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## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# Capacity-building Workshop Promotes Civil Society Participation in Mexico's HIV Response

**Technical assistance helps organizations secure support for HIV prevention activities from the National AIDS Program.**



NGO workshop participants. PHOTO CREDIT: OMAR ROBLES.

*"The February 2009 workshop connected government to civil society by building organizational capacity. For example, the training helped the Mexican Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MPLHIVA) secure funding that is being used to counsel providers and NGOs about administering rapid HIV tests."*

*—MPLHIVA representative*

USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1  
<http://www.healthpolicyinitiative.com>

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In February 2009, the USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1, received a call from the National AIDS Program in Mexico (CENSIDA). The government body that oversees the national response to HIV and AIDS asked the project to collaborate with CENSIDA and coordinate a workshop to guide NGOs through effective proposal-writing processes. Eight days later, and weeks away from the national submission deadline, the Health Policy Initiative in Mexico City hosted representatives from 45 NGOs to build organizational capacity and support civil society participation in the national response to HIV.

During the February 2009 workshop, participants received hands-on technical assistance and drafted their grant proposals. The project stressed the following key points: (1) aligning proposals with CENSIDA's priorities; (2) grounding activities in proven, evidence-based HIV prevention strategies; and (3) preparing a budget with direct links to activities.

The results of the project's technical assistance provided during the collaborative, capacity-building workshop include:

- **Intersectoral collaboration:** CENSIDA is systematizing the proposal submission process to improve the country's response to HIV and AIDS, particularly by supporting HIV prevention activities implemented in rural provinces and communities. The latest request for proposal (RFP) was only CENSIDA's fourth such announcement. At the workshop, NGOs learned to navigate a new proposal submission process, thus strengthening the link between government and civil society.
- **More than 1 in 4 trainees received grants:** CENSIDA awarded grants to 12 of the 45 organizations that attended the capacity-building workshop. Funds appropriated to these organizations totaled approximately \$450,000 dollars. The organizations funded by CENSIDA are assuming leadership roles within their communities by coordinating HIV prevention activities that align with CENSIDA's goals, objectives, and indicators. For example, the Mexican Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS is counseling providers and civil society organizations about properly administering rapid HIV tests, which includes providing adequate counseling and referral information.

Building on the successful collaboration in 2009, the Health Policy Initiative and CENSIDA are already coordinating efforts to facilitate regional trainings across Mexico before next year's submission deadline. To ensure that more civil society organizations have access to this proposal-writing technical assistance, CENSIDA has posted video recordings of the February 2009 workshop on its website, available at:

<http://www.censida.salud.gob.mx/interior/inicio/notaprin/prevenfocalizada/taller.html>