



Newsletter

ECHOES

Issue No. 11 NOV 2024



Breast Cancer Awareness month and activities.

The Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) recently organized a Wellness Check Day to raise awareness about breast cancer. This event aimed to educate staff and foster solidarity among those affected by both breast cancer and HIV. Participants wore shades of pink to symbolize hope and awareness, creating a supportive atmosphere focused on early detection and regular screenings.

A highlight of the event was a breast cancer survivor who shared her inspiring journey, bridging the experiences of living with HIV and the challenges of breast cancer. Her story resonated with attendees, providing insight into the emotional and physical struggles faced by many.

Health professionals led informative sessions on the importance of routine check-ups and self-examinations, encouraging participant engagement and discussion. Despite the emotional weight of the topics, attendees left feeling empowered and better informed.



08080441

In this issue...



Breaking Barriers: How CHA Transformed Access to HIV Treatment at Raffingora Rural Hospital

In this issue...



Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy During COVID-19: The Role of ZNNP+

In this issue...



Empowering Communities Through Male Involvement and EMTCT

ZNNP+'s commitment to raising awareness about breast cancer reflects its holistic approach to health, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various health issues. By championing such initiatives, ZNNP+ not only supports individuals living with HIV but also contributes to the broader fight against breast cancer.

Overall, the event highlighted the importance of solidarity, education, and empowerment in addressing health challenges, reinforcing ZNNP+'s mission to advocate for the well-being of all individuals.

Breaking Barriers: How Community Health Advocates Transformed Access to HIV Treatment at Raffingora Rural Hospital



Tarirai Chindiko a Community Health Agent for Raffingora Rural Hospital in Mash West

At Raffingora Rural Hospital, a \$1 development fee per visit was introduced to support operations, but it inadvertently hindered access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) for many patients, particularly those with opportunistic infections. This led to treatment interruptions and increased defaults, as many patients could not afford the fee and chose to delay their hospital visits.

To address this issue, Community Health Advocates (CHA) intervened and found that the fee was a significant barrier for clients. They collaborated with the hospital's facility committee and advocated for the implementation of Community Antiretroviral Groups (CARGs) as a differentiated service delivery model. This approach allowed

patients to collect a six-month supply of ART while promoting community involvement and reducing financial burdens.

The introduction of CARGs significantly improved access to treatment, as recipients of care who had previously defaulted returned to care without the immediate pressure of the fee. This initiative not only decreased the number of defaulters but also maintained the hospital's development plans. CHA continues to seek additional funding strategies that ensure access to care for all individuals living with HIV.

This story illustrates the impact of advocacy and community engagement in healthcare, demonstrating how innovative service delivery models can enhance health outcomes and accessibility.

Empowering Communities Through Male Involvement in EMTCT

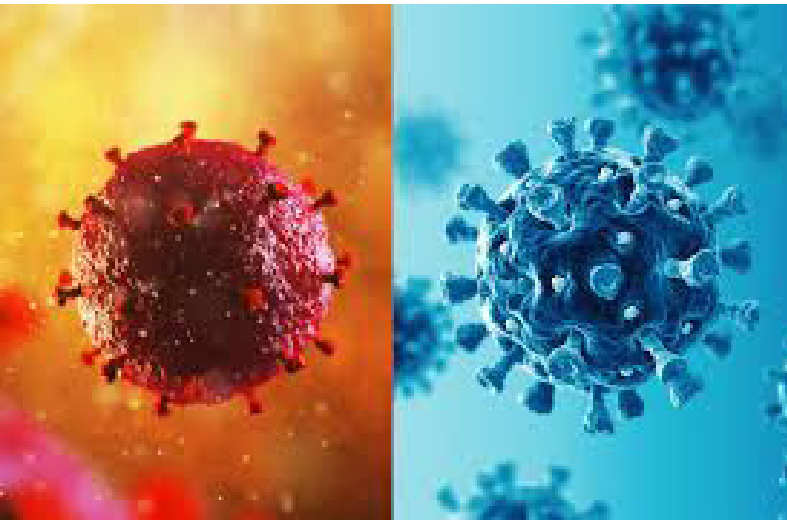


In Kwekwe, Zimbabwe, a program by the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) and ViV Healthcare is advancing efforts against HIV/AIDS. The initiative, "Community Systems Strengthening to Find, Link and Retain Children and Young Adolescents Living with HIV," engages community health workers like Mentor Mothers and CHASAs.

A key success story involves a couple, Joe and Kay, who were referred by Courage, a local yCHASA, for HIV testing and antenatal care. After both tested HIV positive, Courage provided essential counseling and support, highlighting that HIV can be managed with Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). He ensured Kay received proper prenatal care, reassuring her that she could have an HIV-negative baby.

