

Projects – 2009-2013

Antares has developed a wide variety of projects since its establishment in 1999 and continues to do so. Through these, staff from the Antares Foundation have been able assist in the development of staff support systems in organizations of every size and in very varied locations and contexts.

Tanzania - Intercollegial consultation system for KIWAKKUKI

The 'Woman's Group Against AIDS in Kilimanjaro,' commonly known by its Kiswahili acronym, **KIWAKKUKI** (Kikunda cha Wanawake Kilimanjaro Kupambana na UKIMWI), is a woman's group founded in Tanzania in 1990 around the global theme of 'Women and AIDS'. Its main inspiration was the need to accelerate women's access to information on HIV/AIDS and to empower them with simple community health care skills. After empowerment, these women have made a big difference as volunteers in the struggle against HIV/AIDS in the Kilimanjaro region.

KIWAKKUKI works in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, where it is now considered the leading HIV/AIDS service organization. Currently, Kiwakkuki has more than 100 groups of district volunteers, whose main role is to facilitate service provision. Membership now stands well over 5000. The work of these staff and volunteers is deeply physically and emotionally challenging.

The sheer size of the voluntary staff of Kiwakkuki meant that offering an adequate staff support system was a great challenge to its management. Together with the highly stressful nature of the work of the volunteers and managers, this formed a complex set of problems.

Thanks to the generosity of a private donor, The Antares Foundation has been able to successfully install an Intercollegial Consultation System with Kiwakkuki which is now offering them a long term, sustainable system of care. Antares continues to provide support to this process in the form of ongoing contact with Kiwakkuki management and occasional visits to facilitate the spread of this method. Feedback from Kiwakkuki staff and volunteers on the impact of the Intercollegial Consultation System on their stress levels and problem solving capacity has been extremely positive. Kiwakkuki also actively upholds the Antares Guidelines for Good Practice.

Antipas Mtalo, medical advisor Kiwakkuki, Dafrosa Itemba, director, Kiwakkuki, and Cynthia Eriksson, Fuller Theological Seminary, USA



The World Health Organisation, Kiwakkuki and Antares

As the employees and volunteers of Kiwakkuki can testify, working within the context of HIV/Aids is by nature stressful. These stresses are widespread across the field of HIV/AIDS work. Testing multiple clients per day, informing them of the results, offering counseling to infected people and their families, making home visits, bearing witness to the personal dramas connected to HIV/Aids and being bound by limited time and resources create a potentially very stressful context. In addition to the caseload burden, HIV also affects the direct living environment, sometimes impacting on family members, friends and colleagues. Furthermore, a number of workers don't know or find it difficult to accept their own HIV status, adding an element of personal uncertainty or pressure. Even within some organizations who are actively working within the field of HIV/AIDS, some stigma is attached to disclosing a positive status.

For this reason the WHO commissioned the Antares Foundation to develop basic training and support materials that could easily be used by providers and connected organizations as an integral part of the WHO package of implementation materials. These materials consisted of:

1. An organizational framework for managing stress and adverse consequences at the organizational level;
2. A basic training module for introduction of stress for providers (VCT - Voluntary Counselling and Testing workers amongst others) including a module that can be used for training of organizations to deliver to their providers and a self-learning training module;
3. Case studies and ideas for stress management at team level: how can staff support each other (for example inter collegial consultation);
4. Systematic literature review which evaluates the evidence for stress amongst HIV/AIDS workers and volunteers, and supports the organizational framework.

In order to pilot test both training modules in the field and finalize the case study, Antares and WHO visited Tanzania. This visit was hosted by Kiwakkuki our long-term Tanzanian partner. Representatives of WHO Tanzania and the Tanzanian Ministry of Health attended the workshop to assess the suitability of these workshops for distribution on a national level.

Five organizations that were active in Voluntary Counselling and Testing in the Moshi District in Tanzania were selected: Rainbow Center, Angaza, Mawenzi Hospital, Municipal Health Facilities and Kiwakkuki. About 60 staff of these five organisations received a stress management training workshop of one day. A small number of individual staff members were asked to do a self-directed learning manual. The team also conducted interviews with Kiwakkuki staff in order to get additional data for the case study and gathered feedback from the Tanzanian Ministry of Health.

