



MARGARET
SANGER
CENTER
INTERNATIONAL

MSCI *Connects*

Summer 2005

Connecting to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide

New Connections

Doing Gender the "Rights" Way

"I knew that gender was important but this workshop showed me I can change my own behavior and my work at the clinic in ways that change gender stereotypes. I thought I was already addressing gender, but now see that I can do things differently." With reactions like this, MSCI ended its five-day workshop with 25 staff from PLAFAM, a Venezuelan affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

This workshop was the first in a series of trainings that MSCI will provide, in partnership with IPPF/Western Hemisphere Region, to help family planning associations create shifts in age-old cultural expectations and gender roles. "People want concrete examples of how to take a well-intentioned program one step further towards changing patterns that hurt women and men and can lead to HIV infection or unplanned pregnancy," says Marissa Billowitz, MSCI's Program Officer and a facilitator of the workshop in Caracas. This summer MSCI will present this workshop to the staff of IPPF's affiliate in Mexico, MEXFAM.

MSCI's approach translates theory into concrete guidelines that show program staff how they can make small but significant changes that promote greater respect and equality between women and men. All participants leave the workshop with an action plan to help them incorporate new ideas about gender equity into their work.

"I now look at our great written materials and see ways to change them to make them that much more powerful in affecting cultural change," wrote one participant.

This same approach informs MSCI's work, funded by the South African Foundation for Human Rights, to help two pioneering grassroots HIV prevention agencies in South Africa involve men in creating cultural changes that will lead to a decrease in domestic violence. "No real societal change will take place unless men get on board and join women in this struggle," says Errol Alexis, interim Director of MSCI's Africa regional office. "We need to help them to understand that their actions, even if they themselves are never violent, keep women down and can lead to the spread of HIV." This project, like the one in Venezuela, helps achieve shifts in local cultural patterns that harm and kill people throughout the world.



Staff members from PLAFAM present their own plan for changing their practices in order to promote gender equity at the workshop in Caracas, Venezuela.

Who We Are

As the international arm of Planned Parenthood of New York City (PPNYC), MSCI works with local partners in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Central America to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide by:

Supporting Grassroots Partners

"When MSCI came, they did not hijack our vision. Instead they supported us to do what we are committed to. The skills I learned from MSCI enabled me to better promote our vision and ideas."

Sister Cecilia Sato,
Director of Vuselela uLwazi Lwakho,
a grassroots HIV agency in
Diepsloot, South Africa.

Creating Innovative Resources

"I have come across several different evaluation toolkits, but this one is unique in its ability to address those aspects of our programs that never get captured by traditional evaluations. This will help us immensely in our attempts to monitor our own progress."

A participant in the African user consultation workshop conducted to inform MSCI and IPPF's joint development of a user-friendly evaluation toolkit.

Local/Global Connections

Growing Grassroots Organizations

Three years ago, *Let Us Grow* was a small group of dedicated AIDS activists in Orange Farm, a township in Guateng Province in South Africa, providing home-based care for people living with HIV and AIDS and education to young people in the area. Its mission was to support and care for people living with HIV/AIDS so they could live more positive lives. Today, it is a leader in grassroots youth organizing in South Africa that runs two brand new centers, receives funding from top South African aid groups, and serves a community several times bigger than the constituency it first served.

How did such remarkable institutional growth happen so quickly?

Two years ago, the charismatic founders of *Let Us Grow* were proud of their program, but overwhelmed by the work of running a non-profit organization. They applied for help to MSCI's Joint Funding Initiative, a partnership with American Jewish World Service. Through

this program, MSCI's Africa staff provides agencies like *Let Us Grow* with the technical skills they need to survive and grow. Through specially tailored workshops and personalized technical assistance, our grassroots partners acquire administrative and logistical skills to help them run their programs. They learn basic techniques for strategic planning, fund-raising, monitoring and evaluation, and much more. "I now feel ready to sit at the table with other NGOs in my country," said one of the workshop participants. "I think this training showed me the potential my group has within my community."



Youth leaders gather to celebrate their ongoing partnership with MSCI as part of our Joint Funding Initiative in South Africa.

New Tools of the Trade

Connecting Resources with Program Planners



Programme Planning Materials and Training Resources:

A Compendium

MSCI and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are proud to announce the publication of our Safe Youth Worldwide Compendium and searchable CD-ROM. This publication will serve as a resource

for program planners and managers looking to develop or expand effective HIV prevention programs for youth. It will serve the dual purposes of providing access to some of the most promising program materials and training resources while also highlighting the essential elements of youth-focused HIV prevention. The compendium analyzes the content of more than 250 documents such as handbooks, reports, guidelines, and toolkits, presenting them in an easy-to-read format.

For more information, or to order a copy of the compendium, e-mail msci@ppnyc.org. To download a copy of the 308-page compendium, visit www.safeyouthworldwide.org

Connecting with MSCI

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