

Challenges of Disability in HIV/AIDS Response in Zambia

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Abstract

This study was primarily carried out in order to assess the participation of people with disabilities in HIV and AIDS interventions and policy formulations and to identify barriers that limit the participation of people with disabilities in HIV and AIDS interventions.

Therefore, the purpose of the survey was to collect relevant and reliable information that underpins assertions of exclusion of people with disabilities in HIV/AIDS interventions and policy formulation and to examine the vulnerability of people with disabilities to HIV and AIDS.

Estimates of disability and the various disability groups were derived from pre-existing national demographic data collected by the central statistical office. Other socio-demographic data were compiled and analysed from local disabled people's organisations survey data. These data sets were however collected in different years.

A tool with structured questions was used in the broad based interviews and focus discussion groups to gather information from people with disabilities and disabled peoples organizations. For organizations and individuals other than PWDS and DPOs, relevant questions specific to relevance of the stakeholder were adopted. The scope of consultations ranged from disability individuals and groups to AIDS service providers and policy makers.

The results of the survey reveal the following: The study shows that 2.7% of the population in Zambia is disabled. In contrast to the general mainstream population illiteracy is vividly higher among people with disabilities. PWDS are extremely vulnerable to HIV and AIDS because of activity limitations. There are no available disability specific HIV and AIDS interventions and statistics showing the demography of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, people with disabilities are excluded from the IEC materials and other underlying interventions