

Summary of country programme

Ecuador has a concentrated HIV epidemic, with approximately 0.3% of adults infected (around 26,000 people live with HIV). Men who have sex with men (MSM) are the most affected, with an estimated prevalence of 19.3% in the capital city. Prevalence is also high among transgender people and sex workers, and the rate of new infections is steadily increasing. Despite some advances in recent years, access to high quality health care, for example HIV testing and counselling, is still inadequate and there are particular gaps in services targeted at vulnerable populations.

Corporación Kimirina, a Linking Organisation since 2000, provides technical support to community organisations and helps mobilise key populations (sex workers, people living with HIV, transgender people and MSM) in the response to HIV. Kimirina also works to prevent sexually transmitted infections and improve voluntary counselling and testing services for key populations. It has successfully advocated for new national policies on HIV and helped to establish the Global Fund programme in Ecuador. In 2009, Kimirina began an advocacy and observatory project to support transgender people. Since the end of 2009, it has acted as Global Fund Principal Recipient (PR) for Malaria Round 8 and is about to start as PR for HIV Round 9. Kimirina is also implementing a three-year USAID-funded project on sex trafficking.

SD1: Scaled up quality community programmes delivered and access to health and HIV services improved

	2007	2008	2009
Number of people reached through HIV prevention activities	12,808	226	0
Number of individuals reached through stigma and discrimination reduction initiatives	50,976	Data unavailable	2,028

The Frontiers Prevention Programme (FPP), an innovative \$25 million six-year programme supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in five low prevalence countries, came to an end in September 2007. In Ecuador, it worked with 40 different community-based organisations and NGO partners and helped to mobilise significant new groups of MSM, sex workers, transgender people and people living with HIV (PLHIV) in six cities.

Kimirina has supported many projects involving communities in HIV prevention. In collaboration with



A peer outreach worker advises about HIV and safer sex in the Penthouse nightclub, Guayaquil, Ecuador © Gideon Mendel for the Alliance

local and regional governments, it has supported training activities for municipal employees and utilised innovative theatre and artistic techniques with youth in schools.

To help engage the private sector in the HIV response, Kimirina has developed partnerships. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, it gained some funding from sports companies and an international children's clothing company to support its work with children living with HIV.

Kimirina works with partners Futpen and Alfíl, both lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organisations, to improve access to health services for transgenders and combat stigma and discrimination. Activities carried out include outreach work with the local community; building awareness; education and information; legal support; access to microfinance; counselling; and sexual health care. With USAID funding, Kimirina is carrying out a pilot programme 'Strengthening the reintegration of female victims of mistreatment into the workforce' with the intention of ensuring that the women's human rights are respected and that they are able to exercise them.

SD2: Increase civil society capacity to implement effective community responses

Kimirina's technical assistance for its partner organisations includes, for example, methodologies for peer training; building networks; planning; monitoring and evaluation; and advocacy. As well as developing training modules and delivering training, Kimirina has also produced publications and audio visual materials to improve knowledge about issues relating to HIV such as use and negotiation of condoms; rights, gender and sexual orientation; and nutrition.



As part of FPP, Kimirina provided organisational and programmatic technical support to increase counselling and HIV testing services. In addition, it trained partner organisations to advocate with local and national decision-makers for expanded rights and access to services.

With partner FUTPEN (Fundación Transgénero de la Península), local transgender leaders have been trained to represent the trans community and raise awareness of transphobia.

SD3: Strengthen communities influence in national programming and in national and international policy

Within FPP, successful advocacy work achieved positive changes from municipalities, the health ministry and other institutions – for example, the inclusion of sex workers in a national programme providing free HIV and STI testing services. Most importantly in Ecuador, the project showed that key populations are integral to the HIV response and cannot be left out or ignored.

RedTraSex, the Latin American and Caribbean Sex Workers Network, was set up to strengthen the rights of sex workers and is a partner of Kimirina. Its efforts have engendered greater acceptance and receptiveness toward sex workers, and brought about changes in social policies. For example, in association with the Ministry of Health and the national AIDS programme, it advocated for the enactment of the 'National Guide on Laws and Procedures for Integrated Care for Sex Workers'. This new legislation represents a landmark in relations between sex worker organisations and the State. Now, a stigmatising 'Sex Workers Health Card' that recorded personal details with a photo and record of past infectious diseases has been replaced with a 'Comprehensive Healthcare Card', which cannot be retained by the police, health inspectors or pimps. This has increased access to healthcare for sex workers and decreased extortion and police persecution. In order to achieve this, the sex workers of Ecuador spent four years approaching decision-makers, health care workers, authorities and partner organisations in order to raise awareness of the problems relating to the original identity cards and to convince them of the need to bring about change.

Siluetas X is a key partner in advocacy work with transgender people in Ecuador. The group led a campaign to enable transgender men and women to legally change their name. Citing the anti-discrimination passages enshrined in Article 2 of Ecuador's new constitution, they took the case to the Office of the Ombudsman which, in turn, took it up with the Director of the national Registry Office. This resulted in five group members receiving new identity cards within a week. It is expected that this legal precedent will result in the normalisation of the name-changing process.

A 'People Living with HIV Stigma Index', designed to increase understanding of how HIV related stigma and discrimination is experienced, is part of a global initiative driven by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS, the International Community of Women with HIV/AIDS and UNAIDS. Voluntary and confidential questionnaires have been carried out to explore areas relating to the social environment, family, work, access to health services, knowledge of rights, HIV testing and treatment of HIV, having children and internal stigma. The technical advisory committee set up to oversee implementation of the Index is led by the Ecuadorian Coalition of PLHIV (a partner of Kimirina) and it includes Kimirina representatives, among others. The committee will ensure results of the study are suitable to be used at local, national and international level and influence public policies and interventions to tackle stigma and discrimination. It is also expected that the study will contribute to reducing the gap in availability of adequate, timely, accurate information on HIV in Ecuador.

Following the success of similar projects in Bolivia and Peru, in 2009 the Alliance began an advocacy and observatory project to help transgender people in Ecuador. It is run by three organisations: Kimirina, FUTPEN and Alfíl LGBT organisations. The project raises awareness of transsexual and transgender populations to enhance respect for their human rights and improve their access to health services. It follows up on cases of discrimination, mistreatment or abuse.