

People Living with HIV Stigma Index 2.0 Report Launched

By Ngonidzashe Munemo, ZNNP+

On the 31st of May 2023, the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) launched the Zimbabwe Stigma Index 2.0 Report in Harare. The Stigma Index is a study that assesses the level and extent of stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV (PLHIV). The research was conducted for and by people living with HIV with tools developed through the international partnership which includes UNAIDS, the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and the International Coalition of Women Living with HIV (ICW).



The Zimbabwe Stigma Index was officially launched by the Hon. Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care, Dr. John Mangwiro. The launch event was attended by key stakeholders and partners including UNAIDS, UNWomen, NAC, ZAN, OPHID and Zim-TTECH

The findings indicated that the overall stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV in Zimbabwe stood at 69.7 percent, compared to 65.5 percent recorded in the 2014 Stigma Index study. According to the findings, stigma was highest in people who identified as Transgender where 97 percent respondents who were interviewed in the survey indicated that they experienced stigma related to their HIV status; 77.7 Sex Workers reported to have experienced stigma and 62 percent of Men who have sex with Men (MSM) also experienced HIV related stigma.

"We are supposed to be going towards zero percent in line with the UNAIDS 10, 10, 10 targets but we are going towards 100 percent, which is the opposite of what we need".

Mr. Tonderai Mwareka, National Stigma Index Coordinator

Launching the Zimbabwe Stigma Index Report, Dr John C. Mangwiro, the Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care said the Zimbabwean government was determined to confront and end all forms of stigma and discrimination against PLHIV. Dr Mangwiro added that the high

levels of stigma and discrimination against Key populations and PLHIV in general was not good for the national HIV response.



Hon. Dr. John C. Mangwiro, the Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care giving his Keynote Address at the Stigma Index launch in Harare.

"We need to strengthen the multi-sectoral approach to renew and recommit to ending stigma and discrimination if we are to meet global targets to reduce HIV related stigma to less than 10 percent and end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030."

Hon. Dr. John C. Mangwiro, Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care

Mr. Makoni, the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) Executive Director said, the Stigma Index report was a critical step in informing the National AIDS response in

Zimbabwe. Stigma and discrimination remain as one of the key barriers towards ending AIDS by 2030. The Global AIDS strategy states that inequalities are presented by stigma and discrimination and must be eradicated," said Mr Makoni. He added that stigma and discrimination against PLHIV can only end if there is acknowledgment of its ubiquitous existence and it must be quantified or measured to inform decision making. Most importantly Multi-sectoral Priority Actions in response to the study findings must be developed and implemented.

The Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) is the national network of PLHIV that coordinates their interests and rights in Zimbabwe. ZNNP+ led the Stigma Index study with support from partners that include PEPFAR, UNAIDS, USAID, OPHID, ZIM-TTECH, Ministry of Health and Child Care, National AIDS Council, Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), among others. 32 community-based organization (CBOs) of People Living with HIV with presence in the survey districts were involved in the data collection process. The study and launch were made possible with financial support from UNAIDS, PEPFAR, USAID, CDC, OPHID, ZIMTTECH and NAC.