

# BEBASHI

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Rashidah Lorraine Hassan  
Co-Founder and Executive Director



November 26, 1990

Ms. Trish Halloran  
Director of Education  
AMFAR  
1515 Broadway  
Suite 3601  
New York, NY 10036

Dear Ms. Halloran:

In the following report we hope that you can see, as we do, the progress we have made over the past six months in our AMFAR project, "Abused Women of Color: Sex Education as a Crisis Intervention". In some ways, our grant proposal was overly ambitious and seriously underbudgetted. The current Philadelphia fiscal crisis which has cut budgets has forced us to take time away from other BEBASHI resources and projects to compensate. In spite of these financial and programmatic struggles, we believe that we have put together a grant team that rivals other projects in the city of Philadelphia in both expertise and commitment.

Working in the formative research phase has reinforced our sense of purpose in establishing and evaluating our STI/HIV curriculum for abused women. We recognize that as a pilot project the video component will not stand on its own but must be part of a very sophisticated, yet simple, curriculum which depends heavily on the skills of mature health educators. Consequently, creating a detailed curriculum guide to use with these trigger films has become far more important than we had previously articulated.

If you have additional questions about the report, please do not hesitate to call. We will be happy to describe further our approach to implementing this grant.

Sincerely,

Curtis Wadlington  
Deputy Director of Operations  
BEBASHI

## S U M M A R Y   O F   P R O J E C T   G O A L S

This bi-annual report identifies the project goals we specified in our original proposal and describes our progress toward accomplishing those goals.

The measurable goals we set for ourselves included:

- a) documenting the issues and images abused women of color perceive as relevant to their condition
- b) creating a video module depicting abusive interaction in the context of Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV infection,
- c) determining whether this video enhanced curriculum will make a quantifiable difference in the knowledge women in the Women Against Abuse Shelter, Inc. report based on a quasi-experimental design.

To date the majority of our efforts have focused on goals a and b while goal c will begin in earnest in late February and early March. The remainder of this section delineates the components of each goal that have been accomplished and those still in progress.

### a) Documenting Issues and Images of Abused Women of Color

To this end we have activated our Advisory Council which has been instrumental in evaluating our work to identify the issues and images that speak to the relationship between sexual activity in the domestic abuse situation. The active members of the council are Carol Ray of Women Against Abuse, Inc., Joan Mintz-Ulmer of Women's Way, city of Philadelphia, Lydia Morales, Lutheran Settlement House and Ernestine Perry of Women in Transition. We have met monthly since September to design discussion guides for focus groups for both clients and staff of shelters (See attachment A). We conducted four (4) focus groups in lieu of the two called for in our proposal because we felt that we did not have a clear enough sense of the issues that impact abused women. The focus group data have been summarized for those who are working on the scripts (See attachment B). Transcriptions of the focus groups will be included in the final report of the grant. The findings from the focus groups have been shared with the team of video consultants who are completing the scripts for the three vignettes.

We are currently in final script production stages and will start shooting the vignettes in January due to writing staff schedules, underestimation of the amount of time required to conduct focus groups and evaluate them, and television studio scheduling. Script drafts are being evaluated by women in the shelter, the Advisory Council and the video-consulting team.

Although we are currently behind schedule as noted in our proposal design, we do not believe that this will compromise our

ability to complete the project on schedule. However, in the event that delays are experienced you will be promptly notified.

b) Creating the Video Module.

As noted in previous correspondence, we have involved an African-American theatre company, BUSHFIRE, to provide script writing assistance, as well as acting and directing talent, for at least three vignettes. We have had two major design meetings with the scriptwriter to acquaint her with our focus group findings and the content list.

