



A South Africa-Norway Tertiary Education Development Programme

THE ZAWECA **HIV/AIDS** Peer Education Project



A Collaborative Project between the University of the Western Cape
and the University of Zambia

Project close-out report
JULY 2005



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ZAWECA HIV/AIDS Peer Education Project was a two-year collaborative project between the University of the Western Cape and the University of Zambia funded by the South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development Programme. The specific objectives of ZAWECA were to: establish formal links between the two institutions in order to build capacity in the field of HIV/AIDS peer education; develop and implement appropriate university-based HIV/AIDS peer education programmes aimed at changing student attitudes and perceptions, and developing appropriate life-skills; evaluate the effectiveness of the peer education programmes through a process of joint monitoring and evaluation; and disseminate information and research relating to the project.

The ZAWECA project was a direct response to the challenge of HIV/AIDS at the two participating tertiary institutions and linked with their respective mission statements and broader institutional responses to the epidemic. A core aim of the ZAWECA project was to develop peer education programmes at the two universities based on solid research in order to develop best practice models. Each institution developed their own model peer education programme to address their individual needs and circumstances, but team members constantly exchanged ideas and experiences so that the models used were enriched by the mutual collaboration.

Both programmes succeeded in delivering a large range of peer-led activities that included information sessions for first year students, individual counseling and referral, training of senior students and student leadership, and the use of innovative new methods such as interactive theatre, quizzes and informal one-to-one sessions to combat AIDS fatigue and information overload among students. The success of the programme led to a demand for the services of the peer educators from a range of community based projects and to the extension of the project to the communities surrounding the universities.

An important outcome of the project has been the establishment of formal links between the University of the Western Cape and the University of Zambia. During the two year project implementation period, a number of official exchange visits between the two institutions at vice chancellor, project management, research team and student levels took place and served to consolidate and build collaboration between the two institutions that stretched beyond the focus of the ZAWECA project. They provided the



opportunity for joint training and capacity building in peer education methods and portfolio development, the development of student leadership skills, joint community outreach work relating to HIV/AIDS, and collaborative research. The visits succeeded in nurturing shared ownership as well as providing a platform for further collaborative work in the area of student development and HIV/AIDS between the two institutions, which would not have otherwise been possible.

Working collaboratively over a large distance in two different countries with very different (as well as common) problems relating to HIV/AIDS presented the project teams with a number of challenges. These included frequent breakdowns in email communication, different administrative and reporting structures at the two institutions, difficulties in collecting comparable research data, student apathy and the need to find different and more interesting ways of eliciting student participation, as well as the time consuming and labour intensive demands of delivering efficient peer education programmes.

An important question that needs further research is to what extent peer education programmes actually manage to impact on student risk behaviour.

Despite these challenges, the ZAWECA project is a clear example of what can be achieved by higher education collaboration in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. It provides a model of a mutually beneficial and enduring partnership around the critical area of HIV/AIDS prevention.

It has led to the building of a close partnership between the two participating institutions, expertise in peer education, impacted on student knowledge and attitudes relating to HIV/AIDS and thus, hopefully, impacted on the spread of the epidemic among this target group. It has also built capacity of staff and students in the field of peer education and research and will contribute via a range of scientific papers and presentations at conferences to a broader knowledge base on the use of peer education in the field of health promotion.



INTRODUCTION

The ZAWECA HIV/AIDS Peer Education Project was a collaborative project between the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town and the University of Zambia (UNZA) in Lusaka. A total amount of R1.8 million was made available over a two year period (October 2003 - July 2005) by the South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development Programme (SANTED) to fund the project. Its aim was to facilitate and promote institutional collaboration between the two universities through the development of peer education programmes that would equip students with life-skills to enable them to negotiate safer sex practices in order to reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

The specific objectives of ZAWECA were:

- to establish formal links between UWC and UNZA in order to build capacity in the field of HIV/AIDS peer education
- to develop and implement appropriate university-based HIV/AIDS peer education programmes aimed at changing attitudes and perceptions, and developing appropriate life-skills among the participants
- to evaluate the effectiveness of the peer education programmes through a process of joint monitoring and evaluation
- to disseminate information on the peer education programme experience and to share best practices in student peer education programmes with other universities within the region.



