

Disability, HIV and AIDS Trust (DHAT)

Malawi Chapter 2007 – 2008 Annual Briefing Report

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1.0 Introduction

The Disability HIV and AIODS Trust (DHAT) is a regional body that seeks to create an inclusive society with full realization for the rights and welfare of People with Disabilities. With its headquarters in Mogoditshane – Botswana, DHAT has so far opened Country Programme Offices (chapters) in Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In the Malawian chapter of DHAT, so far strides have been undertaken in the areas of stakeholder identification and networking, registration and affiliation to local NGO networks at country level.

This report is a briefing document of the processes so far undertaken since the inception of the chapter in June 2007 up to June 2008. It will provide some brief insights on the first DHAT National Stakeholders' Conference for Malawi, Networking with local partners, the registration and affiliation process, the achievements and challenges.

2.0 History

The DHAT Malawi Chapter was conceived when the Executive Director for DHAT and the Advocacy and Programme Manager visited Malawi and held a week long stakeholders' conference which was held at the Capital City Motel in Lilongwe. The participants were drawn from the following institutions:

1. The Ministry for People with Disabilities and the Elderly;
2. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Special Needs Education Department);
3. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (Social Welfare Department);
4. The Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA);
5. The Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB);
6. The Malawi Disability Sports Association (MADISA);
7. The Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD);
8. The Albino Association of Malawi (AAM);
9. The Southern African AIDS Trust (SAT);
10. The National AIDS Commission (NAC);
11. The Salima AIDS Support Organization (SASO); and
12. The Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA).

At the end of the conference the following lessons were drawn:

1. There is great need for a capacity building entity to help in the capacity building for DPOs in Malawi in programming and financial management in general.
2. There is *Limited access to social, economic and other opportunities by people with disabilities*: Due to their respective physical, sensory, social, intellectual and emotional functional limitations, people with disabilities are limited in day-to-day activities and participation. Society has beliefs and myths that stigmatize disability and the environments in which people with disabilities live do not have adequate provisions that facilitate specific needs of the PWD. As a result, most PWD are excluded from accessing opportunities for education, health, employment, economic ventures, etc, and are therefore less empowered compared to people without disabilities.

3. *Vulnerability*: The limitations noted above subject disabled people to privation and deprivation in many aspects. As a result of limited access to opportunities, most disabled people in the region are among the most socio-economically needy and therefore highly vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.
4. *Lack/inadequate access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care, support and mitigation services*: Programmes and services are designed, planned and implemented in the context of the non-disabled. Disability sensitive and friendly services are inadequate or non-existent. In other words, most prevention, treatment, care, support and mitigations services are not accessible to people with disabilities. For example, facilities lack provisions such as elevators, ramps and wide doors to facilitate access for the physically handicapped; Braille translation for the blind; service providers who are able to communicate in sign language to serve the deaf. Policies that promote disability friendly provisions do

It was resolved in conclusion that DHAT should be registered in Malawi to contribute toward the covering of these gaps.

3.0 DHAT Malawi Registration and Affiliation

Having resolved as above, the DHAT National Focal Point, Mr. James Jeffrey Songolo Kalimbuka took up the task of developing the constitution for the DHAT Malawi. In consultation with the ED and the PM, a constitution was developed and the registration was finally handled by the Senior State Advocate 2, Mr. Steve Kayuni of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Headquarters in Lilongwe.

The first attempt was done in November 2007 but the documents were reported missing in the Ministry in December 2007. The second and successful attempt was in January when the Minister of Justice finally signed the certificate on 27th February 2008. DHAT was registered under the Trustees Incorporation ACT (Chapter 5:01 of the Laws of Malawi) as “The Registered Trustees of the Disability HIV and AIDS Trust”. Certified true copies of the registration documents were made and submitted to DHAT headquarters in April 2008.

So far DHAT Malawi has applied for accreditation to operate as an NGO in Malawi. After this an shall be made to the Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA), which is a regulating body for NGOs in Malawi seeking affiliation and certification to operate.

So far there is need to raise MWK 2, 000.00 (USD 15.00) for the processing fees and USD 300.00 for the registration as an international NGO. This is a total of USD 315.00 only.

4.0 Stakeholder Identification

In the stakeholder identification drive, so DHAT Malawi has catalogued the following institutions to work with initially:

1. The Ministry for People with Disabilities and the Elderly;
2. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Special Needs Education Department);
3. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (Social Welfare Department);

4. The Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA);
5. The Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB);
6. The Malawi Disability Sports Association (MADISA);
7. The Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD);
8. The Malawi Human Rights Youth Network;
9. The Albino Association of Malawi (AAM);
10. The Southern African AIDS Trust (SAT);
11. The National AIDS Commission (NAC);
12. The Salima AIDS Support Organization (SASO);
13. The Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA);
14. The National Technical Working Group on Child Protection;
15. Unicef;
16. Plan International;
17. EveryChild Malawi;
18. Human Rights Consultative Committee; and
19. Parents of Disabled Children in Malawi.

So far what is remaining is to develop Memoranda of Understanding to have formalized partnerships with these institutions.

5.0 Achievements

1. So far DHAT Malawi has won the trust of the above mentioned institutions and others. They have all recognized DHAT as a unique institution that has to deal with two extremes of vulnerability – thus Disability and HIV/AIDS.
2. DHAT has been legally registered in Malawi and it has a legal entity so far.
3. It has the recognition and acceptance of other service providers, implementers and resource providers at both the local and levels.

6.0 Challenges and Recommendations

1. Limited financial support from the regional office to set things and get started as the chapter is reported to have no specific funding under the current funding arrangement.

It is hereby recommended that there be set aside the affiliation fees to get affiliated. This will open the chapter for in dependent resource mobilization both at local and international levels.