Each of the vignettes dramatizes the HIV-risk women face when power and control issues in the abusive situation compromise the types of protection available to abused women. The final scripts include: 1) a vignette which demonstrates how sexual activity is used in the abusive situation as a tool to avoid physical abuse, 2) using the cycle of four phone calls women make to their abusers while in the shelter, a series of mini-vignettes accentuate the HIV-risk factors in the abusive relationship. These vignettes emphasize that as women continue in the cycle of abuse they are more likely to participate in high HIV-risk behavior, 3) a vignette that brings an HIV positive woman back into the shelter to tell them what she's learned about the costs of sexual activity in the abuse situation.

We have also engaged the services of the owner of one of Philadelphia's most successful video production companies as a consultant to the project. Cecie Dry, a video anthropologist, has worked on a number of focus group/advisory council projects, is working far below her standard corporate rate to serve as a bridge between formative research processes and video-production needs.

In addition we have had the services of a student intern from Villanova University. She has worked with a group of student research assistants from Villanova University who have examined the extant literature relating to domestic abuse, shelters, psychological models of behavior change and video strategies. The research assistants will work as production staff running video and audio equipment in the Villanova University television studio.

c) Curriculum Activities.

BEBASHI's Women's Project Staff has clarified the curriculum presented in the abuse shelters and has audiotaped presentations by BEBASHI staff at Women Against Abuse. In light of the research conducted for this grant, shelter curriculum is being reevaluated and in some ways reconstructed. The revised curriculum will serve both the role-playing version and the video-trigger film version. The new BEBASHI curriculum for the shelter has been reviewed and evaluated by the Advisory Council.

# S U M M A R Y O F P R O J E C T D E S I G N & M E T H O D O L O G Y

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### Stage I : Assessment

This stage is complete. We have reviewed the relevant literatures in journals on shelters, abuse, HIV educational strategies and video strategies. Discussion guides were designed and evaluated and revised with the assistance of the Advisory Council. Focus Groups were conducted, according to Human Subjects guidelines, audiotaped, reviewed and synthesized to create key script concepts to be used by scriptwriters to transform the raw ideas into interesting contexts and dialog that women in the shelters can identify with. Redesigning of the shelter HIV curriculum has occurred based on this initial assessment.

### Stage II: Design

Pre-production meetings have occurred; script drafts are being tested with shelter women and the advisory council. We have created a final content list for the director to assure that key pieces of information and effects are translated into the final productions. We have switched from 3/4 inch videotape because of editing limitations. A revised timeline for shooting the vignettes and rehearsal of actors will be forthcoming.

### Stage III: Video Pretesting

Will occur in mid-February.

### Stage IV: Designing and Testing Pre and Post Tests and Curriculum.

BEBASHI AIDS 101 presentation pre and post tests have been revised pursuant to another evaluation grant. These pre and post tests will be revised upon their final completion to incorporate issues that are most appropriate to the abuse situation.

Shelter curriculum has been revised. See Attachment C.

### Stage V: Training and Data Entry.

This work will begin in January.

### Stage VI: Evaluation.

The assessment stage and design stages all include evaluation components. Final evaluation will begin in April and May.

## ADJUSTMENTS IN DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. Our initial plan to cover Latinas in depth has proven problematic. Very few Latinas go to the Women Against Abuse shelter and prefer to attend non-

residential programs during daytime. Because shelter living is restrictive and alters the natural flow of family life mandating separate bed times for children and mothers, radical departures in food and other amenities, Latinas prefer to attend programs like those offered by Lutheran Settlement House. Lydia Morales of Lutheran Settlement House has corroborated this finding. We also know that educational tools must be culture-specific to be effective and we are unable to devote sufficient attention in the vignettes to honestly offer an educational opportunity that will be meaningful. We want to encourage other, Hispanic organizations in the area to create a version of our curriculum.