WHY A PROGRAMME FOCUSING ON HIV/AIDS?

According to UNAIDS (2004), almost 5 million people worldwide were newly infected with HIV in 2003, the greatest number in one year since

the start of the epidemic. Sub-Saharan Africa is by far the worst affected region with an estimated 25 million people living with HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, between 15% and 20% of all adults are estimated to be HIV positive. In Zambia approximately 16% of the population between the ages of 15 and 49 years is estimated to be HIV positive.

The majority of the people infected in both countries are young people between the ages of 15 to 24 years. Statistics also show consistently higher (in some cases as much as six - seven times as high) prevalence rates among young women compared to men. Recent research data by the Reproductive Research Health Unit in Johannesburg indicates that 77% of young South Africans living with HIV/AIDS are female.



Research just released by the South African Department of Health shows that 29.4% of all pregnant women and 38.5% of those between the ages of 25-29 attending government clinics in 2004 were infected with HIV. In Zambia, the 2001-2002 Zambia Demographic and Health

Survey (ZDHS) revealed that 58 % of the young people living with HIV/AIDS in the age group 15 to 24 years were female. Overall, 42% of all infections in Zambia are among youth aged 15 to 24 years. Given that 47% of the population is under the age of 15 years, an urgent need exists to target this section of the population.

These statistics highlight the fact that university students, and female students in particular, fall into a very high risk group for HIV infection. First year female students in residences are particularly vulnerable and at risk as they are away from home for the first time, and often experience immense pressure to engage in high risk behaviour such as substance abuse and unprotected and coercive sex.

The situation is compounded by the fact that men are often under tremendous peer pressure to be sexually active and to demonstrate their masculinity by having multiple partners and/or not using condoms. Many university students come from schools where they have not received adequate and accurate information about HIV/AIDS and have also not been taught the life skills necessary to assert themselves in such high risk situations. In addition to a lack of knowledge about HIV, the liberalization of sexual behavior, high rates of sexually transmitted infections, transactional sex, substance abuse and coercive sex, increase the likelihood of a rapid spread of HIV among university students. In Zambia the problem is exacerbated by a shortage of hostel accommodation, which may prompt girls to start cohabiting rooms with men.

Since HIV is transmitted primarily by behavior that can be modified (unprotected sexual

intercourse), educational programmes designed to influence appropriate behavior are an important part of prevention strategies. Peer education is widely considered a particularly appropriate intervention strategy to use with young people for health promotion work. The ZAWECA project, therefore, focused on developing and evaluating the use of this strategy in HIV prevention work at two universities in two Southern African countries.

INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) is situated in the Greater Cape Town area and was established in 1960 as the University College of the Western Cape to serve the needs of the people classified 'Coloured' by the apartheid regime. During the 1970s and 1980s, it set out to repudiate the terms on which it was founded and refashioned itself as an institution selecting its students from all who applied and reforming its curricula to serve the needs of surrounding communities. The university emphatically rejected the apartheid ideology on which it was established in its mission statement of 1982.

This included a declaration of non-racialism and "a firm commitment to the development of the Third World communities in South Africa". Through the University of the Western Cape Act of 1983, the university finally gained autonomy, a status already enjoyed by the established ('white') universities. UWC was then able to plan strategically for growth, diversification and the fulfilment of its new mission.

