

Building Institutional Capacity to Train Journalists How to Effectively Cover HIV/AIDS

Media coverage of HIV/AIDS in Africa has historically lacked the depth, innovation, and dedication that the epidemic demands. Many working editors have limited or no exposure to the realities of the pandemic for individuals, families, communities, and even nations. In fact, most are unfamiliar with even basic information about HIV and its far-reaching implications for every sector of society.

With PEPFAR support, the Twinning Center has linked the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM) in Lusaka with the School of Journalism at the University of Kentucky in Louisville.

Together, partners are working to strengthen ZAMCOM's institutional and administrative capacity, particularly with regard to media-based communication on the subject of HIV/AIDS. Experts from the University of Kentucky are also providing technical assistance that will help ZAMCOM bolster organization and management capabilities thereby increasing efficiency. Since the partnership was launched in May 2008, the US and Zambian partners have been assisting journalists in Zambia to gain a better understanding of HIV/AIDS issues and improve their ability to inspire and foster community mobilization for prevention, treatment, and support for those affected by the epidemic.



ZAMCOM Director Daniel Nkalamo talks about Zambia and ZAMCOM's work on the air at WMMT-FM in Whitesburg, Kentucky, during the August professional exchange.

Through a series of professional exchanges conducted in the United States and Zambia, Zambian partners have gained the knowledge and expertise they need to train peers at their own institution, as well as other journalism facilities throughout the country.

In August, ZAMCOM Director Daniel Nkalamo and HIV/AIDS and Gender Media Specialist Mwiika Malindima traveled to the United States to attend the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in Chicago, Illinois. After the conference, they traveled to Kentucky to participate in a professional exchange.

AEJMC is a respected forum for sharing new ideas and best practices in research and teaching methodology. The ZAMCOM partners learned about many new and different ideas and programs that they can adapt for use in Zambia.



David Greer and David Thompson of the Kentucky Press Association discuss journalism and freedom of information laws with Mwiika Malindima and Daniel Nkalamo.

"We came back with as many books about the various subjects we teach at ZAMCOM as we could carry," Mwiika Malindima.

"We have also been receiving more books since we returned from the publishers we contacted at the conference," he explains. "These have really added to the supply in our media library and give our lecturers and students an edge over other institutions."