

Partnership Helps Lusaka Association Become Leader in Field of Palliative Care in Zambia

Twinning Center partners at the Palliative Care Association of Zambia (PCAZ) have been working with the Kampala-based African Palliative Care Association (APCA) since 2005 to strengthen the institutional and human resource capacity of PCAZ.

With the support of PEPFAR through USAID, partners have been working to make PCAZ a national leader in palliative care advocacy and policy throughout Zambia, as well as the national custodian of palliative care standards and training.

Through the partnership, PCAZ has made great strides toward becoming a better established organization, according to Mary Margaret Mpomba, national coordinator at PCAZ.



PCAZ staff at a monitoring and evaluation training conducted with PEPFAR support this summer.

She recalls the many challenges she and her colleagues faced when she joined the organization in July 2006 when PCAZ was a young organization struggling to settle into a cramped space with very limited staffing and resources.

“When I started at PCAZ, it was a new organization, with many things still not in place,” Mpomba says. “We had only one other person on staff when I started. I felt alone and was trying to do everything myself.”

With the support of APCA and other collaborating organizations, such

as Catholic Relief Services, PCAZ embarked on a series of partnership activities aimed at increasing its organizational capacity.

They established management and financial policies, improved the functioning and involvement of its board of directors, learned how to better organize effective training workshops and other events, and established monitoring and evaluation systems.

With a human resource strategy in place, PCAZ has been able to bring on additional staff. They have even been able to find a larger and more suitable office space to house their fast-growing operations.

“There is more sharing of responsibilities and we are all working together to complete our many tasks. Now we have grown not only in terms of capacity and staffing, but also in terms of a bigger and better physical space,” Mpomba

acknowledges. "The attitude in the office is different. There is more staff involvement, more creativity, and we are getting things done!"

Partners continue their efforts to position PCAZ as Zambia's leading advocate for palliative care. To that end, PCAZ conducted a situational analysis on palliative care in Zambia and has organized several workshops, including one focusing on advocacy for use of morphine in pain management.

APCA is assisting with the development of a PCAZ Web site and the partners will establish a palliative care resource center, which will further enhance the role of PCAZ as standard-bearers for palliative care in Zambia.

Mpomba says she knows there is plenty of work yet to do, but she is optimistic about the future of PCAZ and can see the organization assuming the lead role as a national association by providing better services to its members and driving the national policy agenda on palliative care. She also stresses her deep appreciation for the assistance she and her colleagues have received from APCA, the Twinning Center, and the American people.

"Our partnership with APCA provides not only technical assistance and mentorship in organizational development; it helps us develop effective working relationships with other international collaborators," Mpomba underscores.

Calling APCA's Director Faith Mwangi-Powell a role model, Mpomba says, "I am amazed by her. She is hardworking and straightforward. We have become better partners with everyone through this process."

In the past year, PCAZ has demonstrated their improved leadership and capacity by conducting in April a two-day advocacy workshop on the use of morphine for pain management and palliative care. The event drew a cadre of hospice workers and District Health Management Team professionals.

Topics covered included: governing policy and law concerning morphine in Zambia; modalities for ordering morphine; safe storage and management of oral morphine; the pain control ladder; pain assessment and measuring tools; and knowledge of accessory drugs.

Following a capacity building workshop conducted by APCA in May, the partners finalized a monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework that has since been institutionalized.



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