Between 1985 and 1995 UWC grew at an unprecedented rate. The institution simultaneously redefined and repositioned itself in important and far-reaching ways. Its intention remained to critically engage with society through the production of new and the critical transfer of old knowledge, but within a new, changing environment of severe economic and fiscal constraints. The university adopted an 'open' admissions policy, which led to English becoming the main medium of instruction and encouraged Africans to enrol (their numbers increased from 336 or under 5% in 1985, to 7235 or nearly 50% of 14653 students in 1995, and 58% in 1997).



In 2004, the university had almost 15 000 students, 78% of whom were studying full-time. A breakdown of student registrations according to faculty reveals that 17% were registered in the Arts faculty, 16.4% in Community and Health Sciences, 5.8% in Dentistry, 27.6% in Economic and Management Science, 8.8% in Education, 10.8% in Law and 13.5% in Science. The majority of students at UWC are from historically disadvantaged communities. In 2004 34% were African, 48.7% Coloured, 9.5% Indian and 5.6% White. UWC has seen a

consistently higher rate of enrolment of female students over the past five years. In 2004, 57% of the students were female and 43% male.

The University of Zambia (UNZA) is situated in the capital city, Lusaka. UNZA was established in October 1965, one year after independence, and the first academic sessions commenced in March 1966. The university began with only three schools across two campuses, Lusaka and Ndola. Over the years, a number of other schools have been established, namely, Law (1967); Engineering (1969); Medicine (1970); Agricultural Sciences (1971); Mining (1973);

of less than 5,000 students. Over the past five years, student numbers have increased to a total of about 9,000 students, with first year enrolment increasing to more than 1,500. In the 2004/2005 academic year the University enrolled 1,826 first year students. Of these 1,130 (62%) were male and 696 (38%) female. Given that the UNZA infrastructure has remained unchanged over the last three decades, residential and recreational facilities are overstretched and there is overcrowding in student residences, with up to 4 students sharing a room with only two beds. These living conditions may promote risky sexual practices that favour the rapid spread of HIV.



Business and Industrial Studies (1978), Environmental Studies (1981) at the Ndola Campus (1978), and Veterinary Medicine (1983) at the Great East Road Campus in Lusaka. In 1987 an Act was passed that established two autonomous Universities, the University of Zambia and the Copperbelt University that incorporated the schools at the Ndola campus. Presently UNZA hosts both the Main Campus on the Great East Road and the Ridgeway Campus or the School of Medicine along Nationalist Road where the University Teaching Hospital is also located. Until recently UNZA had a student population

PROJECT CONTEXT

HIV/AIDS is clearly one of the most important challenges facing both universities. The ZAWECA project is a direct response to this and should be seen against the mission statements of the two universities and their broader institutional responses to the epidemic.

At the University of the Western Cape, the ZAWECA project links with its mission to develop excellence in teaching, learning and research.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE MISSION STATEMENT

The University of the Western Cape is a national university, alert to its African and international context as it strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow. It is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society.

The UWC mission statement underscores the university’s alignment with the development needs of a society in transition, and with the unfolding needs of the poor communities from which most of its students are drawn. It also clearly states the university’s commitment to its African context. Over the past few years the institution has become critically aware of its role in the process of aligning itself with the mission of African universities. As such it subscribes to the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and the Declaration of the Association of African Universities (AAU). The ZAWECA project thus links very clearly with university’s aim to expand and strengthen its relationship with other universities in Africa.

At the University of Zambia, the ZAWECA

project falls within its policy guidelines and motto of ‘Service and Excellence’. This entails fostering excellence in the focus areas of the institution, namely, teaching, research and consultancy. The university is committed to developing and researching best practice peer-education models to create awareness and advocacy in prevention, care and support programmes in HIV at institutional, national, and regional levels.

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA MISSION STATEMENT

- to fulfill the historical purpose of a university through the pursuit of excellence in teaching research and scholarship.
- to advance national development through the application of learning and research.
- to promote learning by offering opportunities for advanced education to all suitably qualified persons, without distinction of race, gender, religion or political affiliation; and
- to enhance Zambia’s potential to promote the goals of the wider African and international communities.

