
JULY & AUGUST 2015

About the PHIA Project

The PHIA Project, led by ICAP and its partners, consists of national, population-based HIV impact assessments (PHIAs) in PEPFAR-supported countries. In close collaboration with key stakeholders and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ICAP will launch PHIA surveys in three countries in 2015 and plans to conduct up to 20 in Africa and the Caribbean over the next five years. The PHIA surveys will estimate HIV prevalence, incidence and the prevalence of HIV viral load suppression among adults, and HIV prevalence among children. The results will also assess the reach of each country's HIV prevention, care and treatment services, guide policy and inform funding priorities.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Household listings starting in Zambia:** The tablet-based household listing, a key planning step needed for survey implementation, began in August. This is Zambia's first experience using tablets for household listing.
- **State-of-the art data collection and management systems:** In order to ensure high-quality data, the PHIA team has devised an electronic data management system to collect and link all survey and lab data.
 - **Survey data:** The PHIA Project is using tablet computers loaded with case report forms coded in OpenDataKit (ODK), an open-access software, to allow field staff to record participants' responses to the questionnaire and results of HIV and other rapid test results. Field staff will carry pocket routers to allow the secure transmission of data from the tablet to a cloud-based PHIA server via a cellular and/or Wi-Fi network. Point-of-care CD4 machines fitted with 3G modems will transmit CD4 test results directly to the same server.
 - **Lab data:** At satellite labs, a laboratory specimen management system will track the progress of specimens as they are processed and shipped and will also track QA/QC results from the retesting of a subsample of blood specimens. Existing laboratory information systems at each central lab will manage more specialized HIV test results, such as HIV viral load test results, and will securely send these data to the PHIA server.
- **Laboratory and field survey training has begun:** ICAP and CDC have developed and completed four laboratory training curricula, with different modules for field teams and for staff from satellite and central laboratories. The first lab training began in Zimbabwe the week of July 20th and trainings for interviewers, community mobilization coordinators, and field supervisors for the Zimbabwe PHIA (ZIMPHIA) will start September 7th.
- **Engaging stakeholders in Zambia, Tanzania, and Namibia:** The University of Zambia, in collaboration with the Zambia Ministry of Health, CDC, and ICAP, hosted a National Stakeholders Meeting on July 29th, during which the Zambia PHIA (ZAMPHIA) protocol was shared and further support for the project was garnered amongst stakeholders. In Tanzania, the PHIA Steering Committee has been formed and the PHIA Technical Working Group (TWG) held an initial protocol development workshop on July 15-16 in Dar es Salaam. CDC, ICAP, and UCSF made an initial visit to Namibia on July 8-10.

UPCOMING PLANS:

- ZIMPHIA data collection is expected to begin at the end of September 2015.
- The Malawi PHIA (MPHIA) TWG sub committees are reviewing standard operating procedures and developing community mobilization messages.
- PHIA planning processes are underway in several other countries.
 - The Uganda PHIA protocol development continues, with submission to IRB and Ethics Committees planned for September.
 - In Lesotho, following a series of ICAP meetings with CDC and key stakeholders held this past May, steps are underway to constitute a TWG to help drive PHIA development in Lesotho.
 - An initial technical visit to Cameroon is scheduled for September.

ACHIEVING QUALITY AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT IN GLOBAL HIV PROGRAMS – ICAP PRE-MEETING TO THE IAS CONFERENCE

On July 18th, ICAP hosted a pre-meeting to the International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference in Vancouver, entitled “Achieving Quality and Demonstrating Impact in Global HIV Programs.” Attended by a range of policy-makers, researchers, and implementers, the pre-meeting introduced the PHIA Project and highlighted the key methodological issues considered ahead of the launch of the first three surveys later this year.

In her introductory remarks, Ambassador Deborah Birx, Coordinator of the United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS, highlighted the need for population data on impact level indicators, which the PHIA's will provide. Ambassador Birx emphasized that PHIA data will be critical to shaping increasingly targeted HIV programs in the coming years. PHIA data will also be critical to benchmarking progress towards the 90-90-90 goals.

Guided by framing remarks from the PHIA Project's Principal Investigator, Dr. Jessica Justman of ICAP, the meeting reviewed a range of methodological issues critical to the PHIA's. Dr. Vinod Mishra of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) highlighted opportunities and limitations of population based surveys, while Dr. John Nkengasong of the CDC International Laboratory Branch (CDC ILB) summarized recency assays used for measuring incidence. Dr. Owen Mugurungi of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care shared his country's experience in tailoring the objectives of ZIMPHIA to provide useful policy information in the national context. Finally, PHIA Project Director Dr. David Hoos of ICAP chaired a panel on the ethical considerations of PHIA surveys in relation to consent procedures, the inclusion of pediatric populations, and the return of test results.

The pre-meeting was an important opportunity to gather feedback and input from experts on key considerations, and to raise interest and awareness in the data that the PHIA Project will generate.

About ICAP

ICAP was founded in 2003 at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. Now a global leader in HIV and health systems strengthening, ICAP provides technical assistance and implementation support to governments and non-governmental organizations in more than 20 countries. ICAP has supported work at more than 4,300 health facilities around the world. More than 2.3 million people have received HIV care through ICAP-supported programs and over 1.4 million have begun antiretroviral therapy. More information can be found online at ICAP.columbia.edu.