Their commitment and Courage's support led to the birth of a healthy, HIV-negative baby boy, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Early Mother-to-Child Transmission (EMTCT) program. Their experience underscores the importance of male involvement and open communication in antenatal care.

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy During COVID-19: The role of ZNNP+



However, ZNNP+ was able to dispel these myths and share accurate information regarding vaccinations. This is important for preparing individuals for future pandemics, where vaccinations will be administered by healthcare workers. The Kutabila platform call centre will continue to be widely advertised to address the information gap regarding vaccinations in the targeted communities beyond the project's lifespan.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ZNNP+ engaged with communities to promote awareness and access to COVID-19 vaccines, particularly among people living with HIV (PLHIV), pregnant, and lactating women. They faced challenges, including widespread misinformation that led to vaccine hesitancy and lower vaccination rates.

As part of the RISE Vaccine Delivery Project in collaboration with OPHID and JF Kapnek, ZNNP+ focused on understanding the reasons behind vaccine hesitancy and disseminating accurate information. They conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gather community insights and inform future vaccination strategies. Additionally, ZNNP+ offered accurate vaccination information through the Kutabila Platform Call Centre to counter misinformation. The findings from FGDs were shared across 15 districts, including Chitungwiza, Bulawayo, and Masvingo, to enhance community engagement and improve planning for future public health initiatives.

As part of its sustainability plan for the project, ZNNP+ utilized its Kutabila Virtual Platform Call Centre to disseminate accurate information about vaccinations. In September 2024, a total of 90 calls were received from 15 districts, comprising 47 calls from Matabeleland South, 16 from Bulawayo, 18 from Chitungwiza, and 9 from Masvingo. Most of the callers were people living with HIV (PLHIV) who expressed concerns about vaccinations. Upon further probing, the callers indicated that their primary source of information was social media, which often spread misinformation and rumors about vaccinations, leading to vaccine hesitancy.

Insights from the FGDS

“From Hesitance to Advocacy: Filina Dube’s Journey to Embrace the COVID-19 Vaccine”

Filina Dube, a 57-year-old from Gandavagwa Village in Insiza District, initially struggled with accepting the Covid-19 vaccine due to misinformation and negative perceptions about its safety. In August 2024, she participated in a focus group discussion as part of the USAID-supported COVID-19 RISE Project, which aimed to understand vaccine perceptions and improve emergency vaccination delivery, particularly for People Living with HIV.

Filina expressed her initial hesitance, citing fears that the vaccines were unsafe and harmful. However, through community awareness campaigns, she gained a better understanding of the vaccine's benefits and ultimately became an advocate for vaccination in her village. After getting vaccinated herself, she successfully encouraged others to do the same, emphasizing that people living with HIV can be vaccinated safely. Her experience highlights the positive impact of the Covid-19 vaccine delivery project in her community.

ZNNP+ Successfully Concludes National Meeting on HIV Stigma and Discrimination in Zimbabwe



Attendees during the HIV stigma and discrimination validation workshop

The Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) recently hosted the National Mapping of HIV Stigma and Discrimination validation meeting, an event that focused on sharing important findings related to stigma and discrimination programming across the nation.

The meeting brought together a diverse group of stakeholders who engaged in discussions aimed at co-creating actionable recommendations for strengthening HIV stigma reduction efforts in Zimbabwe. Participants shared their insights and experiences, contributing to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals living with HIV in their communities.

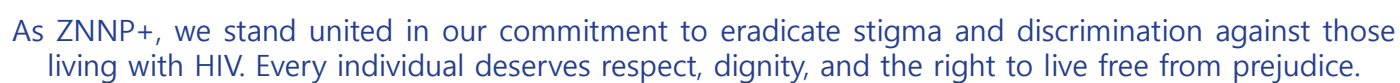
"This validation meeting was a vital step toward addressing the complexities of stigma and discrimination," said a representative from ZNNP+. "Through collaboration, we developed strategies that empower individuals and support their rights."

In addition to the discussions, the meeting includ-

ed a mapping of deliverables, ensuring that all stakeholders had the opportunity to contribute to a comprehensive strategy tackling the multifaceted issues surrounding stigma and discrimination. This collaborative approach highlighted the importance of community involvement in shaping effective responses to HIV-related challenges.

The insights gained from the meeting are expected to inform future programming and foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals living with HIV in Zimbabwe.







ZNNP+ staff



ZNNP+ staff PLHIV and Representatives

Pink Friday

Breast Cancer Awareness month and activities.

