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TANZANIA

HEBU TUYAJENGE

Hebu Tuyajenge (“Let’s Discuss Constructively”) engages people living with HIV (PLHIV) via Tanzania’s National Council of People Living with HIV in Tanzania (NACOPHA). The program focuses on increasing utilization of HIV testing, treatment, and family planning services among adolescents and PLHIV, strengthening capacity of PLHIV organizations and structures, and improving the enabling environment for the HIV response through PLHIV empowerment. Hebu Tuyajenge empowers its beneficiaries under the guiding principle of ‘nothing for us is possible without us.’ The program engages HIV-positive individuals and groups in design, implementation, and monitoring of HIV activities delivered in communities.

Activity interventions include the following:

- Conducting HIV treatment literacy among PLHIV and in communities.
- Prevention of new HIV infections among adolescents.
- Engaging faith and community leaders in finding children and men living with HIV.
- Identifying sexual partners and children of PLHIV and linking them to HIV testing.
- Providing adherence counseling and support to ensure that PLHIV stay on treatment.
- Training and mentoring treatment advocates who are community volunteers.
- Disseminating social behavior changes messages through community radios and interpersonal communication.

- Training PLHIV group leaders on leadership and management, financial management, and monitoring of community HIV activities.
- Combating and responding to HIV stigma and sexual violence in communities.
- Engaging in dialogue with policy and law makers to ensure PLHIV’s voices are heard.
- Generating evidence for community HIV activities.
- Conducting community led monitoring of facility HIV services.

BUDGET \$17,500,000

DURATION
December 2019 – December 2024

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS
65 District Councils in Dar es Salaam, Mtwara, Lindi, Pwani, Kilimanjaro, Tanga, Mwanza, Mara, Tabora, Kagera, Kigoma, Shinyanga, Dodoma, Morogoro, Singida, Arusha, Manyara, Mbeya, Iringa, Njombe, Ruvuma and Rukwa

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER
The National Council of People Living with HIV in Tanzania (NACOPHA)

Partners
MoHCDEC; PORALG; PLHIV Clusters; Religious Leaders and FBOs, Network of Women Living with HIV (DWWT) 4,525 NACOPHA PLHIV groups 640,487 PLHIVs under NACOPHA 1,792 Treatment Advocates 1,150 Treatment Action Teams

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RESULTS

- Building on the previous Sauti Yetu (“*Our Health*”) activity, Hebu Tuyajenge has established a sustainable community structure to deliver HIV services in communities using PLHIV themselves.
- **Increasing the utilization of HIV testing, treatment, and family planning services among adolescents and people living with HIV.** This activity uses a peer-led and family-centered approach to increase the utilization of HIV services. To date, the activity has established under its umbrella more than 4,525 PLHIV groups, 1,792 treatment advocates (TA), and 1,150 community action teams (CAT) composed of youth, women, and men living with HIV from 185 districts of Tanzania.
- **Strengthening the capacity of PLHIV organizations and structures.** As a result of strengthening the management and organizational capacity of the PLHIV groups and networks of Youth and Women Living with HIV in Tanzania, the engagement of youth and women with policy and lawmakers, and PEPFAR has increased. This activity has supported the participation of youth in PEPFAR 2023 country operation plan.
- **Improving the enabling environment for the HIV response.** To create an enabling environment Hebu Tuyajenge uses the following strategies: (i) Monitoring HIV stigma and discrimination (ii) Fighting HIV stigma and discrimination in health facilities, schools, and communities, (iii) Working with policy and lawmakers to ensure favorable HIV policies and laws (iv) Engaging faith and community leaders.
- **Monitoring of HIV Stigma and**

Discrimination: This activity facilitated and supported the participation of the people living with HIV in HIV stigma index studies in 2013 and 2021 and will facilitate and support their participation in 2024. In addition, the activity engages recipients of care to monitor the HIV stigma and discrimination at health facilities and community.

- **Addressing HIV stigma and discrimination:** HIV stigma manifests at individual, interpersonal, community, program, and policy levels. Fear of stigma and discrimination can

deter PLHIV, especially adolescents, from accessing HIV services. Stigma in health settings is a result of age discrimination, providers' and family or community members' negative attitudes or perceptions of PLHIV. This affects adolescents' willingness to test for HIV, disclose their status, or take their ARVs. In such an environment, avoidance of HIV services and partner violence is common. In a school setting adolescents may drop out, they may be isolated, be rejected in playgrounds, and experience name-calling and labeling. This usually impacts their self-esteem and ability to participate in learning activities.

- **Working with policy and lawmakers on HIV policies and legal matters. This activity** works with PLHIV groups from all government administrative levels (villages, wards, and districts) to consolidate the priorities and concerns of the people that may require the attention of the policy and law makers. As a result of advocacy and consultative dialogues, the Government of Tanzania has lowered the age of consent for HIV testing from 18 to 15 years, adopted self-testing of HIV, and is implementing differentiated HIV service delivery models. This activity is geared to advocating for a fully community ART distribution model that is led by the beneficiaries by 2025.
- **Engaging faith and community leaders to fight HIV stigma and gender-based violence.** This strategy makes use of religious leaders who have exceptional influence in their communities to influence attitudes, mindsets, and norms about HIV that can perpetuate violence and stigma. This activity facilitated a dialogue with religious leaders from the five denominations who signed and issued a joint statement to fight HIV stigma and discrimination, and sexual violence in Tanzania through their congregation.