

New Psycho-Social Caregiver Training Program Improves Quality of Care for Vulnerable Families



Community-based caregivers who work with orphans and other vulnerable populations in and around the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa gained much-needed case management, counseling, and psycho-social support skills at a workshop conducted in August by Twinning Center partners at Addis Ababa University School of Social Work and their US counterparts from Jane Addams College of Social Work and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois-Chicago.



With funding from PEPFAR through CDC/Ethiopia, this pilot in-service training — titled “Introduction to Applying Social Work Skills to Psycho-social Needs of People Infected and Affected by HIV” — armed caregivers who work with vulnerable children and families at the grassroots level with critical information on how to better assist people in need.

The pilot training featured presentations, case studies, and small group exercises designed to arm participants, all of whom currently work directly with vulnerable children and families, with key social work skills that will help them provide effective community-based support.

Participants learned about topics ranging from HIV disease and current trends in Ethiopia and how to identify HIV-affected groups within the community to the psycho-social support needs of people living with the virus and their families and how to mitigate HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

Other topics covered during the 12-day workshop included prevention of mother-to-child transmission, providing support to improve adherence to treatment, effective education and outreach techniques, case management, and how to link clients to existing services and support programs.

Explaining how their feedback would be reviewed carefully to help direct changes and additions to course content to ensure training is in keeping with the needs of caregivers who work with vulnerable populations within their communities on a daily basis, Dr. Tasse Abye, Dean of Addis Ababa University School of Social Work told participants, “Not everyone who works on a daily basis with people made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS has the opportunity to attend trainings. It is your responsibility to take what you learn here and share it with your co-workers. In that way, these efforts will multiply,” and more and more people will have access to the care and support they need.

Partners are now in the process of fine-tuning the training curriculum and related materials and will be move forward with additional workshops in the coming months.

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