To attain these aims effectively, the University has the responsibility to marshal and manage the necessary resources.

Both UWC and UNZA strive to link their academic work with campus extracurricular activities that will nurture a caring and people-centred campus community resulting in well-

rounded graduates. In order to do this, creating a caring and compassionate environment that addresses the needs of students affected and infected by HIV/AIDS has become a crucial part of student development. By focusing on HIV prevention using peer education, the ZAWECA project contributed to a better quality of life for students on campus as well as to building leadership and capacity to effectively address HIV/AIDS both on and off campus.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO HIV/AIDS

Over the last 5 years, both UWC and UNZA have endeavoured to develop integrated institutional responses to HIV/AIDS.

In the case of UWC, an HIV/AIDS programme was established in 2001 to prevent, manage and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on the university. This was based on an acknowledgment of the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and recognition that the disease would have a significant effect on the university. The programme reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor and aims to develop a model integrated response to create a caring, compassionate and non-discriminatory environment for all members of the university community infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

In addition to its work on campus, it strives to build partnerships within the university, between the university and surrounding communities, as well as with local and international organizations, more specifically with institutions of higher learning in the SADC region. The ZAWECA

project was clearly aligned with the institution's HIV/AIDS policy and contributed toward the university's integrated response to HIV/AIDS, focusing particularly on prevention.

In the case of UNZA, the ZAWECA project which started in the 2003/2004 academic year, was one of many efforts to provide students with information and other behavioural change interventions relating to HIV/AIDS. ZAWECA fell under the broader university-wide HIV/AIDS response co-ordinated by the Vice-Chancellor's Standing Committee on HIV/AIDS. The general mandate of the Committee includes fostering and co-ordinating all entities within the university directly or indirectly involved in any aspect of HIV/AIDS. The Committee is also responsible for initiating efforts to provide free voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and anti-retroviral treatment for students, staff and community members at the university clinic. Other projects include Stop HIV/AIDS, Reach Every Student (SHARES) and the Post-Test Club.



MANAGEMENT OF THE ZAWECA PROJECT AT UWC AND UNZA

The two institutions each developed a different management structure for the ZAWECA project. At UWC, the project was located in the HIV/AIDS programme office under the leadership of the project manager. The project manager reported to the HIV/AIDS Programme Director, who is accountable to the office of the Rector and Vice Chancellor. In addition to this line of reporting, the project had strong links with the Institutional Planning Office. This reporting structure and access to the Institutional Planning Office avoided unnecessary bureaucracy, allowed flexibility and ensured a high degree of independence in the project management. This expedited effective decision-making and project implementation.

At UNZA, the ZAWECA project was located in the Department of Development Studies in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. At its inception, the Vice-Chancellor appointed a multi-disciplinary Steering Committee consisting of members from various departments within UNZA to manage the project. The membership of this committee comprised the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, who chaired the Steering Committee meetings; a Senior Lecturer from the School of Medicine, who was also the Chair for the Vice-Chancellor's Standing Committee on HIV/AIDS; a Research Fellow from the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), who was also the ZAWECA co-ordinator working closely with the Project Manager in the day-to-day running of the project; a Lecturer in the Demography Division, School of Humanities and Social

Sciences, who was the main researcher on the project; and two Counsellors from the Dean of Student Affairs Office. The steering committee was responsible for the overall policy direction and also monitored that the planned peer education activities were appropriately implemented.

The Project Manager was responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and also served as the secretary to the Steering Committee. He supervised and coordinated the activities of the peer educators. In the second year of the project the Steering Committee reassigned the Manager to the research team and appointed the Assistant Co-ordinator as Manager. This move was affected in December 2004 to streamline the operations of the project.



PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

DEVELOPMENT OF PEER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES TO ADDRESS HIV/AIDS AT BOTH INSTITUTIONS.

