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SUCCESS STORY

One teacher mentor helps a student identify her HIV-positive status and receive proper treatment

Teacher mentors provide an atmosphere of trust and safety in schools to ensure OVC receive effective psychosocial support.



Ms. Mwajuma Rashidi, a teacher mentor for primary school students in Rufiji, Tanzania

The training that I got on OVC care and support, and skills I gained in observing and talking to children has helped me so much in communicating with children.

When you educate a girl, everything changes

The Campaign for Female Education

www.camfed.org

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Ms. Mwajuma Rashidi, a teacher mentor at a primary school in the Rufiji district of Tanzania, used what she learned from her training by Camfed on how to provide effective psychosocial support to children to help an HIV-positive student identify her status and seek treatment.

Ms. Rashidi was conducting a group counseling session in the classroom when she noticed a student, Aisha*, wasn't participating in group work, lacked energy, and wasn't interested in socializing with the other students. Ms. Rashidi checked the attendance register and saw that Aisha was missing school frequently. Ms. Rashidi then paid a visit to Aisha's home where she found that Aisha and her grandmother were living in very poor conditions. After questioning Aisha's grandmother about Aisha's lack of participation in school, Ms. Rashidi discovered that both Aisha's parents died of AIDS. Using Camfed's referral list of local VCT clinics, Ms. Rashidi suggested that Aisha be taken for HIV testing at a clinic nearby. It is here that Aisha found out she was HIV positive.

Teacher Mentors provide an atmosphere of trust and safety in schools to ensure OVC receive effective psychosocial support. With the support of USAID, Camfed invests in identifying and training female teachers in each Camfed partner school across the Rufiji, Iringa and Kilolo districts to mentor girl pupils and to help promote a positive and safe learning environment for all children. It is through such trainings that students like Aisha receive the individual attention and support they need to secure proper care. These female teacher mentors become important role models for OVC, especially girls, and their encouragement greatly contributes towards successful academic performance.

Teacher mentors in Tanzania are using a new training module that is focused on topics such as adolescence, HIV and AIDs – most specifically focusing on HIV prevention. The module contains guidelines in conducting counseling both for individuals and for groups, and it also contains activities that teacher mentors can engage children in for the purpose of providing children with psychosocial support.

Aisha has since started ARV treatments, attends the health clinic twice per month, and is still attending school.

* Student's name changed to protect her identity