

# Supporting Zambia's non state development actors

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This newsletter introduces ways to boost the capacity of the non state actors that support people living with HIV/AIDS in Zambia. The techniques mentioned are supported by Practical Action, DAPP and HODI in Kabwe, Mkushi and Kapiri Mposhi.

## 1. The role of non-state actors in Zambia

In Zambia, HIV/AIDS has been declared an emergency by the government because of the impact on families, communities and the nation at large. There is no aspect of life that has not directly or indirectly been affected by the epidemic. The government tackles national issues through prevention, care and treatment, as well impact mitigation, and the country is lucky to enough to receive committed support from a number of regional and international agencies.

Zambia is also blessed by numerous, and hardworking organisations that provide the frontline support for people living with HIV. When a person tests positive, they are encouraged by the nurse to join a local Support Group, many of whom are affiliated to the Network of Zambian People Living With HIV/AIDS (NZP+). This is their first port of call for support, and other community based organizations provide social safety nets through home based care activities.

Many of these organisations are small and lack funding and capacities, which limits their ability to respond to the needs and priorities of PLHIV. But they have a commitment to the people in their local areas that goes beyond what the government and donors can realistically offer. When running effectively, non-state actors compliment the government and donor efforts across the country.

The articles in this newsletter demonstrate ways in which these non-state actors can be strengthened to provide better care and development support for PLHIV.

## 2. Training for Transformation

One of the most important actions for building the capacity of people living with HIV and their support groups is Training for Transformation. Changing the mindset of communities to take



Support Group members training for transformation in Kabwe

charge of their own development, it helps to install ownership and accountability, and ultimately ensure the sustainability of livelihoods improvement and health interventions.

### The principles of Training for Transformation

- Allow people to identify relevant strategies to liberate themselves out of poverty
- Everyone knows something that s/he can contribute
- All are equal, but with different talents
- Does not teach but engages people in dialogue
- Demands that groups develop their own visions

Core facilitation teams have been set up in Kapiri Mposhi, Kabwe, and Mkushi, and the Support Groups have been trained in leadership skills, action planning, and participatory monitoring and evaluation. These have since been passed down to the community level by the Support Group members.

*"TfT has helped a lot our family, Support Group and church. I take advantage of different platforms to talk about TfT principles, including at the market where I have a business."*

*Mrs. Simushi, Living Proof Support Group*

### 3. Referral Networks

Referral Networks are groups of organizations and institutions providing services related to HIV and AIDS for people in Zambia. They cover prevention, care, treatment and support, and mitigation of the impact on people's lives. If an organisation diagnoses someone as HIV positive, they will refer the person to a health service provider for assistance on services they cannot provide.

These organisations are linked together through a constitution and the use of uniform referral tools, helping to ensure services are complimentary and making information about support much more accessible. This encourages effective use of resources through sharing, reduces duplication of activities, and enables effective client tracking for adherence.

The Kabwe Referral Network was one of the first. It was set up in 2005 and has been an inspirational model for other networks in the country. However, for sometime, the network has faced numerous challenges that have impacted negatively on its functions. In response, the project helped revive the Referral Network to its former level.

Once regular meetings were reinstated, the members of the network were encouraged to list the factors that prevented it from operating efficiently. Funding, difficulties, data management, and lack of planning were some of the problems identified. The network was supported in coming up with an action plan based on its original objectives and the members' vision for the future. Training was given to members on monitoring and evaluation skills so that the network can assess its performance and improve on failure, rather than let its standards gradually degenerate.

The Network still needs to attract further funding in order to operate effectively, but now a shared vision and action plan are in place, clarity has been restored within the group and they will address the factors that have held them back.



*The Kabwe referral network sets out its action plan*

### 4. Empowering PLHIV through Community Juries

For PLHIV in Zambia, participation in decision making on issues related to their support and treatment, as well as on the factors relevant to their development, has been very minimal. Most interventions target their perceived needs and priorities. The use of Community Juries (Insakas) in Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi and Mkushi has provided platforms for PLHIV to openly discuss these matters with the government, Civil Society Organisations, and other support providers, thereby making service delivery more relevant.

Many debates focussed on the National AIDS Strategic Framework (NASF) which is geared towards enhancing the support vulnerable households and individuals receive. At the end of the juries, social contracts in the form of public commitments were developed between service providers and PLHIV. Service providers are now working to addressing the concerns raised and will give feedback in the upcoming juries.

All communities emphasised the need to consistently convene the juries to develop the relationships between all the actors. To this end, the next Community Juries will take place in same three districts in January 2012 and more in the future.

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**For more information on any of the activities or the project, please contact:**  
**[Alex.Nyakatsapa@practicalactionzw.org](mailto:Alex.Nyakatsapa@practicalactionzw.org) or visit [www.practicalaction.org](http://www.practicalaction.org)**

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