

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center



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Armed with Para-Social Worker Training, Community Caregiver Assists Family in Need

Zenebech Asfaw is a community worker from Hiwot HIV Care and Support Association, an NGO that provides care and support services to 10,000 orphans and vulnerable children and 8,500 people living with HIV or AIDS in Addis Ababa.

In early 2010, Zenebech attended a 12-day Psychosocial Care Worker training conducted with the support of PEPFAR and CDC/Ethiopia by Twinning Center partners at the Addis Ababa University School of Social Work and the University of Illinois-Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work and Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center.

"I have been able to apply most of the knowledge and skills I learned to my home-based care work. I also shared this information with my co-workers, so they too are benefiting from the course. It has changed the way we interact with vulnerable children and families."

Children such as Sisay and Mesay Adane, who lost both parents to AIDS and now live with their aunt in Addis Ababa.

Sisay and Mesay, like other children of people who died from HIV-related causes, often face the unbearable burden of stigma and discrimination compounded by extreme poverty. Many

are forced to drop out of school and are highly vulnerable to violence, abuse, and disease.

Educating the community about HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination, Zenebech works to raise awareness about the virus. "I try to mobilize the community to help support people affected by HIV... I teach them how it is transmitted and how it can be treated and prevented," she says.

So far, Zenebech has helped 24 children orphaned by AIDS return to the classroom.

"These children have been able to cope with stigma and discrimination by forming their own support group and have even helped others by doing advocacy and sensitization work," she explains.

"I learned how to teach them to create a memory book, which really helps them cope with the loss of their parents. I visit their homes frequently and have even helped tutor some of the children after I realized they were having difficulties in school because of the time they missed or other challenges they face," she admits, noting that offering children compassion and support is just as



Zenebach visits Mesay and Sisay in their aunt's home.

important as linking them to nearby health and social service providers.

"Thanks to Zenebech's help, we feel liking we are getting our smiles back," Sisay says, looking at Mesay. Both girls nod in agreement before breaking into smiles that reinforce Sisay's hopeful comment.

"What I learned during the training course has made it much easier for me to network with other organizations and manage referrals when my clients are in need of services we do not provide at Hiwot," Zenebach concludes. "Really, it has caused me to adopt new methods of working within the community."

Twinning Center Hosts Distance Learning Course on Developing Patient Education Materials



Through AIHA's LRC project, healthcare professionals, medical librarians, and students of the health sciences can access up-to-date evidence-based research and guidelines; share information with a global network of scientists, clinicians, and others; and participate in online courses on a wide range of topics.

The Twinning Center conducted a four-week distance learning course focusing on developing Effective, evidence-based patient education materials in August-September.

According to Warrant Officer Tommy Sajisa of the Zambian Defense Force, "This course could not have come at a better time than now, when so many of our HIV patients are in dire need of information on the ARV medicines that they shall need for the rest of their lives."

Sajisa, head of information technology at Maina Soko Military Hospital in Zambia, says that he learned about many useful online resources for finding valuable information for those looking to develop patient education materials on a broad range of health-related topics, including HIV/AIDS. Sajisa is also the information coordina-

tor at Maina Soko's Learning Resource Center (LRC) — the first LRC established by the Twinning Center in Africa.

"Our patients really need to have easy-to-understand information on nutrition, opportunistic infections, psycho-social support, how to manage ARV side effects, and so on," he points out.

The online course, presented by AIHA ICT consultant Irina Ibraghimova, PhD, a library and information management specialist based in Croatia, provided participants not only with an array of Web sites featuring evidence-based clinical information, but also a number of guidance and tools that will assist them to research, develop, and evaluate patient education materials that meet the needs of their patients.

"The course explained how to define your target audience

and the objective of the information we are providing," Sajisa explains, noting that it also covered effective ways of presenting and disseminating medical information to patients.

"Online learning courses can be quite expensive, but through the Twinning Center we are able to do them free of charge. I really hope more and more of my colleagues will take advantage of these opportunities and learn from them," he says.

Helen Lungu, a pharmacist at University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, also found the course beneficial. "In my experience, most patients are more interested in treating a condition than preventing it, but this could help me educate them so they can avoid getting sick in the future," she says.

New Pediatric Emergency Medicine Partnership Will Help Improve Child Health Services in Ethiopia



Improving child health services is a top priority for Ethiopia's Ministry of Health. Partners will work to help the country achieve its goals by strengthening pre- and in-service training in pediatric emergency medicine.

