

#POSITIVE LEARNING

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY No. 2

Multi-agency engagement in disability and HIV project for children in Zimbabwe



Children living with HIV are at increased risk of impairment and disability. These conditions can have severe consequences for their participation in school and learning, their experience of stigma and discrimination, and their self-esteem and confidence.

It is estimated that 90% of children and adolescents with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. ¹



In 2015, Zvandiri set up an HIV and Disability Impact Mitigation Project in Zimbabwe to address the unmet health, rehabilitation, educational and psychosocial needs of school age children who are both living with HIV and have an impairment. It aimed to:

- * improve their access to health and rehabilitation by increasing the knowledge and skills of caregivers and health professionals and linking HIV and disability services;
- * improve their access and quality of education by training educational and psychological professionals;
- * increase awareness of their rights.

This collaboration between different sectors was key to the project's success. One important element of the project was the use of trained peer workers. They identified, referred, and supported children and caregivers to seek early treatment for infections and to access both HIV- and disability-related services. An evaluation of the project found improved access to and quality of education for children living with HIV.

95% of trained educational professionals demonstrated increased knowledge and skills in supporting children with HIV and disability.



84% of primary school-age children supported by the project had improved educational outcomes. ²



The project has shown that early detection and referrals are a cost-effective way to treat infections and reduce impairments that may otherwise lead to permanent disabilities. Projects like this can make an enormous difference to the self-esteem, educational opportunities and overall quality of life of children living with HIV.

“ I learned counselling skills and how to empower children to support others regardless of HIV or disability. ”

“ (The project) changed my attitude to people with disabilities. ”

¹ Supporting school-age children living with HIV and disability in Zimbabwe. Evaluation of the HIV and disability impact mitigation project of Africaid. 2019

² UNESCO, Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010, Reaching the marginalized, 2010