

Brazil anti-AIDS effort uses indigenous language

October 11 2012, by Stan Lehman

(AP)—Brazil is using an indigenous language for the first in a campaign aimed at curbing violence against women and the spread of HIV.

The program includes folders warning that "violence or fear of violence increase women's vulnerability to [HIV infection](#) and other sexually transmitted diseases" because women who fear violence can be forced to have unprotected sex.

To get the message across to indigenous populations, folders and pamphlets were prepared in Tikuna, which is spoken by more than 30,000 Indians in the western tip of Amazonas state. Educational material is being prepared in other indigenous languages as well.

The campaign is a joint effort between Brazil and three United Nations agencies including the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS).

"[Indigenous groups](#) have the right to this information in their own language," said Pedro Chequer, the UNAIDS director in Brazil.

The campaign using materials in Tikuna was launched after [health workers](#) tested about 20,000 Indians for sexually transmitted diseases and found 46 with syphilis and 16 with the virus that causes AIDS, said Dr. Adele Benzaken of the UNAIDS office in Brazil.

The Tikuna Indians live near Brazil's borders with Peru and Colombia,

where prostitution and [drug trafficking](#) are rife, Benzaken said by telephone.

She said the information regarding HIV among indigenous groups will create a baseline that can be referred to in future years to determine if the incidence of the disease is increasing in that population.

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