Responding to the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of Ethiopian health-care professionals to provide urgent care services to children in the country, Twinning Center partners at the Addis Ababa University (AAU), Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and People 2 People launched a new partnership in Pediatric Emergency Medicine this summer.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Health is working to establish a center of excellence in emergency medicine at Tikur Anbessa, where the ER opened in 2008. Together with AAU, the hospital has launched the

first emergency medicine residency program in the country.

The Ministry has made improving child health services one of its top priorities and this partnership's objective to improve pediatric urgent care in Ethiopia by strengthening pre- and in-service training in pediatric emergency medicine plays a significant role in achieving this important national goal.

Key objectives of AIHA's Pediatric Emergency Medicine Partnership in Ethiopia are to strengthen the human and organizational capacity of local partner institutions to provide pediatric emergency

medical services by:

- Providing continuing education opportunities for faculty and staff;
- Improving organization and use of resources at Tikur Anbessa's Pediatric Emergency Medicine Department; and
- Strengthening pre-service training capacity in emergency medicine at the partner-established Emergency Medicine Training Center at AAU.

The partners conducted a three-day planning meeting in Wisconsin Aug. 23-25 to develop program goals and a timeline for their first year of work together.

Hearts and Minds Campaign Takes on Highway Africa Conference

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center partners from ZAMCOM, MISA/Botswana, and the University of Kentucky again participated in Highway Africa, and annual pan-African media conference that was held July 5-8 in Grahamstown, South Africa.

Correspondents from Radio Waumini - a Nairobi-based Catholic public broadcaster and member institution of AIHA's highly successful youth HIV prevention partnership linking the Kenya Episcopal Conference Catholic Secretariat with DePaul University in Chicago - also attended the event, marking the expansion of the Hearts and Minds Campaign to East Africa.

Partners launched Hearts and Minds two years ago with the goal of elevating the quality of HIV/AIDS reporting in Africa thereby creating an environment that reduces stigma and discrimination by giving people better access to timely, accurate, relevant information about HIV and AIDS. The campaign also encourages journalists report on the epidemic in a way that doesn't just parrot statistics,

but tells real stories about real human beings.

At the conference, partners conducted two sessions: one on the community outreach components of Hearts and Minds and a second that focused on how effective the mass media was at harnessing the attention generated by the 2010 FIFA World Cup to share effective HIV-related messages.

During the first session, partners shared details of how they are tapping into different media genres and outlets, including Zambia's community radio outreach program; Botswana's Mafoko Mathlong - a program that features face-to-face interaction between journalists and communities; and Kenya's Making Life's Responsible Choices broadcasts, which complement the highly successful school-based abstinence and life skills program of the same name.

The second session featured a roundtable discussion about HIV/AIDS messaging. It drew a large audience and resulted in an animated debate about

effective communications vehicles. Participants agreed that a multifaceted, collaborative approach that involves not only media professionals, but also activists, NGO workers, government officials, and the general public is needed to most effectively create and disseminate messages capable of influencing behavior at the community level.

Partners shared how Hearts and Minds works to create sustainability by teaching communities the skills they need to continue addressing HIV-related issues after the trainings have ceased. In turn, this process gives journalists the opportunity to tell stories that have a more human face and are ultimately more appealing to their audiences.

They distributed community information kits describing Hearts and Minds activities to journalists and activists looking for new ways of approaching HIV/AIDS outreach in their own Communities at both Sessions and elsewhere during the conference.



HIV media partners from Kenya, Botswana, Zambia, and the United States participated in the 2010 Highway Africa Conference at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa last July.



A roundtable session conducted by partners was well attended by Africa journalists looking to find new and better ways for telling HIV-related stories that can make a real difference in people's lives.

Social Work Partners Play a Strong Role in First OVC in Africa Conference

Twinning Center staff and partners from Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania participated in the 1st OVC in Africa Conference, which took place Oct. 31 - Nov. 3 in Johannesburg.

Leah Omari, of the Tanzania Institute of Social Work (ISW); Meseret K. Desta, of the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Chicago; and Ashenafi Hagos, of the Addis

Ababa University School of Social Work, made oral presentations highlighting various aspects of psycho-social care and support services that their partnerships are working to improve.

AIHA/South Africa Director John B. Capati spoke on the benefits of using social work partnerships to build sustainable capacity to address the needs of orphans and other vulnerable populations, while

AIHA/Nigeria Director Justice C. Ulunta presented an overview of the Twinning Center's social work partnership in his country.

In addition, the Twinning Center also hosted a well-attended satellite session on "Capacity Strengthening for OVC Support: The Role of Social Workers and Para-Social Workers," which was moderated ISW partner Dr. Theresa Kaijage.

