

## HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Projects in Tanzania

### Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children

The Tanzania Institute of Social Work (ISW) is partnering with Jane Addams College of Social Work (JACSW) and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago to strengthen ISW's pre-and in-service social work training programs.

Partners are working to address Tanzania's immediate and long-term needs for trained social workers who can provide care and support to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Specific objectives include strengthening the role of social workers as case managers and increasing the capacity of community volunteers to access resources for improving care for OVCs.

To this end, the partnership is building ISW's capacity to deliver high quality pre- and in-service social work education, particularly in the areas of HIV/AIDS and OVC care through curriculum development; joint teaching curriculum; enhanced student fieldwork placement and supervision; exchange of educational materials and training resources; faculty development for teaching and targeted evaluation; and the development and institutionalization of an in-service certificate program for para-professional case managers to serve the needs of OVC. Partners are also helping strengthen the capacity of the Tanzania Social Work Association to serve as an advocacy body for social workers.

As of May 2009, partners have trained more than 700 para-social workers and 75 district social workers from Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Iringa, Lindi, Mbeya, Morogoro, and Mtwara. These community workers provide care and support to orphans and vulnerable children and families by linking them to much-needed assistance. Partners also trained 40 master trainers in the para-social work curriculum, thus bolstering sustainable local capacity, and 75 para-social worker supervisors are now in place at the municipal level.

### Pre-Service HIV/AIDS Training for Nurses

Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences and the University of California at San Francisco School of Nursing are collaborating to strengthen the capacity of Tanzania's 62 nursing schools to equip students with

### Tanzania Country Overview



The largest country in East Africa, Tanzania has an estimated HIV prevalence rate of 6.2 percent among adults aged 15 - 49. Among the 1.4 million people living with HIV on Tanzania's mainland, 70.5 percent are 25 - 49 years old and 15 percent are 15 - 24 years; 60 percent of all new infections occur among this age group with young women being at a slightly elevated risk compared to their male contemporaries. Other populations at high risk include commercial sex workers, miners, transport workers, police and military personnel, and incarcerated people. In recent years, increased HIV prevalence rates have been noted in older populations. Injecting drug use is also on the rise, underscoring the need for effective prevention, treatment, and retention programs targeting this high risk population.

With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the US government team in country, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center currently manages five partnerships and a Volunteer Healthcare Corps initiative in Tanzania.

In 2006, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center opened an office in Dar es Salaam to provide programmatic and logistical support to partners and volunteers. Staff also work closely with local government agencies and the US Government team to identify and facilitate needs-driven partnerships and volunteer placements.

the knowledge and skills they need to provide quality



**Nursing school tutors trained through the THANE Project are now teaching nursing students such as these at Weill Bugando University College of Health Sciences in Mwanza using the new HIV/AIDS curriculum.**

HIV/AIDS services, as well the life skills they need to safeguard their own health and wellbeing by practicing safer sexual behaviors.

Partners developed and are implementing the Tanzania HIV/AIDS Nursing Education (THANE) Project, a comprehensive training package with a training-of-trainers component that integrates HIV/AIDS care and life skills content into pre-service curricula at nursing schools throughout Tanzania. The THANE Project is helping to ensure that graduating nurses are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to provide high quality healthcare services to people living with HIV or AIDS.

Partners also assisted the Nursing Unit of Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to develop new curricula for certificate and diploma programs under the government's Primary Health Services Development Program. This program is designed to increase the country's healthcare workforce by — among other things — shortening the duration of pre-service education for selected professions, including nursing. To this end, partners conducted a five-week curricula development workshop in late 2007 for some 25 nursing tutors and experts to ensure relevant HIV/AIDS content was incorporated into the new curricula.

To date, partners have conducted 14 zonal training-of-trainers workshops, resulting in 352 nurse tutors being trained to deliver the THANE resource tools. Based on pre- and post-test analysis, participants increased their knowledge of HIV/AIDS subject matter by nearly 20 percent and also reported a significant increase in

confidence in their ability to teach the new HIV/AIDS content. In addition, 18 master trainers trained through the project helped facilitate zonal training workshops thus sharpening their subject matter knowledge and teaching skills.

In May 2009, partners began conducting orientation workshops designed to improve the quality of nursing education by bolstering nurse tutors' understanding of THANE content and better ensure its integration into certificate and diploma programs in nursing. Initially, orientations will be held in three zones, training a cohort of 100 nurse tutors before being rolled out nationwide.

They are also helping to ensure the revised curricula and related materials — including the THANE resource tools — are being utilized in all of the country's nursing schools and that national nursing examinations reflect the HIV/AIDS content. In addition, the partners plan to conduct site visits to each nursing school to observe training courses and evaluate how the HIV/AIDS content has been integrated into various aspects of nurse education, as well as evaluate the quality of instruction. During these visits, students will be interviewed to gauge their individual perceptions and thoughts on HIV/AIDS, along with how they are utilizing the life skills taught through the THANE resource tools.

