

Human Development Trust in Mbeya region conducted a training to 32 Community Home Based Care (CHBC) providers (under a project funded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation) whereby 20 were from Rungwe district and 12 from Kyela district. The trained CHBC are of equal sex and they come from 16 wards whereby 10 wards are in Rungwe district and 6 wards in Kyela.

HDT has opted the approach of training CHBC providers from the community members and those who live with HIV to serve their fellow PLHIV. The main assumption is that people who have been infected and live with HIV can easily volunteer and serve their fellow patients. From the previous experience, it has been observed that CHBC providers who are also PLHIV reach many new patients within a short period of time compared to HBC providers who are employed by the government: This is because the latter have many other responsibilities at the health centers/dispensaries apart from provision of home based care.

The training was of 24 days where 21 days were for HBC skills and the remaining days were for the introduction to TB and leprosy. The training started on 21st June to 14th July 2010. The trainers for CHBC skills were district HBC coordinators from both districts of Kyela and Rungwe districts while the trainer for TB and leprosy was a Medical Doctor from Rungwe District hospital. All trainings were given under the HBC provider national guideline.

After the training, the trained CHBC providers were given bicycles and CHBC kits in order for them to do their work. The bicycles will be used for transport from village to village during the service provision while medicines in the kits will be used as starting point for patients' treatment. However, the medicines in the kits are limited, therefore in order to make the service sustainable, the government will continue filling medicines in the kits as needed.

Community Home Based Care providers trained and given kits and bicycles to enhance their work in Mbeya region.



Some of CHBC providers at the training at Tukuyu in Mbeya region

During the ceremony on completion of the training and handing of bicycles and kits which was done at Kyimo ward in Rungwe district, many government officials and local government leaders were invited. The guest of honor was Dr. Mnema who was representing the Regional Medical officer

During the ceremony, the trained CHBC provider thanked HDT for enhancing this training because it has helped them to understand in detail HIV and other long persisting diseases such as TB and leprosy. They also have understood how to help their fellow people who have been infected and will continue to educate the community members on the importance of avoiding practices which can lead to the increase of new infections. Furthermore trained CHBC providers asked the government to cooperate with them particularly in the issue of providing medicines such as ceprine for helping patients who are at home. They also asked the government to provide transport allowances in order to facilitate their work in the community.



The guest of honor giving a kit and bicycle to one of the CHBC providers from Kyela district

The Acting Executive Director of HDT Mr. John Simon Malanilo requested the health workers to cooperate with trained CHBC providers in order to meet the target of providing quality services to the patients who are at home lacking services. He also asked the trained CHBC providers to use the provided bicycles for the required services instead of other uses. He moreover said that the government should think on how it can help in providing monthly allowances to CHBC providers since they do a hard and important work of reaching many patients in the community compared to those employed by the government due to the fact the latter have a high workload and are few in number. Since the number of trained CHBC is small compared to current demand, HDT asked other stakeholders to put more efforts on training more CHBC providers.

The guest of honor started by thanking HDT for its effort in implementing the interventions which play a big role in helping to reduce the effects of the HIV pandemic in the communities, particularly in Mbeya region. He said that CHBC service is incorporated in a national policy which is aimed at reducing the acuteness of HIV to people who have been infected and affected.

He said the government itself cannot fulfill this gap of CHBC providers, instead other stakeholders particularly NGOs like HDT have been welcomed to contribute on filling it. Therefore he encouraged other NGOs to train more CHBC providers.

The guest of honor asked the trained CHBC providers to use obtained skills for the benefit of all community. He said the Government is still looking on how it can help CHBC providers to fulfill their duties in the community bearing in mind that the budget provided to the health sector is insufficient to meet all needs.

The provided kits were distributed through dispensaries/health centers of CHBC providers' respective areas. This is to make sure that cooperation between CHBC providers and government health workers is strengthened.



Rungwe HBC coordinator explaining to some of Government and HDT staff the contents & medicines contained in the HBC kit