

Integrated harm reduction and livelihood empowerment: The steps tanzania model for advancing behavioral health among pwud and plhiv - a case study

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Behavioral health, defined by the interplay between mental well-being and behavioral patterns, is a critical determinant of health, especially for People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) and People Living with HIV (PLHIV). In Tanzania, these populations often contend with compounded challenges including substance dependence, mental health disorders, social stigma, and economic marginalization. STEPS Tanzania has implemented an integrated approach to address these intersecting vulnerabilities through harm reduction and livelihood development programs across different regions. This case study presents practical experiences and lessons learned from Dar es Salaam and Mwanza (focusing on harm reduction interventions), and Kisarawe in the Coastal Region (focusing on life planning and entrepreneurship skills enhancement).

Methodology: A qualitative case study approach was used, drawing from program data, client records, and key informant interviews conducted between 2020 and 2024. In Dar es Salaam and Mwanza, harm reduction services included opioid substitution therapy, needle and syringe programs, HIV care linkage, and psychosocial support. In Kisarawe, youth and vulnerable populations were engaged in structured life planning and entrepreneurship training aimed at enhancing economic resilience and preventing high-risk behaviors.

Biography

Cyprian Paul Magere, STEPS Tanzania, is a community health advocate dedicated to harm reduction and behavioral health support for people who use drugs and individuals living with HIV. He leads innovative livelihood-empowerment initiatives that strengthen resilience, improve health outcomes, and advance inclusive care models across Tanzania.

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