The Twinning Center currently manages three partnerships that are working to improve care and support to vulnerable populations by improving pre- and in-service social work training programs in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Tanzania.

For VHC Vol Andrea Mayer, Working in South Africa Was More Than Just a “Feel Good” Project

From the moment Andrea Mayer arrived in South Africa, she had an agenda.

“I wanted to make sure that when I completed my assignments in South Africa both organizations I worked with were in different situation than they were before I joined them. I did not want this to be just a ‘feel good’ project,” she explains.



Andrea Mayer conducts a monitoring and evaluation workshop at the AIDS Consortium “Bua,” a regular gathering of the organization’s NGO members.

A monitoring and evaluation expert with a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and more than five years of experience designing and implementing projects, Mayer put her social science background to good use assisting both the Aids Consortium in Johannesburg and The Networking HIV/AIDS Community of South Africa (NACOSA) in Cape Town during a year-long volunteer assignment that concluded in July.

She was placed by the Twinning Center’s Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC) thanks to PEPFAR funding and the support of CDC/South Africa.

“At both organizations, we developed, conducted, analyzed, and reported on a survey of affiliates. This was a major success not only because we were able to roll it out quickly, but also gain valuable information about our constituents,” Andrea explains.

“The surveys identified areas that needed more attention and enabled us to effectively show affiliates the value of monitoring and evaluation,” she says. “They also showed these organizations that they are capable of conducting an annual survey.”

Despite the fact that these two organizations are a thousand kilometers away from each other, Andrea was able to accomplish a lot in just under a year’s time.

At the AIDS Consortium, she worked with staff to develop and conduct a pilot project that asked a small group of affiliates to report data, participate in its analysis, and its use for decision making.

At NACOSA, she helped develop a monitoring and evaluation plan, framework, and protocol as part of the Global Fund Round 9 grant program.

“Andrea has made a positive contribution to the AIDS Consortium and its affiliates,” acknowledges Denis Anthony, the organization’s Monitoring and Evaluation Manager.

“Our M&E Department is up and running thanks to her, which had a positive impact on a recent Oxfam-America evaluation,” he explains, noting that most staff and affiliates now produce qualitative reports for their partners and donors.

According to NACOSA Executive Director Dr. Maureen van Wyk, Andrea’s efforts “Helped us get a positive review from the Global Fund Local Fund Agent (LFA).”

Andrea sums up her VHC experience, saying, “I feel there are two critical factors that make some volunteer opportunities more positive than others. First, is the right level of support from the placement agency; second, it is the quality of the placement organization. I was lucky in both regards. I was fortunate to be placed in big cities and was able to avail myself of the existing opportunities and networks. Also, both organizations where I was placed had experience with international volunteers. They had a clear understanding of my role within the organization and were ready for capacity building.”

Although Andrea insists that she has done nothing special, the people she worked with all agree that she provides a perfect example of how one dedicated individual can make a real difference.

“Andrea has made a positive contribution to the AIDS Consortium and its affiliates. Our M&E Department is up and running thanks to her, which had a positive impact on a recent Oxfam-America evaluation.”

— Denis Anthony, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, The AIDS Consortium, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Social Work Training Helps Tanzanian NGO Worker Support Vulnerable Children, Families

"I am taking care of six of my seven grandchildren and it is hard to tell where our next dollar is coming from," says 65-year-old Hadija Selemani as she sits on a straw mat outside her tiny one-room house in Dar es Salaam's Temeke District.

"Sometimes the children cry because they are hungry. They are all in school, but I cannot afford their uniforms and materials without help," Hadija says, explaining that she supports her family by cooking chipati and selling it at a nearby market.

"From time to time a good Samaritan will donate some small things to us or I will beg for assistance from people around here," she continues.

Hadija had six children of her own, but all of them have died from AIDS or TB. When her daughter died leaving her seven children — all between the ages of 8 and 17 — in the care of distant relatives in Kigoma, Hadija traveled there to get them, she explains.

Lukadia, 9, Bakari, 8, and Ramadhani, 7, all say they came to live with Hadija when they were very young.

"We don't remember exactly how old we were, we just remember being here and finding out that our parents were dead," recalls Lukadia.

"We feel comfortable here. Our grandmother loves us and cares for us. We have freedom and time to play, but she also gives us a little work to do," says 14-year-old Tatu. "She makes sure that we go to school, too," the girl says, explaining that she had never attended school before moving in with Hadija.