Partners are also working with the Tanzania Nurses and Midwives Council and the National Nurses Association to help strengthen leadership in advocacy and quality assurance for nurses. To this end, they plan to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment in fall 2009.

Ongoing activities include refining the nurse training curriculum and increasing its availability to all relevant nurse training schools; finalizing the THANE resource tools; providing International Council of Nurses mobile libraries to three schools of nursing that have been identified as having limited resources; and developing a comprehensive impact evaluation plan that encompasses the partnership's three major areas of focus:

- HIV/AIDS Education,
- Resource Support, and
- Revision and Dissemination of Nursing Curricula.

### **Building HIV/AIDS Laboratory Capacity**

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Tanzania is partnering with Boulder (Colorado) Community Hospital to build much-needed human resource capacity at the country's regional laboratories. Medical labs in Tanzania are faced with a severe shortage of qualified



The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance funded by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration.

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**Lynn Maedel of the Colorado Association of Continuing Medical Laboratory Education reviews new med-tech resources with the Tanzanian partners during a professional exchange.**

staff capable of supporting care and treatment services.

Partners continue to conduct targeted training and technical assistance activities at regional labs as a way to strengthen related capacity to provide high quality HIV diagnostic and disease management laboratory services throughout the country.

Specifically, partners are providing onsite training and mentoring for laboratory staff, as well as other pre- and in-service professional development opportunities. They are also working to strengthen the capacity of MELSAT, Tanzania's Medical Laboratory Association.

Partners have already completed assessments of 10 regional laboratories and, as of May 2009, nine laboratory mentors have been placed in regional labs to help fast-track technical assistance and support; an additional eight are expected to be placed in July 2009.

### **Strengthening HIV/AIDS Palliative Care**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is partnering with the Southeast Iowa Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Iowa Sister States, and Iowa Health Des Moines to strengthen palliative care capacity in Tanzania's Pare Diocese. Partners are training both medical and non-medical workers, including community volunteers to provide high quality care and support to people living with HIV with the goal of improving clinic and home based palliative care.

Launched in 2007, the partnership helped train some



**Participants in a November 2007 palliative care training conducted by partners in Tanzania.**

200 clinical and church leaders in the concepts and practices of palliative care using the African Palliative Care Association's curriculum during its first year.

In 2008, partners selected six pilot sites where each local health facility chose 10 Community Workers and a Sustaining Trainer for targeted training and development. Tanzanian faculty trained these six Sustaining Trainers and 60 Community Workers in a two-week course on home-based care palliative care. Since then, more 500 patients have been visited in their homes by these Community Workers, who provide comfort and supportive care to patients and their families.

Future activities include increasing the number of sites and developing mentoring and distance learning programs for the Sustaining Trainers and Community Workers.

### **Preventing HIV/AIDS and Substance Abuse in Zanzibar**

Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Department of Substance Abuse and Prevention in Zanzibar, is partnering with the Great Lakes Addiction Transfer and Technology Center (GLATTC) in Chicago, Illinois, to strengthen ministry and NGO support of substance abuse and HIV prevention programs.

Partners conducted their first training in Zanzibar in January 2009 for 35 peers in recovery, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's Department of Substance Abuse and Prevention. Titled "How to Create a Community of Recovery" the workshop focused on the "12 Steps Recovery Model" and the "Islamic Milati," and was designed to increase capacity to address both HIV and substance abuse in Zanzibar. An early outcome of the



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training has been increased awareness of and attendance at 12- step programs in the community.

Partners have determined that inter-faith dialogue continues to play an important role in collective efforts to understand both HIV and substance abuse within the local community. In response, partners and Twinning Center staff visited the Muslim Education and Welfare Association (MEWA) in Kenya to gain a greater knowledge of the models they have in place for recovery within the East African context, which is helping to direct future activities as this partnership progresses.

### **Tanzania Preceptors Initiative: Supporting ARV Treatment Sites with Skilled Volunteers**

Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has set ambitious goals for national expansion of HIV/AIDS treatment and seeks to expand ART services to 200 sites supporting a total of 100,000 patients on ARV treatment within the next several years. The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center is supporting this rapid expansion through its Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC).

With the goal of increasing the institutional and human resource capacity of HIV care and treatment centers, the Tanzania Preceptors Initiative places highly skilled professionals at PEPFAR-supported sites, where they serve as onsite technical experts for a period ranging from three months to two years. During that time, their dual goals are to increase institutional capacity to deliver and expand quality HIV/AIDS treatment and care services and to increase staff competencies in HIV-related treatment, care, and support.

VHC volunteers mentor staff; assist with the provision of services as needed; and help with program expansion, quality control, and other support tasks beneficial to the host institution.

As of July 1, 2009, the VHC has placed 15 volunteers in Tanzania. Current placements include an in-service training officer, pediatric clinical preceptor, pediatric nurse, and an adherence counselor.



**VHC volunteer Deborah Roseman with a group of young girls she met on a site visit to Kiwohede Youth Center during her three-month placement at the PEPFAR-supported Mbeya Referral Hospital.**



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