



Disability, HIV and AIDS Trust

Creating an Inclusive Society

Hwange Workshop Report

HIV and AIDS Resource Center

20th -21st August 2012

Hwange Colliery

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1. Introduction

Hwange Urban Arts Association in partnership with Disability, HIV and AIDS Trust held a two day workshop, targeting persons with disabilities, especially those in the arts industry and those with potential to venture into the field of Arts. The workshop took place at the Hwange Colliery HIV and AIDS Resource Center on 20th and 21st August 2012. The purpose was to impart HIV and AIDS knowledge and information to persons with disabilities and creating a platform for them to identify gaps in the HIV and AIDS service delivery system.

Hwange is an old mining town, situated between Cross Date and Victoria Falls. It is home to thousands of people seeking employment with the mines. The vulnerability of young people with disabilities reflect in the absence of specialized education and lack of access to skills in communication and negotiation especially for girls.

Most people earn their living by actively participating in mining activities. This exposes Persons with Disabilities to poverty and to the risk of being vulnerable to HIV infection. It is so because they cannot qualify for such activities which require physical strength. So Persons with Disabilities do not have any means of employment. Due to this, the non-disabled sexually take advantage of them.

1.1 Welcome Remarks

Petros Ndlovu from the Hwange Urban Arts Association welcomed the participants and encouraged everyone to actively participate in HIV and AIDS awareness workshop: for Persons with Disabilities. He also introduced guests and facilitators.

2. Workshop Goals and Objectives

2.1 Workshop Goal

The goal of the workshop was to explore ways of reducing the vulnerability of Persons with Disabilities to the impact of HIV and AIDS.

2.2 Workshop Objectives

- To impart HIV and AIDS knowledge and information to Persons with Disabilities
- To identify challenges faced with PWDs in accessing HIV and AIDS services
- To create a platform for Persons with Disabilities to share their experiences and knowledge of HIV and AIDS
- To encourage Persons with Disabilities to showcase their capabilities and talents

3. Workshop Presentations

3.1 Testimonies

Participants were very happy about the workshop. They said that it was their first time to participate in such a workshop. Persons with Disabilities showed that they have limited knowledge of HIV and AIDS. One of the participants explained that myths and misconceptions on disability expose persons with disabilities to the risk of being vulnerable to HIV infection. When she went for HIV tests, the person who attended her asked why she had troubled herself to come for the test, since she was hearing impaired

The person at the clinic told her to go back by simply shaking her head and hands as a sign to let her out of the room, since there was no one who could communicate with her

Another hearing impaired lady said that she was abused by the person at the VCT when she went with her five year old daughter. The person at the VCT was very annoyed because she had brought a little child with her. But that was the only aid she could get at that particular time. Thus, communication is a great barrier for the hearing impaired persons to access health services in general and HIV and AIDS services in particular.

For those with physical disabilities, one of the challenges is mobility. The distance to the hospital is too long. So they find it very difficult to go to the hospital. Most of them also require wheelchairs.

3.2 Relationship between TB and HIV

The Health officer for Hwange Colliery Hospital, Mr. M Shonai, presented on the relationship between TB and HIV. He advised the participants to go for tests on HIV and TB.

The participants showed that they were willing to go for HIV and TB test. However, the hearing impaired, were concerned about the challenges faced in communication and the general attitudes of the health workers on Persons with Disabilities.

3.3 ART and Buddy Programme on Positive living

The presenter Mss L Mguni asked the participants about their understanding of ART and Buddy programme on positive Living. The participants expressed ignorance about the programme. After having been briefed about the programme, the participants showed that it was a good idea. However, persons with disabilities have a challenge to get a buddy who is non-disabled. This is due to the misunderstanding and the general attitude of the society on persons with disabilities.

The participants then suggested that persons with disabilities should have buddies who are also persons with disabilities. However, there is need to sensitize the public on issues of disability. This will enable the public to appreciate and recognize persons with disabilities and have buddies who are disabled.

4. Meetings held with other stakeholders

We held a meeting with Mss C Gonamombe, the Probation Officer from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services. This meeting was meant to introduce DHAT to the department of Social Welfare by the Hwange Urban Arts Association because it is already registered with the department. It was also explained to the department representative that DHAT and Hwange Urban Arts Association are working as partners

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The Arts Association was also encouraged to submit their monthly reports to the department, including the activities that will be taking place in DHAT-Hwange Urban Arts Association partnership. The Probation Officer expressed willingness to work with the two organisations.

The meeting that was held with the District AIDS Coordinator, Mss Mumba was also fruitful since it was agreed that the AIDS coordinating committee should also be representative of persons with disabilities. The committee of persons with disabilities that was set after the workshop was tasked to choose the chairperson of the committee to sit on the AIDS coordinating committee. This would ensure that issues of persons with disabilities are taken up to the national offices through the provincial offices. Mss Mumba also explained that DACC has the resources for the travel expenses for people who attend these meetings in Victoria Falls. She went on to say that the workshop was an eye-opener for her and most of the organisations that deal with HIV and AIDS issues are ignorant of such issues that she got from the workshop that she attended hosted by Hwange Urban Arts Association in partnership with DHAT.

The Hwange Health Officer, Mr. M Shonai was also supportive of the programme. He said that he will forward all the requests made on the issue of the transport challenges that persons with disabilities face when going to the hospital. He also advised persons with disabilities to organize themselves and channel their requests through their committee. Mr. Shonai explained that the Colliery is very supportive of the programme and has shown this by offering the venue for holding the workshop.

The two councilors that we met showed their support of the programme by committing themselves to offer the land to persons with disabilities if they would want to carry out an income generating project. One of the councilors has a child with a disability, hence he was very happy that there are organisations that are committed to work with persons with disabilities who are most marginalized in the society. Mr. R Ndlovu, Councillor for Ward 11, said that most organisations that come to seek permission to work in their area never come back for some feedback or even during the implementation period, the councilors are never invited. However, DHAT explained that it is going to ensure that the project will be community owned. Community leaders and councilors will be actively involved in the implementation of the programme to ensure sustainability after the end of the programme. These stakeholders will also help in publicizing the project.

5. Discussion and way forward

The participants requested DHAT to support and promote disability and HIV and AIDS awareness programmes in Hwange. The DHAT representatives said that DHAT is ready to work towards raising awareness and having income generating projects for persons with disabilities in Hwange.

It was agreed that people should meet every month to review progress on the issues raised from the workshop. These meetings will also assist to discuss HIV and AIDS issues. These issues include;

- a) The need to have more workshops, targeting persons with disabilities in order to equip them with information on HIV and AIDS
- b) Mobilization of resources to purchase hearing aids for the hard of hearing. A request was made that DHAT could mobilize resources
- c) The workshop proposed that follow up meetings should be held once a month at the HIV and AIDS Resource Center in Hwange
- d) Establishment of a committee of Persons with Disabilities that will be responsible for taking up issues affecting persons with disabilities to the relevant authorities
- e) An individual with a disability should be chosen to represent persons with disabilities on the District AIDS Coordinating Committee [DACC]
- f) The workshop agreed that income generating projects will enable them to be self reliant. The participants emphasized a lot on the issue of Income Generating Activities. Mobilization of financial resources to start income generating initiatives. The proposed projects are Craft Shop, Soap making and Poultry in Victoria Falls. Others are brick molding, poultry and peanut butter making in Hwange