Though things are difficult for the family, they all say they

are lucky that Alex Ng'ingo, a Para-Social Worker with Save Your Generation Tanzania (SAGETA), provides assistance and support.

At 33, Alex Ng'ingo still looks like a boy with his ready smile and easy-going demeanor. In truth, he has been working to help those in need in his community for nearly two decades.

"I started volunteering with a youth group and then, in 1999, joined with other good Samaritans to form SAGETA," Alex says.

"The purpose of this NGO is to educate young people about HIV/AIDS and provide assistance to orphans and vulnerable children, especially those who are homeless."

Alex says there are many children wandering the streets of the Temeke District.

"They don't go to school. They get into all kinds of trouble. I started wondering where they would be in 10 years. That's when I decided to do something," he explains.

SAGETA is currently working with more than 220 children and their families, trying to first determine their needs and then link them to support services that are available within the community.

"Alex visits us and talks to us about what is happening in our family," says Hadija.

"He listens to our problems and makes referrals to different places where we can get support. He gave the children school uniforms and has provided vocational training to our eldest girl," she continues. "What's more, he helped me with some training in

batik work and a small loan to help me earn money for food, clothes, and school fees. We are very grateful for his help."

Alex attended a Para-Social Worker Training course in April 2008, where he gained valuable knowledge and skills that help him provide more effective care to the vulnerable children and families SAGETA works with. The course was developed and conducted with the support of PEPFAR through USAID/Tanzania by Twinning Center partners at the Tanzania Institute of Social Work and the University of Illinois-Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work and Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center.

"Before taking the course, there were so many problems that we weren't able to help with. Now we know what to do and where to send our clients. We can link them to other service providers who can give them assistance with food, medical care, financial problems, and even legal issues," Alex says.

With only a tiny operating budget and mostly volunteer staff, Alex admits that SAGETA — very much like its clients — faces many challenges.

"But we have also achieved a lot over the past decade," he says, concluding, "I feel that what we have learned through the Para-Social Worker Training is helping us to do a better job helping children and families in need."



Para-Social Worker Alex Ng'ingo (right) uses the skills he learned at the training to provide care and support to people living with or affected by HIV like Hadija Selemani, a 65-year-old woman caring for six grandchildren who were orphaned by AIDS.



Hadija (center with pink cap) is surrounded by her grandchildren in their tiny house in Dar es Salaam's Temeke District. Para-Social Worker Alex Ng'ingo (on the right in the white shirt) visits the family often to provide assistance and support.

Conferences and Opportunities



3rd Access to Healthcare in Africa Conference
October 6-7, 2010
Johannesburg, South Africa

3rd Botswana International HIV Conference
October 13-16, 2010
Gaborone, Botswana

5th South African HIV Drug Resistance and Treatment Monitoring Workshop
October 27-29, 2010
Bloemfontein, South Africa

Social Justice: 138th APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition
November 6-10, 2010
Denver, Colorado, USA

International Students Conference on Reproductive Health (ISCORH)
November 18-20, 2010
Kampala, Uganda

ANAC 2010-Remembering, Recommitting, Reaching, Reforming: Implications for the Future of HIV Nursing

November 18-20, 2010
Reno, Nevada, USA

Global South-South Development Expo 2010
November 22-26, 2010
Geneva, Switzerland

International Conference on Stigma: The Attitude That Spreads HIV
December 1, 2010
Washington, DC, USA

Hope 2010: 10th International Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Environment, Population, Human Rights, and HIV/AIDS
December 15-17, 2010
Mumbai, India

3rd Annual University of the Western Cape "HIV in Context" Research Symposium: New Research in Gender, Violence, and HIV
March 11-13, 2011
Cape Town, South Africa

Pan-African Obstetrics and Gynecology Conference
May 9, 2011
Johannesburg, South Africa

Pan-African Symposium on Infectious Diseases
May 10-11, 2011
Johannesburg, South Africa

African International Quality and Accreditation in Healthcare Conference
May 10-11, 2011
Johannesburg, South Africa

HIV/AIDS 2011: Best Practices in HIV/AIDS Social Work
May 26-29, 2011
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center mobilizes and coordinates the resources of healthcare and allied professionals in the United States and abroad to effectively build capacity to reduce HIV infection rates and provide care to those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in support of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Funded by PEPFAR through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, the Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance, a US-based nonprofit dedicated to helping limited-resource communities make positive, sustainable changes that improve accessibility to a broad range of high-quality healthcare services and preventive programs.

The contents of this newsletter are the responsibility of AIHA and the Twinning Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States government or other funding agencies.