2. To enhance the credibility of the vignettes, we became convinced, after looking at examples of student actor-productions, that only actors who could portray the characters and make the women believe they were not seeing actors but the real thing were crucial to this effort. To this end we acquired the services of BUSHFIRE actors and scriptwriters. The Deputy Director negotiated for the services of BUSHFIRE through the director of the troupe. Kimmika Williams, known for her playwriting work in women's prisons is the subcontracted scriptwriter for the project. Because they are a new troupe, a spinoff of the older more established Freedom Theatre in Philadelphia, they were willing to contract with us at a significant rate reduction for their services. Coincidentally, student actors were not available for this effort as coordination with local universities could not easily occur. (e.g. Temple University faculty were on strike through October and we were unable to negotiate with them for student talent).

3. Addition of Cecie Dry, a video anthropologist, who has completed projects for the city of Philadelphia, Cancer Centers using focus group/advisory council practices. The Deputy Director felt that her expertise using formative research similar to that stipulated in the grant could help to guide our work and supplement the technical expertise of Dr. Leonard Shyles.

4. We moved from 3/4 inch tape production to 1/2 inch. Our priority in this effort is to create scripts that are true to life that support the revised curriculum. Given the current budget, we realized that mass production of the video modules and the accompanying discussion guide will require further funding efforts. We now view this pilot project as a trial to clarify and enrich the current curriculum and as a detailed blueprint for a more elaborate, technically sophisticated production. The production values we will see in this pilot are not suitable for mass production. Availability of 3/4 inch editors for post-production editing was not forthcoming and given this altered goal are unnecessary.

5. Deferring shooting until January allowed BEBASHI Women's Project Staff to conduct their current contractual obligations for training, given budgetary limitations due to the City of Philadelphia's current budget crisis. Our staff is asked currently to work twice as hard for the same reimbursement. The revised schedule also accommodates the schedules of the television studio and professional actors.

6. Villanova University student intern, Tami Bryan, was available to support

the project in a variety of capacities. She and other student research assistants are familiar with the total project and will assist in the video production stage as well-informed production crew.

7. Deputy Director, Curtis Wadlington, has become more involved in the day-to-day decisionmaking of the project to insure that the project is closely aligned to BEBASHI's operating philosophy. This results in un-paid or non-reimbursed time away from BEBASHI's other responsibilities.

## R E S U L T S

With the formative research in final stages, we have examined the focus group data, Advisory Council comments and have generated a diverse data base. After considerable deliberation, we have synthesized our knowledge and have created script designs that are intended to reflect that data base.

## S U M M A R Y O F E V A L U A T I O N C O M P O N E N T

**Process Evaluation:** Members of the Advisory Council are meeting monthly with the project staff to review the project and goal/task accomplishment. The use of formative research to tailor the script and video production to the clients assures the authenticity of the project. In addition, at the end of the project, the Best Thinking Session will allow members of the Advisory Council to react to the project report.

**Impact Evaluation:** Results of the treatment/comparison group study will offer information about the impact of the video module on client knowledge of HIV/STI and abuse issues. In addition, 20% of the clients in the treatment group entering Lutheran Settlement House or Women in Transition homes will be voluntarily tested at two and four month intervals to measure the deterioration effects of the curriculum.

## C O M M E N T S

We have developed a good working relationship with our Advisory Council. They often remark that our meetings are different from others they attend, as we accomplish what we set out to get done. By December 7, we will have had five advisory council meetings. The focus groups yielded a wealth of information that has been useful in evaluating script ideas. It was in fact, in the shelter staff focus group that we discovered the cycle of communication that occurs with the abuser in the shelter setting via telephone, which serves as a basis for the second video module. We are far clearer now than when we started that the video vignettes or trigger films cannot stand alone. Because we want the vignettes to be as real as possible, most of the HIV related information will have to be brought out in the discussions with clients. The vignette then triggers the discussion, and the health educator forces clients to examine those issues that intensify risk. We feel so strongly about this, that we will add a disclaimer to the videotape of the vignettes indicating that use of the video without strict

adherence to the curriculum guide is not recommended.  
Consequently, ~~the~~ tape can only be used with the services of an experienced health educator.