



ROADS: The Solidarity Center's HIV/AIDS Work in East Africa

FUNDING SOURCE

Family Health International through USAID/REDSO

COUNTRIES

Kenya
Rwanda
Uganda
Tanzania
Burundi (mid-2009 start-up)

OBJECTIVES

- ❑ Mobilize transport unions to provide HIV/AIDS information, services and referrals at SafeTStop Centers.
- ❑ Enhance HIV/AIDS stigma reduction skills and reduce risky behaviors by training peer educators to reach transport workers, their partners and community members
- ❑ Strengthen referral systems to increase the uptake of HIV/AIDS services.
- ❑ Enhance networking between transport unions, SafeTStop communities and stakeholders.
- ❑ Build union capacity to address HIV/AIDS issues.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ❑ Amalgamated Transport & Allied Workers' Union - Uganda
- ❑ International Transport Workers Federation
- ❑ Kenya Long Distance Truck Drivers Welfare Association
- ❑ Association des Chauffeurs des Poids Lourds au Rwanda
- ❑ Communication and Transport Workers Union- Tanzania

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Solidarity Center is a lead partner in Regional Outreach Addressing AIDS through Development Strategies (ROADS), a regional program that aims to reduce HIV transmission and improve treatment along major transport corridors in East Africa. Funded by USAID and administered by Family Health International (FHI), ROADS provides prevention, care, and support services to mobile populations, primarily long-haul drivers, and nearby communities.

Solidarity Center has participated in ROADS since its inception in 2005, connecting the project to a critical intervention population: long-haul truck drivers. Low wages, lack of benefits, and long absences from home put truckers at high risk of HIV infection. In addition, long-haul drivers are likely to have contacts across a broad geographic area, increasing HIV vulnerability and spread along major transportation routes.

The ROADS project established HIV/AIDS resource facilities, called SafeTStop centers, at major truck stops within East Africa. SafeTStop centers offer truckers an alternative environment for relaxation and rest rather than bars and brothels. Each center is equipped with HIV/AIDS educational materials and recreational facilities. The centers have trained HIV/AIDS counselors who provide truckers with voluntary HIV counseling and testing and refer them to other HIV/AIDS services.

As a union-based organization with substantial HIV/AIDS experience, the Solidarity Center's role in the ROADS project is to mobilize transportation unions and to build their capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS.

RESULTS FROM SEPTEMBER 2005 TO APRIL 2009 AT SAFETSTOPS IN KENYA, RWANDA, TANZANIA AND UGANDA:

- ❑ More than 200 peer educators trained.
- ❑ 137,220 truck drivers and community members reached with prevention, care and support information through one-on-one or community group outreach.
- ❑ 268,714 condoms were distributed to truck drivers and community members at designated sites and during community outreach.
- ❑ 9,922 truck drivers and community members received palliative care or were referred for HIV or Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) treatment at the SafeTStops.
- ❑ More than 5,500 people were counseled, tested and received their results at the resource centers, or were referred for counseling and testing.
- ❑ Nearly 20,000 informational or educational materials were distributed.

THE SOLIDARITY CENTER AND THE TRADE UNION ADVANTAGE

Workers trust unions to advocate, educate, and fight on their behalf. With millions of members worldwide, unions are the largest civil society organization and are particularly important in Africa for advocating for workers' issues. The Solidarity Center's partnerships with unions, governments, and civil society coalitions uniquely position us to develop and implement prevention, care, and treatment strategies that benefit workers, their families, and their communities.

