

# Together We Remember: A Powerful Tribute to Lives Lost to HIV/AIDS in Hopely

More than a hundred people gathered at Rising Star Primary School in Hopely on Thursday, 20 June 2025 for the Harare Provincial Candlelight Memorial Service, coordinated by the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+). This solemn event honored those Living with and affected by HIV.



*Attendees gather at Rising Star Primary School, united in remembrance and solidarity during the Candlelight Memorial Service.*



*Provincial Medical Director Dr. Hove addresses the crowd, emphasizing the importance of remembering those lost to HIV/AIDS.*

Despite the chilly weather, the crowd came together to remember their loved ones lost to HIV/AIDS, fostering a powerful sense of community and shared grief. Among those present were Dr. Innocent Hove, the Harare Provincial Medical Director from the Ministry of Health and Child Care, Mr. Adonija Muzondiona the Harare National Aids Council Provincial Manager, and stakeholders from Zim-TTECH.

Dr. Hove urged attendees to reflect on the lives lost, emphasizing the emotional weight behind each name and face,

“Let us remember those people as lives lost too soon,” he stated.

Everyone represented not just statistics but a cherished person whose potential was tragically cut short by HIV/AIDS.

The candlelight memorial served as a poignant reminder of the epidemic's profound impact on families and communities. Dr. Hove encouraged everyone to honor their memories by continuing the fight against this HIV. He recalled how testing protocols had evolved, “In the 2000s, we would test individuals and, if the result was negative, we would let them go. Nowadays, we’re proactive. We treat people immediately and provide comprehensive education, even for those who test negative.”

This transformative approach empowers individuals with knowledge and strengthens the community’s resilience against HIV/AIDS.



*Mr. Muzondiona, Harare National Aids Council Provincial Manager, highlights the role of ZNNP+ in supporting people living with HIV.*



*Representatives from Zim-TTECH in attendance, showcasing their commitment to supporting the fight against HIV in the community.*

“We gather here not just to mourn but to celebrate the lives of those we have lost,” he continued.

Each candlelit represented a soul that has left us, as well as a promise to continue the fight against HIV. Each name inscribed on the memory quilt symbolized a cherished individual whose potential was cut short.

Mr. Muzondiona emphasized the vital role of ZNNP+,

“As the National AIDS Council, we officially recognize ZNNP+ as the lead organization for people living with HIV. Together we remember, together we heal through love and solidarity.” He acknowledged that the journey of the National AIDS Council has been shaped by the dedication and advocacy of the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV.

As the event commenced, Mrs. Chabikwa, the ZNNP+ provincial chair, led the crowd in harmonies that echoed through the evening air. Their songs of hope and remembrance rose

above the murmurs, creating an atmosphere of unity. Following their performance, Dr. Hove stepped forward to light the first candle. A silence fell over the crowd, marking the beginning of a solemn yet hopeful moment.

The flickering flame symbolized resilience and remembrance. One by one, attendees lit their own candles from this flame, creating a sea of lights that illuminated the night. As the warm glow spread, the haunting melody of "Senzeni Na" filled the air, resonating with collective grief and determination. This poignant song united everyone with a shared commitment to honor the lives lost and continue the fight against HIV.

Reverend Kapachawo offered heartfelt thanks to all who gathered to pay tribute. As the candles burned low, the crowd left with renewed resolve to support one another and advocate for change. The Candlelight Memorial was more than a remembrance; it served as a powerful reminder of the strength found in unity and the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS.