results of the meeting, the positions of the Regional Executive Board have now been confirmed. The Regional Executive Board members of NAP+ WA will meet regularly every six months to ensure a close follow up of the interventions undertaken by the executive secretary.



Participants and Officials, NAP+ Regional Committee Meeting, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: Officials shown include, First row, standing, from left to right: Modibo Kané, President of NAP+ WA (4th) – Héléne Badini, UNAIDS/RST Dakar (5th) – Mariam Lamizana, Minister of Social Affairs and National Solidarity, Burkina Faso (6th) and Eric Benjamenson, US Embassy in Burkina (behind Badini)

Integrating family planning messages into HIV/AIDS prevention activities

By Jean Affo, Technical Advisor for Social Marketing, PSI

Cotonou, BENIN—AWARE-RH conducted a regional workshop of identification and selection of the family planning messages to be integrated in the trans-border activities in the fight against HIV/AIDS 16-24 June 2005. Officials included Mrs. Barbara Dikerson, USAID/Benin, and Dr. Moussa YAROU, principal private secretary of the Ministry for the Public Health of Benin.

Dr. Yarou pointed out the genesis of the actions, which the AWARE-RH and HIV/AIDS project has implemented in partnership with Benin and the region. These regional activities began last March, initiated by AWARE-HIV in collaboration with the African Western Organization of Health (OOAS) and the CORRIDOR project. Yarou challenged the participants to put into use the training in their respective communication strategies for an effective use of the messages of SR/PF in the activities of prevention of IST/HIV/SIDA on the trans-border activities.



USAID/Benin representative Mrs. Barbara Dikerson and Benin Ministry of Public Health Dr. Moussa Yarou were among 35 participants attending the AWARE-RH social marketing regional workshop in Cotonou. Countries represented included Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Togo. USAID/Benin also participated along with Dr. Moussa Yarou, principal private secretary of the Ministry for the Public Health of Benin. AWARE-RH Photo by Dendi Kiye, WAHO YPIP Intern.