



RAPID FUNDING ENVELOPE FOR HIV/AIDS: TANZANIA



REDUCING THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON ELDERLY CAREGIVERS



Not long ago in Tanzania, the impact of HIV/AIDS on the elderly was relatively unknown. According to a 2002 WHO study, two-thirds of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa who died from AIDS were receiving most of their care from a parent or other older-generation relative. Yet, in Tanzania and around the world, this group is often excluded from government programmes and policies concerning the epidemic, resulting in a lack of awareness among the elderly about proper prevention and safe-care practices, and how to access available services for those in their care.

As a result of successfully participating in two partnerships to implement RFE projects, CHAWAMA has gained the experience necessary to now apply for and implement grants on its own.

Chama cha Wazee na Wastaafu Arusha (*Association for the Retired and Elderly in Arusha*, CHAWAMA) is an organisation of mostly volunteers founded in 1998. CHAWAMA started off as a community-based welfare group for the elderly, but has since broadened its mission to promote stronger inter-generational understanding. In addition, the organisation supports elderly men and women at the grassroots level, working to increase access to free health care. CHAWAMA has trained more than 3,000 home-based caregivers, each of whom is responsible for at least one child orphaned by AIDS. In September 2005, CHAWAMA participated in a partnership led by HelpAge International and funded by the Rapid Funding Envelope to provide assistance to elderly persons affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly those providing home-based care.

The project developed a model of home-based care by the elderly in 57 communities from selected wards in nine districts in Tanzania. These districts include a total population of 184,000 with an estimated elderly population of 18,000 (aged 60 or older). The model included information on publicly available assistance for persons living with AIDS, training on providing health and psychosocial support to patients, and the provision of home-based care kits. These kits included supplies for caring for the sick as well as protecting the caregivers from infection. Each caregiver was provided training in the contents of the kits as well as being linked to local health facilities which supply replacement materials for the kits.



Michael Paydos, MSH, 2007

One of the peer educators for CHAWAMA's project. The role of peer educators in the project is to offer support to elderly caregivers, including providing information on safe-care practices.

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For its part in the project, CHAWAMA covered two wards, one in each of two districts: Arusha and Arumeru. The purpose of the project was to adapt the existing National Home-Based Caregivers Guidelines and Curriculum to fit the needs of elderly caregivers. With an adapted model in hand, CHAWAMA set to work by training two groups of five from each district to offer ongoing advocacy in the community, support to caregivers and peer educators, and provide follow-up in the implementation of the programme. These advocacy teams also helped encourage and develop the skills of the peer educators, who worked to educate other elderly persons on the dangers of HIV/AIDS. "HIV/AIDS is always on the media," explained Kausi, a peer educator. "But what the media is able to teach people and what we can do face-to-face is very different."

CHAWAMA trained and equipped a total of 18 home-based caregivers and 18 elderly peer educators (see the results box for information on the project as a whole). During this process, the team included church organisations and other community based organisations. "Before, the sick were being hidden, nobody was going to have or admit to having a sick person in their house," explained a home-based caregiver trained by CHAWAMA. "After reaching out, people were coming up to us, saying 'Would you please come and see my relative?'" We are more accepted in the community and people understand us more than they used to."

This is not the first time CHAWAMA has participated in a partnership with HelpAge International. In 2004, CHAWAMA contributed to a research project on the effects of HIV/AIDS on the elderly in Tanzania. Among its findings were that more than 50 percent of elderly people were directly involved in caring for children orphaned by AIDS. The study also found a lack of sufficient knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the elderly, particularly in the areas of care and prevention.

Following the completion of its most recent RFE project, CHAWAMA was able to demonstrate its ability to effectively implement a programme at the community level. The organisation has since received funding from the TACAIDS Regional Facilitating Agency in Arusha, marking the first time CHAWAMA has received funding for a project with full responsibility for its implementation. Mr. Stephen Masawe, the Deputy Director at CHAWAMA, explains: "We believe the experience we gained from implementing this RFE project and the one before it has really helped us win this funding." The organisation now has plans in place to apply for additional direct funding to expand its projects and impact, including applying to future rounds of the RFE.



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Many elderly in Tanzania find themselves suddenly caring for HIV positive relatives or raising grandchildren who were orphaned by AIDS.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- National Home-Based Caregivers Guidelines and Curriculum adapted to fit older caregivers needs. 5,000 copies of the guide printed in Kiswahili and English;
- Improved skills of home-based caregivers (HBCs) in 57 communities in Northern Tanzania; 114 HBCs received home-based care kits and were linked with local health facilities for resupply;
- Trained 45 representatives to operate in advocacy groups to lobby and raise awareness for elderly/AIDS issues in the communities;
- Awareness and advocacy campaign detailing the plight faced by the elderly targeted to district council representatives, CSOs, national policy makers, and other key stakeholders to strengthen support for elderly programs in HIV/AIDS.

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For more information on the Rapid Funding Envelope, please contact:

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