All information gathered by actually doing the training, experiencing how things went, and the reaction and feedback of participants as well as of the representatives of the Ministry of Health of Tanzania were taken into account when the revisions were drafted. The materials has been finalized in 2010.

Jordan and Iraq- Psychosocial Capacity Building Programme for Staff and NGOs working with Iraqi Refugees in Jordan

In September 2008, the Antares Foundation began a program focused on local staff of NGOs working with Iraqi refugees in Jordan. The program is funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), US State Department. The program ran until September 2009 and had three main components: stress assessment amongst local staff, psychosocial skills building of national staff, and stress awareness training, and stress management training and developing psycho social support program for NGOs. This project was especially valuable for Antares, as its three components embrace three of Antares' core activities, and results from the Jordan project were used as input for our research program.

The psychosocial skill building was undertaken in cooperation with the War Trauma Foundation.

The organizations that participated in one or more components of this programme were: Jordanian Health Aid Society, Noor Hussein Foundation, People in Need, IOM, CARE, Save the Children, ZENID, CARITAS, Jordanian Red Crescent Society, ICMC, MIZAN, FIDA, Mercy Corps, International Relief & Development, International Rescue Committee, IFRC, IOCC and World Vision international.

In mid 2009, the Antares Foundation wrote and was granted a proposal for extension and as a result a program started in September 2009 until September 2010 and included activities in Jordan and Iraq.

In Jordan, Antares continues with stress management and psychosocial skills building. Antares will be conducting stress awareness workshops for staff, stress management trainings for operational managers and coordinators and individual consultations with the management of participating NGOs. The psychosocial skills building will consist of three training blocks, a short refresher course for previously trained staff and some specific modules on new topics. The Antares Foundation has also developed a regional pool of stress management and staff support experts in the region.

Psychosocial support and training program in Northern Iraq

The improved security situation in Northern Iraq created expectations of an increase in returning refugees. Upon request of the participating NGOs in the Jordan program, the Antares Foundation began with a similar training and psychosocial support program in Northern Iraq in September 2009, also funded by BPRM and which focused on NGOs working with IDPs (Internally Displaced Person) and returnees, as part of the Jordan program.

In October 2009, a feasibility assessment for the implementation of the Antares psychosocial support programme was conducted. The Kurdish cities of Erbil and Suleimaniah were found to be both relatively safe and no immediate security threats are present. As there was a wide range of NGOs active in Iraq working in varied circumstances with different needs and capacities, it was recommended that psychosocial capacity and training needs should be further explored.

In November 2009, a second visit to Northern Iraq responded to the recommendations and a community based needs inventory was conducted. The target group was a selection of NGOs with a strong IDP focus and a staff team of twenty people or more. Training of these organizations has then been conducted.

Kosovo - Five year project in collaboration with the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims, Kosovo and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, USA.

The Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims, (known as the KRCT) is a non profit organization established in Pristina in 1999, which provides professional services for the improvement of the psychological and health status of victims of torture.

As KRCT is made up of mental health specialists, their initial request was for Antares to carry out an evaluation of their activities. KRCT were so pleased with the positive impact of Antares' work with them that they requested a follow-up, this time with the focus on their own staff support system. Antares and KRCT were happy to be able to include managers from other Kosovar NGOs in this process.

The population of Kosovo is still suffering from the consequences of the war which ended in 1999. Although at a much lower intensity than during and before the war (1997-1999), the violence continues even after years of UNMIK administration.

The Kosovar population is now facing new threats, such as human trafficking, drugs, criminality and uncleared mine areas.

The need to strengthen the Kosovar general health practitioners to recognize and treat and refer patients with war/related mental health problems was recognized already in 2001, following various studies by CDC and the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT). Thanks to funding from CDC, 2009 saw the launch of a new Antares Foundation project in Kosovo, run in collaboration with KRCT. Antares activities there have begun with a country wide survey to assess stress levels and stress management amongst primary health care workers. This baseline measure have informed the training that has been

given throughout the country in the course of the next years.

Through supporting stress management within the health care system itself amongst primary health care givers and providing training in mental health care, the overall goal of this program is to improve the quality and cohesion of health services to the Kosovar population. Our project will run until September 2014 and will be based in Pristina.

The Antares Foundation continues to seek new projects through which to offer its support to humanitarian agencies worldwide.