A core aim of the ZAWECA project was to develop peer education programmes at the two universities based on solid research in order to develop best practice models. Each institution developed their own model peer education programme to address their individual needs and circumstances, but team members constantly exchanged ideas and experiences so that the models used were enriched by the mutual collaboration. In the following section the approaches developed at each institution will be described separately:



University of the Western Cape Programme:

The University of the Western Cape programme focused on using peer educators to ensure that all incoming first year students received basic information about HIV/AIDS, were made aware of the availability of and encouraged to use services such as VCT and condoms and addressed stigma and discrimination. In addition, the programme was used to develop student leadership for a range of HIV/AIDS awareness raising activities on campus as well as for community outreach activities.

Over the two year project implementation period, the UWC project recruited and trained 55 HIV/AIDS peer educators. Applicants were selected using a two-step selection procedure comprising a paper selection followed by an individual interview. The selected peer educators then received extensive training for their new roles. This commenced with a basic two day training session on HIV/AIDS conducted by an external trainer. This aimed at providing the peer educators with basic knowledge on HIV/AIDS, encouraged critical reflection about their personal attitudes relating to HIV, and addressed their questions and concerns. This was followed by a 4 day intensive skills development and growth training programme at the beginning of the academic year focusing on advanced biomedical, psychosocial and legal aspects of HIV/AIDS, diversity, facilitation skills, group dynamics and an in-depth focus on gender. Taking the peer educators off-campus during this training facilitated team building and allowed intensive work to take place in the evenings. All peer educators also attended a portfolio development

workshop as well as fortnightly follow-up training and supervision sessions.

Over the two year period, the UWC peer educators delivered a large number of project activities. These included:

- Presenting a basic 2 hour HIV/AIDS training workshop to all incoming first year students during the orientation programme at the beginning of each academic year. The workshop aimed at imparting accurate information about HIV/AIDS and ensuring that the new students knew what services are available on campus and where to access them (e.g. VCT, condoms, treatment for STIs and so on). The peer educators reached approximately 3000 first year students with these workshops over the two years. Evaluation of the impact of these workshops indicates that they succeeded in increasing knowledge of services and of HIV (See separate research report) among the first year students who attended them.
- Facilitating a series of events in the first year university residences to raise awareness about issues relating to HIV/AIDS. During the project implementation period, peer educators were involved in a number of events with a particular focus on addressing stigma and discrimination. These included an induction ceremony

for first year residence students and a fun day focusing on positive living. Using creative approaches such as drama, singing, music, poster competitions and dancing, in excess of 1000 university residence students were reached during these two events alone.

- Arranging social marketing and awareness raising events across campus. These included candlelight memorial services, interfaith ceremonies, participating in the university RAG event and the UWC Race against AIDS (a 10 Km fun run). The fun run was supported by more than 1000 athletes between the ages of 16 and 45 years.
- Training of senior students in student governance structures such as clubs, societies, the executive members from residence house committees, Central House Committee members and mentors in the first year mentorship programme on various issues relating to HIV/AIDS.
- Using interactive theatre to spread prevention messages and provide basic information on HIV/AIDS at various events both on campus and in the surrounding communities.
- Conducting community outreach activities in schools, youth centres, with refugees from other SADC countries and adults placed in a poverty alleviation programme.

■ Tutoring in a Psychology 1 tutorial course focusing on HIV/AIDS. The objective of this course was to ensure that first year Psychology students knew basic facts about HIV/AIDS and were aware of its implications for their field of study. A total of 350 first year Psychology students participated in this course that comprised six one-hour tutorials presented by the peer educators and a range of assignments. After a thorough evaluation of the programme, it was decided not to continue with this intervention in the second year of the ZAWECA project. Although this was an interesting pilot study, the evaluation report suggested that the labour intensive nature of such an intervention is not merited in situations where there are limited and scarce monetary and personnel resources, such as is the case at UWC.

