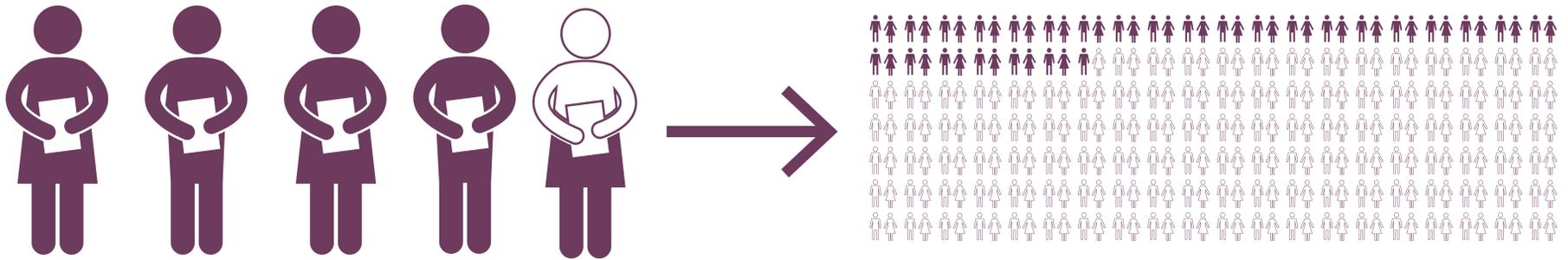


TANZANIAN PARA-SOCIAL WORKER CADRE: INTRODUCING VOLUNTEER SOCIAL WORKERS IN TANZANIA

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4,461 PSW PROVIDED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TO 52,971 MVC OUT OF 280,513 IDENTIFIED IN FOUR REGIONS IN TANZANIA

ISSUES

Social welfare services in Africa have been dramatically impacted by the exponential increase in orphans and vulnerable children as a result of the HIV epidemic. According to UNICEF, by 2010 an estimated 15.7 million children in sub-Saharan Africa had lost at least one parent to HIV/AIDS. To address village-level social welfare service needs, the USAID-funded Tanzania Human Resource Capacity Project, led by IntraHealth International, has worked since 2008 with partner organizations and the Government of Tanzania to develop and mainstream a new cadre of volunteer para-social workers (PSWs) into existing local government structures. Volunteer PSWs are an interim solution to fill the gap in community-level social welfare workers.

DESCRIPTION

PSWs identify most vulnerable children (MVC), provide psychosocial support, and refer MVC and their families to facilities and networks offering health, education, nutrition, legal/protection, shelter, and economic strengthening services. To date, 4,461 PSWs have been trained and deployed in four regions across Tanzania, and 645 of the most promising PSWs have been trained as PSW supervisors. In addition to providing support to MVC, PSWs also have the opportunity to pursue a career path in social work. The first class of PSWs has recently graduated as social welfare assistants (SWAs), the lowest cadre in the professional social welfare workforce. A PSW advocacy network, PASONET, has been formed to provide social and technical support to PSWs. PASONET branches have been established in 27 districts and have already helped to establish MVC Community funds to support MVC in 116 villages. In addition, District Advocacy Teams have been organized to advocate at the district level for more budgetary and resource support for PSWs and MVC.

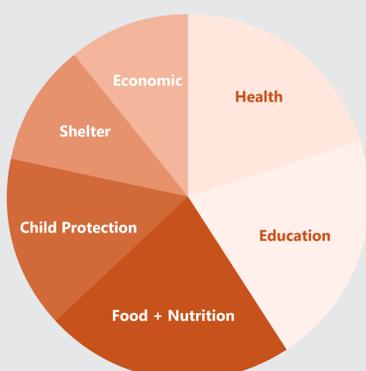
LESSONS LEARNED

From 2009 to 2013, PSWs provided psychosocial support services directly to 52,971 MVC and linked them to essential social services, showing that well-trained and committed volunteer PSWs can help fill the social welfare gap at the village level. Unfortunately, attrition of PSWs remains an issue and retaining them requires creative solutions, since the government does not allow distribution of cash stipends. Some districts have been addressing this by linking PSWs with NGOs that are supporting MVC, providing training, and engaging PSWs in other village-level work. However, more advocacy is needed to ensure PSWs are fully supported, appreciated, utilized, and engaged. Additionally, more SWA positions need to be funded by the districts so that PSWs have a better chance of career advancement.

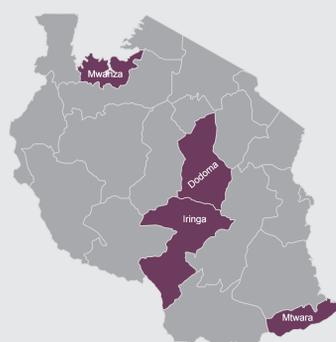
NEXT STEPS

- Continue **advocacy** for additional district resources to support PSWs.
- Incorporate PSWs into other MVC programs sponsored by international agencies.
- Establish **more SWA positions** and district employment opportunities.
- Develop creative mechanisms to **motivate** PSWs and maintain their services with limited local government budgets and commitment.
- Address these challenges by **building the capacity** of PASONET, further strengthening district advocacy teams, sustaining identified best practices, and documenting and disseminating program results and outcomes.

TYPES OF REFERRALS



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