Tanzania Commission on AIDS Benchmarks Zimbabwe's Community-Led HIV Response During Learning Visit to ZNNP+

By Annah Page

A high-level delegation from the Tanzania AIDS Commission (TACAIDS), led by the Chairperson of the ATF Board, visited the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) on 4 November 2026 for a bench-marking and learning exchange visit focused on social contracting, community-led HIV responses, and the sustainability of networks of people living with HIV. The visit formed part of regional efforts to strengthen community systems and identify sustainable approaches to financing HIV programmes through domestic resources and meaningful community engagement.

The Chairperson of the ATF Board Mr. Sabasaba Moshingi noted that the primary purpose of the learning exchange was to understand how Zimbabwe has successfully implemented social contracting mechanisms that enable government resources to directly support communities of people living with HIV. The delegation was particularly interested in learning about the impact of community-led interventions, the sustainability of PLHIV networks, and the role communities play in strengthening accountability, service delivery and resource mobilisation.

In welcoming the delegation, ZNNP+ Director Mr. Tatenda Makoni highlighted the critical role of communities in shaping a resilient and people-centred HIV response. He drew attention to findings from the most recent Zimbabwe People Living with HIV Stigma Index 2.0, which revealed that HIV-related stigma and discrimination remain alarmingly high at 69.7%, an increase from 65.5% recorded in 2014. The report further showed that 48.5% of people living with HIV experienced internalised stigma, while stigma levels remain particularly severe among key populations.

Makoni emphasized that stigma continues to be one of the greatest barriers preventing people living with HIV from accessing services, adhering to treatment, and fully participating in social and economic life. He stressed that ending AIDS as a public health threat cannot be achieved without addressing the structural inequalities and stigma that continue to affect communities.

The ZNNP+ Director also raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of the HIV response in the face of shifting global funding landscapes. He called for stronger advocacy efforts and more prominent community voices in influencing domestic financing and resource mobilisation strategies.

"Now more than ever, communities must be at the centre of discussions on financing the HIV response. Sustainable solutions will require governments to prioritise health budget

allocations and strengthen expenditure tracking systems so that we understand how much investment is reaching and benefiting each person living with HIV. This will help countries develop more sustainable, equitable and results-focused funding frameworks," he said.

The delegation was taken through Zimbabwe's social contracting model, where resources from the National AIDS Council (NAC) are channeled through ZNNP+ to community-based organisations and PLHIV support structures. Since 2021, the model has supported community systems strengthening through a social contracting, reaching all ten provinces and strengthening community-led service delivery and accountability mechanisms.

Participants also explored Zimbabwe's Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV (MIPA) structures, community monitoring systems, accountability frameworks, resource mobilisation initiatives, and the innovative Kutabila digital platform, which provides treatment literacy, psycho-social support, referrals, and real-time community feedback.

Makoni applauded the Tanzanian delegation for recognising the value of learning directly from communities, noting that communities are not merely beneficiaries of the HIV response but essential partners and implementers. He further encouraged both countries to use the visit as a foundation for deeper regional collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint advocacy efforts.

The learning exchange concluded with commitments to strengthen collaboration between Zimbabwe and Tanzania in advancing community leadership, promoting domestic resource mobilisation, reducing stigma and discrimination, and ensuring sustainable HIV responses that leave no one behind.