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HAITI: MERCHANTS ACCESS HIV AND AIDS SERVICES

VIDEO

BORDER TOWN,OUANAMINTHE
BRIDGE

TRAFFIC ON BRIDGE

PIERRE ON CAMERA

AUDIO

NARRATION

Ouanaminthe – a unique trading town in northern Haiti - sits on the edge of the massacre River. A bridge running across the river links Haiti to the Dominican Republic. (12)

Struggling with a population of 85,000 people, Ouanaminthe also processes some 50,000 travellers, mostly traders, who cross the bridge daily to ply their ware. (11)

Many of these traders attempt to stay illegally in the Dominican Republic. When caught, they are returned to Haiti. Pierre Rony is Mayor of the Haitian border town of Ouanaminthe. (11)

PIERRE: (In French) **M**

"It is a problem. The Dominican authorities decide to repatriate Haitians and they drop them here at the border.// They do not have money or food to go back to their cities so they wind up

staying on our streets.” (12)

NARRATION

WOMEN AND TRADERS

And they compete for social benefits too, especially medical attention. (5)

LAURENCEAU: (English) F

LAURENCEAU ON CAMERA

“It is known as one of the departments where there are less services for women (...)” (4)

NARRATION

Barbara Laurenceau, UN Population Fund Deputy Representative in Haiti. (5)

LAURENCEAU: (English) F

LAURENCEAU ON CAMERA

“We know there are several cases of sexual exploitation of women, going back and forth between the two countries.” (5)

NARRATION

HOSPITAL

Haiti has an HIV prevalence rate of nearly four percent among adults, the highest rate of HIV anywhere in the Caribbean and the leading cause of death in women of childbearing age. (11)

WAITING ROOM

The United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, is sponsoring HIV and AIDS prevention programmes at this health centre. (8)

The health centre treats 150 patients every day, half of them migrant women. (5)

Thirty-year-old Annerose Toussaint sells goods at the frontier. She is here to test for HIV. (6)

TOUSSAINT ON CAMERA

TOUSSAINT: (French Creole) **F**

"I did a test. My husband did it in another city. It was negative. Both tests were negative. So we are having sex without condoms." (14)

HEALTH CENTRE SERVICES

NARRATION

Most services for women are free at the centre. Health workers focus on educating patients about contraception. They also promote condom usage to prevent HIV transmission. (12)

Dr. Isnelle Descommes is Medical Director at the centre. (3.5)

ISNELLE ON CAMERA

ISNELLE: (French) **F**

"We have groups, 34 women are in these groups. We also include men, because we cannot only blame women for spreading AIDS //They must use condoms; but if men do not want to use them, they need to know the consequences." (17)

GROUPS

NARRATION

These groups are then dispatched into the community to pass on what they learned at the centre. (6)

GIRLS IN CLASS

Another way to spread the word - through schools. At this all-girls school, students like 10 year old Peca Annaise Telusma, learn about AIDS, as part of the core curriculum. (12)

TELUSMA ON CAMERA

TELUSMA: (French) F

“They teach me a lot of things that I did not know. And they also teach me how to protect myself from AIDS while I am young.//It is important because we are all messengers and we have to protect ourselves and pass the message to other people.” (12)

RINGING BELL

NARRATION

Sister Denise Delcy helps with activities. (3)

SISTER DELCY ON CAMERA

DELCY: (French) F

“We teach them how they can protect themselves while they are still young...because the parents don’t have time to teach them.” (10)

SPORTS

NARRATION

And within schools there is another way – through athletics. Here students take part in games every Wednesday afternoon. After two hours of sports, they return to the classroom for instruction. (11.5)

WAITING ROOM / LABORATORY

Meanwhile, the health centre continues to offer free HIV tests to men and women. Here 10% of those tested were positive, more than double the national average. (10)

STREET SCENES

But prevention efforts here and across the country do seem to be making a difference. And according to the UNAIDS office, HIV in pregnant women decreased by two-thirds over the last

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decade – a sign of hope for all Haitians. (14.5)

This report was prepared by Mary Ferreira for the United Nations.