■ Participating in institutional linkage events with UNZA peer educators.

■ Assisting with research and dissemination of information about the project. A student colloquium focusing on bringing together outstanding students from the three tertiary institutions in the Western Cape to discuss and present papers on gender and HIV/AIDS was held at UWC in June 2005. Three UWC ZAWECA peer educators presented papers

reflecting on their experiences in the project. One of the papers presented focused on the collaboration between UWC and UNZA from a student perspective.

University of Zambia Programme

The ZAWECA HIV/AIDS peer education programme at the University of Zambia had a similar target group to the UWC programme, namely, first year students. In addition to this group, the programme also attempted to involve senior students in HIV/AIDS prevention and positive living. The focus of the programme was on raising awareness on issues related to reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and more specifically VCT. In contrast to the programme at UWC, the UNZA programme placed a strong emphasis on one-on-one counselling, a strategy that has proved to be very effective in the University of Zambia context.



At UNZA, a total of 60 peer educators were trained in the ZAWECA project over the two year project period. They were chosen from the different schools (faculties) of the University on the basis of recommendations from staff followed by personal interviews.

After selection, the peer educators received an initial 5-day in-house training at the main campus. Training topics included disease epidemiology, biomedical and psychosocial aspects of HIV/AIDS, facilitation skills, and personal development. In addition the training focused on personal risk assessment, assertiveness skills, self-awareness and communication skills. The training also aimed at teaching peer educators how to deliver HIV/AIDS awareness raising sessions to first-year students as well as how to handle and/or refer (where appropriate) individual questions and problems related to HIV/AIDS.

During year two of the project, as a result of the collaboration with UWC, portfolio development was included as a training theme at the beginning of the year. To facilitate programme delivery, the Project Manager/Assistant Coordinator and some members of the Steering Committee maintained constant contact with the peer-educators during activities and meeting sessions. This included regular briefing and debriefing meetings with the peer educators. These were used to plan and reflect on activities undertaken and to discuss the experience of the students during their one-to-one interactions and counselling sessions with fellow students.

The ZAWECA peer educators conducted their activities in close liaison with other HIV/AIDS initiatives at UNZA, for example, SHARES (Stop HIV/AIDS Reach Every Student) and UNZAPASS (a programme based in the Psychology department). In order to strengthen the project, an excellent working relationship was created with the counsellors from the Dean of Student Affairs' office and the UNZA clinic, so that cases beyond the scope of the peer educators could be referred for further psychosocial counselling and medical attention.

The model for peer education delivery at UNZA comprised the use of interactive drama, sharing of HIV/AIDS-related experiences through open group discussions, one-to-one peer educator/student interactions and quizzes about HIV/AIDS. In order to reach incoming first year students during the orientation programme, UNZA opted for informal interactive evenings. Activities presented during these evenings consisted of drama skits, quizzes and sharing of HIV/AIDS-related experiences to encourage





open discussion. Topics covered included stigmatization, the feasibility of abstinence in a campus environment and how to live positively. These activities were complemented by talks from leaders of all campus-based HIV/AIDS projects including social and youth clubs. At the end of the evening the programme used small group discussions to impart basic HIV/AIDS prevention messages and to give the first year students an opportunity to ask questions. Meeting in small groups (of between 25- 40 students) also provided an opportunity for peer educators to administer a baseline survey. Over the two year project period a total of 1400 first year students were reached through the interactive evenings.

In addition to their involvement in the first year programme, UNZA peer educators participated in a number of other activities both on campus and in the surrounding communities. These included:

- A VCT drive involving students from different faculties and all year levels.
- Talk shows, discussion forums and panel discussions with commercial sex

workers, people living with AIDS and senior students as guest speakers. These events were hosted to place HIV/AIDS on the institutional agenda of student governance structures. More than 300 students attended a discussion forum presented during the UWC visit to Zambia in 2005.

