



## HIV/AIDS and ARV therapy: the importance of developing culturally-appropriate educational tools and delivery mechanisms. Lessons learned from Botswana

*J.T. Machao<sup>1</sup>, T.S. Mphole<sup>2</sup>, P. Naidoo<sup>1</sup>*

**Issues:** Identification of a cultural value-system to develop an appropriate analogy to stimulate dialogue on HIV/AIDS and ART and to encourage ART adherence and early HIV testing. Storytelling used to develop a localized understanding of ARV therapy amongst communities with strong oral traditions.

**Description:** The National ARV Program's mobilization campaign is centered on an interactive, picture-based, storytelling flipchart that uses the analogy of cattle, a kraal and super, strong termites to describe the issues of health, the immune system, HIV and ARV therapy. Pre-testing amongst PLWHA, HCWs and general public ensured that the flipchart was culturally appropriate and technically correct. By 2005, the tool was rolled-out to 25 ARV sites and was used to teach 125,000 people across Botswana.

**Lessons learned:** Nationwide training of mobilizers allows nationwide information dissemination monitored through a feedback mechanism. Involvement and utilization of local structures and authorities allows for local ownership and sustainability especially if village leaders are involved. Paying attention to cultural relevance has ensured the utilization and acceptance of the flipchart amongst different ethnic groups, speaking different dialects and languages, across the country. The attrition rate of mobilizers can be reduced by having a local focal person, improved communications between the ART office and the site and the use of non-monetary incentives as well as identification materials for the campaign.

**Recommendations:** Comparison of the flipchart to other forms of communication and a qualitative assessment into its impact on communities. Investigation of ways the tool can be expanded into other HIV program areas like PMTCT and IPT. Exploration of other ways in which the analogy can be presented in order to reach wider audiences e.g. community drama, school work books, radio, television and other audio-visual arts.

*AIDS 2006 - XVI International AIDS Conference  
Abstract no. MOPE0810*