In a bid to raise awareness on Breast Cancer this year ZNNP+ was not left behind. A wellness check in day was held at the National office with colleagues coming to the office dressed in pink. We had Breast cancer survivor coming among people living with HIV to share their experiences with the team. It was a taxing but empowering event as ZNNP+ did its part in raising awareness on breast cancer.





NAC 2024 HIV RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Oral Presentation

Understanding Community-Led Monitoring for Increased Community Engagement in Differentiated Service Delivery Decision Making and Programming in Zimbabwe



22 October 2024



8am to 4pm



Rainbow Towers Hotel Harare

For More Information Call
Us On Our Kutabila Tollfree

08080441



Poster No 63

Understanding Community-Led Monitoring for Increased Community Engagement in Differentiated Service Delivery Decision Making and Programming in Zimbabwe

Mukuwapasi, Waraidzo; Makoni, Tatenda; Mademutsa, Clarence; Nhapi, Abigail; Munemo Ngonidzashe

The NAC Award winning poster

The ZNNP+ Poster was voted as the Best Poster at the NAC 2024 HIV Research Symposium ZNNP

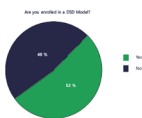
Introduction



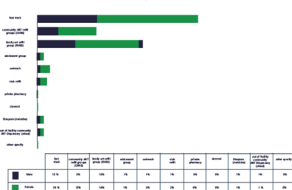
Community-led monitoring (CLM) is a powerful tool empowering communities to evaluate service quality and enhance service delivery and accountability. Zimbabwe faces challenges in utilizing CLM to boost community engagement in Differentiated Service Delivery (DSD) decision making and programming. These challenges include limited resources, inadequate participation, insufficient government support, communication gaps, coordination difficulties, and trust deficits.

Results

The CHASAs reached 100 225 PLHIV through the training of CG. 48% of 196 225 HIV positive clients registered in the ZNNP+ database are enrolled in DSD models. CLM holds promise to enhance community engagement in DSD decision making and programming. 1 200 community leaders were engaged through the CG trainings. Effective CLM demands community empowerment through training and resources. Cultural and social barriers can hinder participation, necessitating engagement with community gatekeepers and context-specific monitoring. Building trust hinges on transparent communication, regular feedback, and mutual respect. Advocating for government support is vital to sustain CLM initiatives.



DSD Models



Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on ZNNP+'s experience, recommendations include capacity building, addressing cultural barriers, fostering communication, trust, and advocating for government support. These steps aim to improve community engagement in DSD decision-making and programming through effective CLM, enhancing DSD uptake and accountability. By providing training, engaging marginalized groups, promoting communication, trust-building, and advocating for government support, CLM strengthens DSD and service delivery in Zimbabwe.

Methods

To tackle these multifaceted challenges, the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) engaged communities and stakeholders through collaborative and participatory efforts. This included extensive training in 15 districts across Matabeleland South, Masvingo, Bulawayo, and Harare provinces. A key resource was the Comprehensive Guide (CG), aiding service delivery monitoring and enabling communities to evaluate DSDs while nurturing trust between communities and service providers. In partnership with the Organization for Public Health Interventions and Development (OPHID) and with funding from USAID to capacitate 315 Community HIV and AIDS Support Agents (CHASAs), CHASAs played a pivotal role in boosting community engagement in DSD decision-making and programming by participating in community level meetings, providing feedback, and ensuring DSD utilization.



Waraidzo Mukuwapasi
Strategic Information & Evaluation Officer



2024

Candlelight Memorial

**Together We Remember, Together We
Heal, Through Love and Solidarity**

Every year, on the 30th of November, the AIDS Candlelight Memorial provides an opportunity to remember the people we have lost, but also to honor those who dedicated their lives to helping people living with and affected by HIV. This event continues to mobilize our communities in solidarity with those living with HIV.

This year, the Candlelight Memorial will be held under the theme, "Together We Remember, Together We Heal, Through Love and Solidarity!" It will take place in Rusape at Vengere Hall.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to our valued donors, partners, and stakeholders for their unwavering support and trust. Your confidence in ZNNP+ has been instrumental in turning our shared vision into reality. Together, we are making a meaningful impact in the communities we serve, and we deeply appreciate your commitment to our mission.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey.



Zimbabwe National Network of People living with HIV (ZNNP+)
28 Divine Road, Milton Park, Harare Zimbabwe
Tel+263-242-257310, +263(0)774151276, Kutabila Tollfree: 08080441
email: info@znnp.org website: www.znnp.org