

HIV RISK ENVIRONMENT AND PERCEPTION STUDY AMONG GROUPS OF HIGH RISK IN LIBERIA

SURVEY PROTOCOL

Introduction

In order to accelerate the implementation of the component “Strengthening and Scaling up HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in Liberia” as part of the project implementation plan, UNDP Liberia, which is the Global Fund Principal Recipient (PR) is planning, in collaboration with UNFPA and LISGIS to conduct HIV risk environment and perception study among key high risk groups (commercial sex workers, UNMIL, border security personnel, youth ages 15-24, TB patients, transport workers and other mobile populations) between October and January 2007 in Montserrado, Lofa, Grand Gedeh and Nimba Counties in Liberia.

1. Justification

This study will help to respond promptly and effectively to the HIV/AIDS pandemic by gathering complete and reliable information about the structural factors which shape attitudes, beliefs and practices of groups at high risk, particularly in post-conflict and transitional settings like Liberia. Migration, displacement, sexual violence, exploitation and poverty are among the many factors which influence sexual and other HIV risk behaviors. Monitoring these changes over time in these behaviors and attitudes is essential to formulating and implementing appropriate responsive HIV/AIDS programs.

2. Objectives

This risk environment and perception study aims at supporting the national HIV/AIDS programs in program design, direction and evaluation. More specifically the study will permit to:

- Develop a broad understanding about the structural and Psycho-social factors shaping risk behaviors, attitudes and practices among these target groups
- Identify opportunities and entry points for HIV prevention and response in relation to each of the target group
- Identify the social, behavior and cultural drivers of HIV epidemic in Liberia, with special attention to the high risk populations:
- Identify services availability, accessibility and affordability.

- Make recommendations for prevention strategies and specific interventions targeting these high risk HIV transmission groups.

3. Methodology and material

Type of the study

This is a transversal study intended to measure the level of risk and perceptions of HIV/AIDS of the targeted groups based on their environment, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and practices.

Target population

This Study targets Commercial Sex Workers, UNMIL, Liberian Border Security Personnel, Youth ages 15-24, TB Patients, Transport Workers and other mobile populations in Montserrado, Lofa, Grand Gedeh and Nimba Counties in Liberia.

Sampling

a). Sampling method

A multi-stage sampling will be adopted:

- ❖ The ratio of the total population of each of the pre-determined four counties to the total national population will be applied to the sample size of n= 2,000 respondents to obtain the number of respondents per county.
- ❖ This number will be divided by the number of selected/targeted areas in each county to obtain the sample size per area since the total population for each of these areas is not known/available.
- ❖ The result is further divided by the number of sub-groups in each selected/targeted area to obtain the sampling units.
- ❖ The selected/targeted areas will be canvassed to locate the targeted groups.
- ❖ Interview will be conducted using systematic sampling by selecting every fifth respondent in each group.

b). Sample size

- ❖ The sample size will be 2,000 individuals from key high risk groups (commercial sex workers, UNMIL, border security personnel, youth aged 15-24 years, TB patients, transport workers, and other mobile populations) of the four counties - Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Lofa, and Montserrado - selected for the survey.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was initially developed by a core team comprised LISGIS, UNFPA and UNDP. This questionnaire will be reviewed and adopted during the interagency Advisory Committee Meeting.

Data collection

Interviewers will be recruited and trained based on the developed interviewer's guide developed by the technical assistance team to conduct field data collection which will include focus group discussions.

Data analysis

The software to be used for data entry and analysis will be agreed between LISGIS, UNDP and the UNFPA technical assistance team.

Interviewer's guide

In order to facilitate the field conduct of the study (data collection), the UNFPA technical assistance team is developing a short interviewer's and focus group discussion guide. These documents will be presented, reviewed and adopted during the interagency general meeting.

Interviewers' recruitment and training

This activity will be carried out at site level by LISGIS with the support of the UNFPA technical assistance team.

Study operations

The Advisory Committee will be responsible for overall oversight of the study.

The study will be conducted in the targeted Counties and will last between November 2007 and March 2008.

The supervision of the field data collection will be jointly done by LISGIS and UNFPA.

On completion of the study a preliminary report must be submitted to the advisory committee for review and comments.

The final report will be submitted to UNDP