



Health Kiosks in Zimbabwe

Faith Communities accelerating achievement of 95% awareness of status among people living with HIV

Overview

The purpose of the Health Kiosks at Faith Worship Centers is to increase knowledge and literacy around HIV and health matters, improve access to services, and support retention in HIV care. The Health Kiosks disseminate HIV and health information within the congregation, mobilize congregants to access health information, and provide referrals and linkages to HIV and Health services from congregation volunteers. The program was implemented in two districts in Zimbabwe (Gwanda and Gokwe North) from March 2018 - February 2019.

3,500 individuals requested information from Health Kiosks (increased by 350% above target)



34.5% sought information on HIV



23.6% sought information on MCH



34.7% sought information on other health topics

37.5% of those requesting information on HIV were tested and received their results

5.7% of Health Kiosk participants who received testing were HIV positive



How are Health Kiosks improving uptake of HIV testing and services?

Health Kiosks have created a simpler way of allowing congregants to encourage each other to seek and access health care services. Faith leaders preach sermonettes on HIV, church volunteers share information on HIV and make referrals for HIV testing. Those who tested positive were linked to care and treatment at the health facility and followed up for retention. Those who tested negative were linked to health facilities for further HIV prevention services.

The Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) is now able to work directly with churches, which has enhanced access to health services. There is improved access to those who object to modern medicine, such as apostolic sect members, on various health issues to reduce the spread of diseases.

Health Kiosks at faith worship centers are an effective entry point for HIV services with high yield for HIV positivity and should be mainstreamed into general HIV programming.

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World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.



Health Kiosks

An effective partnership with the faith community for HIV epidemic control through social and behavior change in Zimbabwe

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How are Health Kiosks improving social and behavior change for HIV?

In addition to community awareness raising, the Health Kiosk program utilized safe spaces that were accessible and confidential. The Health Kiosks engaged male and female church volunteers across generations in addition to church leadership. Safe spaces created a conducive environment for congregants to ask sensitive questions related to their sexual and reproductive health and made it easier to give appropriate messages for different sexes and ages in confidence.

Many churches saw strong youth involvement among the volunteers which led to high turnout of youth during health promotion. The older volunteers could counsel and share information with their peers, and the male congregants felt comfortable talking to male volunteers. Topics such as condom use and STI prevention and treatment were previously a taboo in the church. However, the Health Kiosk program created an opportunity for discussion of these sensitive topics, even among youth.

Rural clinic staff noted an increase in referrals from the churches. Faith leaders confirmed that the safe spaces motivated youth to seek information on HIV testing and receive services from the health facilities. A ward councilor



from Gwanda stated that the clinic received referrals from the volunteers for HIV testing which led to some being initiated on antiretroviral therapy. Uptake of health and HIV services increased as men in Gokwe North began going for HIV testing and prostate cancer screening. More pregnant women began going for PMTCT services. Women also received cervical cancer screening. Similarly, in Gwanda, young men began going for Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision.

The Health Kiosk program had effects in the community beyond HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Churches began to engage broadly in health. One church elder in Gokwe North introduced a health advisor in the church. Another faith leader stated that congregants now brought clean water to church, had dug rubbish pits in their homes and at the church site, and had installed handwashing stations at church and at home.

Overall, community leaders observed a shift in congregants' approach to their health concerns—from neglecting their health issues or focusing only on prayer to actively visiting the clinic. This was especially true of Apostolic congregations which did not previously support medical intervention among their followers.

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Health Kiosk Case Study

Positive behavior change through health screening sessions at Chomuuyu Centre, Zimbabwe



On this day, a health screening at Chomuuyu Primary Ward center in Gokwe drew multitudes of people from across ward 16 and surrounding wards even, beyond those targeted by the Health Kiosk program.

Nurses and trained volunteers conducted health awareness raising with participants. Health promotion activities included HIV testing and counselling as well as cervical cancer screening. Information was disseminated to participants including fliers, pamphlets, and books on health. Information was also shared on the intersection of health and scripture to enhance people's knowledge.

The Health Kiosk team was determined to serve all those who came out, but the response was more than they had expected. Out of a total of 300 participants, the team was able to serve 64. This scenario indicates that information about the Health Kiosk reached many people, and the approach was appropriate and accessible.

Changes were seen among congregants in attitudes and behavior related to health. Initially people hesitated to share their health status. Many mentioned the preference for traditional remedies like herbs and seeking help from prophets and traditional healers. They consult these services because of fear regarding their actual health (e.g. HIV) status. For them, a medical test is the last option. The situation at Chomuuyu Centre indicates a positive transformation as people were willing and intent to know their HIV status through medical testing.

Health Kiosk Case Study

“From stony hearts to listening sheep”



Knowledge is power. This adage can be hard to believe without firsthand experience. Dave (pseudonym), the leader of an Apostolic church in Gwokwe explained it like “going from a thick cloud of darkness into a plane of light and splendor.” Dave, 43 years old and married to three wives, trained together with other church leaders during the Health Kiosk program. The training addressed issues concerning HIV, hygiene, and many other health challenges affecting the community.

The program has greatly benefited this church by transforming members’ perceptions towards seeking medical assistance from health facilities. Dave said,

“From my perspective, I was naïve and reluctant to take health issues seriously, but since the emergence of the Health Kiosk project, well, I am now more empowered. I’m now encouraging my wives and my children to access health services from the clinic.”

Before the inception of the Health Kiosk program in the community, members of this Apostolic church were restricted from consulting health facilities for medical assistance as per church doctrine. This led to the spread of diseases, especially sexually transmitted infections, among church members. Many families lost their loved ones due to this religious norm.

There are indications that church members are now improving health service utilization. The level of health literacy is noticeable since the inception of the Health Kiosk project. Increasing numbers of congregants are coming to seek information and reading material from the church leader and other trained volunteers. Many congregants were referred to health facilities for assistance after receiving education from the Health Kiosk.

As a result, this has greatly improved the health and well-being of the congregants. Church members now appreciate the change that came because of the Health Kiosk program. Almost half of the female congregants have gone for different health screenings, and members of the church are now free to share their views concerning their HIV status.

Health Kiosk Case Study

“We now know our HIV status”

Mike (pseudonym), one of the Worship Centre Volunteers, could not hold in his joy as he was talking to the World Vision Community Development Worker in Ward 1. He was very pleased that the Health Kiosk program has benefited him and the other youths in his congregation. Mike, aged 23, is one of the worship center volunteers who received training on health and HIV issues. He worships at an Apostolic church which participated in the Health Kiosk program.

The Health Kiosk program greatly benefitted the youths at this church. Mike mentioned that while issues on HIV and AIDS were being discussed at his congregation, youths never used to talk openly regarding HIV and AIDS. They were not keen to go for HIV testing. Most of the youths thought HIV testing was for grown-ups. Mike said,

“As a youth I never talked openly about HIV. I was afraid to go for HIV testing. As youths we now know our HIV status, thanks to the Health Kiosk Program.”

He indicated that youths were free to come to the health kiosk to discuss their health issues. He said,

“Interacting with the youths was very easy as I was of their age. They were able to open up.”



The pastor of the church applauded World Vision and the Ministry of Health and Child Care for implementing the Health Kiosk program. He was quick to mention that the program did not only benefit the youths. He said,

“All the members of my congregation are now enlightened on the health issues.”

He cited that, before the establishment of the Health Kiosk, most of the church members had no information about a number of health issues, especially cancer. However, through the program, his church members were able to have access to health information and they are now free to go to the clinic for services.

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