



In the spotlight

Supply security tops the agenda in Barcelona

Supply security topped the agenda at a five-day (27 Feb to 3 Mar) technical meeting on Sexual and RH Policies in Africa. Held in the Catalan capital of Barcelona, the meeting provided a forum for representatives of eight African countries and other stakeholders to advise the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECE) and the Catalan Agency for Cooperation to Development (ACCD) on potential areas of support to RH in Africa. In an all-day session, chaired by John Skibiak, participants heard presentations by Coalition partners Rogelio Fernández-Castilla and Danièle Landry-Mugengana (UNFPA), Mercedes Mas de Xaxas (PAI), and Gloria Asare (Ghana MOH). Following much debate and lively discussion, participants drafted a set of recommendations in which they reaffirmed the importance of RHCS and its role within the Maputo Plan of Action. They called on the Spanish and Catalan Development Agencies to advocate for supply security, particularly within the context of European multilateral assistance; and to guarantee the integrity of program-specific support to both RH commodities and systems. Follow-on discussions between the Coalition and the Spanish Development agency have already been planned. More information on the workshop and its hosts, the Spanish Interest Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, is available at www.grupogie.org/?m=10&l=en&id=67.

RHSC on the scene

London Membership Meetings - Book through IPPF

Participants at next April's membership meetings (WG sessions, general membership meeting, or Executive Committee) should advise Caroline Dickinson (cdickinson@ippf.org) at IPPF of their accommodation needs as soon as possible. This applies whether one wishes to stay at the Horseguards Hotel (www.theroyalhorseguards.co.uk/), where IPPF has secured preferential rates, or not. For those who do wish to stay at the Horseguards Hotel please note that you must book through Caroline, and not the hotel itself. This will minimize the risk of cancellation charges; avoid confusion over room rates; and ensure that everyone accesses our special rate.

European NGOs address RH Supplies

On February 15th, Coalition partners John Skibiak, Steve Kinzett, Terri Bartlett and Mercedes Mas de Xaxas conducted a capacity building session on reproductive health supplies (RHS) with representatives of ten European NGOs. The NGOs are in the process of submitting a proposal to advocate for RHS within Europe.

During the session, which was hosted by Brussels-based IPPF Europe, the four facilitators traced the history of efforts to address RHS, and within that history, the role of such initiatives as the RH Interchange, the Supply Initiative, the Coalition and the newly launched RMA Project. Using Kenya as a case study, the group saw first-hand the complexities of ensuring access to supplies, specifically as they related to financing, procurement, and distribution. The exercise helped them to look critically at the data used in advocacy efforts and also to identify new opportunities for awareness raising, collaboration, and resource mobilization.

Communication Task Force meeting in London

On February 6th, six members of the Communication Task Force met in London to begin planning for an RHSC Communication Strategy. The strategy, which they hope will be completed by May, promises to address the Coalition's communication needs, both internal and external, and identify the approaches and tools required to address them.

The group also discussed the design of a new RHSC website, which will replace the current temporary one. Though the design process will follow a systematic consultation with potential audiences, expectations are that the new site will reach out to a wider readership; reflect a broader range of supply-related issues; and require less prior knowledge of the Coalition's internal structure to navigate effectively. At the same time, it will serve as an important vehicle for internal and external communication by Coalition members and working groups.

Finally, the group discussed the need for visual standards to identify materials produced by or in conjunction with the Coalition. The group heard from IPPF Task Force member Chris Wells, who described IPPF's own recent branding exercise. Your thoughts on any of these issues can be sent to RHSCcommunications@path.org.

Highlights from the Working Groups

Resource Mobilization and Awareness Working Group (RMAWG)

Representatives of Population Action International (PAI), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) met at IPPF's London offices during the week of February 5th. The three partners discussed their collaborative implementation of the Resource Mobilization and Awareness (RMA) working group workplan. The partnership, hereafter called Project RMA, has been funded for three years to operate at the global, regional and national levels, and will be building advocacy capacity on the issue of RH supplies. Prior to the next full meeting of the RHSC in London in April, Project RMA will be meeting to discuss progress made since January. At this time, a meeting of the full RMA working group will also be held.

Market Development Approaches Working Group (MDAWG)

The Secretariat is still awaiting responses to a questionnaire on the Country Typology Matrix for Market Development Approaches. The questionnaire was sent to all members of the MDA WG as well as to selected RHSC members. Anyone wishing to participate in this exercise may do so by accessing a short description of the typology and then completing the questionnaire at www.rhsupplies.org/market_countrytypo.shtml.

Systems Strengthening Working Group (SSWG)

To better capture countries' RH supply situations and assess their progress in achieving commodity security, the SSWG and RMAWG are working to make better use of existing studies and sources of data. Ready access to this information could improve communication and decision making among key stakeholders. As a first step in constructing a "one stop" compilation of data and other resources, the RHInterchange Project, together with the RMA Project and Coalition Secretariat, is hiring a consultant who will update and expand a supplies-related resource list. With input from likely users, the consultant will determine how best to access the list on the new RHSC website; and plan for its maintenance, continued applicability, and further long-term development. If you know of any RH supplies research that would warrant inclusion in the resource list, please contact Jane Feinberg (jfeinberg@jsi.com) at JSI.

Meanwhile, the "Countries at Risk" group met by teleconference on 28th February. The group focused their discussion on Kenya - where the country is facing a shortfall of over \$6 million to procure supplies for use later this year.

Finally, a revised Systems Strengthening workplan has been circulated to members. Feedback, comments and changes should be sent to Alan Bornbusch (abornbusch@usaid.gov).

Upcoming events

13 or 15 March	MDA Teleconference (date to be determined)
25 Apr	Systems Strengthening WG meeting, London
	RMA Project WG meeting, London
26 Apr	Executive Committee meeting, London
27-28 Apr	RHSC Membership meeting, London
24-25 Oct	RHSC Membership meeting, Washington, DC

Contact

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