- The development of ICE (Information, Communication and Education) materials. These materials have been designed to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS both on campus and in surrounding communities. The development of a training manual formed an important part of the materials development process. These materials have served an important function in training and intervention work on campus.
- Visits to orphanages and hospices to familiarize peer educators with community resources and introduce the UNZA programme to community organizations.

INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES AND NETWORKING

An important outcome of the project has been the establishment of formal links between the University of the Western Cape and the University of Zambia. These were initiated by the official launch of the project in Cape Town in November 2003. This event was attended by a high level UNZA delegation as well as representatives from SANTED, NORAD and the South African National Department of Education. It provided an ideal opportunity for project staff as well as representatives of top management from both institutions to establish a working relationship and engage in joint programme planning discussions at a very early stage in the project.

The formal launch of the UNZA programme took place on 3rd December 2004. The aim was to formally introduce the project to staff and students at UNZA. The event was hosted by the Vice-Chancellor and a representative of the former Head of State, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, was the guest of honour. The launch was also attended by the UWC programme manager and the SANTED programme director.

During the two year project implementation period, a number of official exchange visits between the two institutions at Vice Chancellor, project management, research team and student levels took place. The UWC project team paid 6 visits to Zambia over the two year project implementation period. Details of these visits are provided in the table below:

Date	Purpose of visit	Team composition
12-15 April 2004	First visit to UNZA – meet members of project team and UNZA peer educators	UWC ZAWECA Programme manager
6-10 June 2004	Report writing meeting	UWC ZAWECA Programme manager
16-20 Aug 2004	Student linkage	HIV/AIDS Programme Director, UWC ZAWECA Programme manager, 6 Peer educators
2-4 December 2004	UNZA project launch	UWC ZAWECA Programme manager
27 Apr-2 May 2005	Student linkage	UWC Vice-Chancellor, Institutional Planner, HIV/AIDS Programme Director, Programme manager, 9 Peer educators
23-27 June 2005	Joint report writing for close out report	Director HIV/AIDS programme, UWC ZAWECA Programme manager

A highlight was the visit to UNZA in May 2005 by an official delegation from UWC comprising the Vice Chancellor, Institutional Planner, ZAWECA programme director, project manager, Director of SANTED, 9 UWC HIV/AIDS peer educators and Dr Sanette Boshoff from the National Department of Education (South Africa). The aim of this visit was to discuss further collaboration between UWC and UNZA beyond the ZAWECA project with a particular focus on student development;

A final exchange visit to Zambia by the UWC project manager and project director in June 2005 allowed the two project teams time to plan and compile the joint project report and analyse and write up the comparative data from the first year survey.

Zambian project team members undertook 4 visits to the UWC project over the past two years. Details of these visits are provided below:

Date	Purpose of visit	Team composition
18 November 2003	ZAWECA project launch	UNZA Deputy Vice Chancellor, Chairperson of Steering Committee, Chairperson of Standing Committee on HIV/AIDS, UNZA ZAWECA Project Researcher, ZAWECA Project Programme manager
4-6 November 2004	Project planning	UNZA programme manager
24-29 September 2004	Student linkage	Programme manager, steering committee member, researcher, 5 UNZA peer educators
18 November 2004	ZAWECA end of year function	UNZA Programme manager, Chairperson Standing committee on HIV/AIDS
18-23 Apr 2005	Student linkage	Assistant Programme coordinator, steering committee member, researcher, student counsellor, 5 UNZA peer educators



The exchange visits were very beneficial to the students involved. A total of ten peer educators from UNZA and 14 from UWC participated in the student exchange visits. Four of the South African students even raised their own money to visit their Zambian counterparts. The peer educators who went on the exchange visits were all nominated by their peers to represent the two programmes. This was their first experience of visiting another African country and enabled them to spend time getting to know each other and exchanging ideas and experiences relating to HIV/AIDS in their respective countries. In addition, these visits provided the opportunity for joint training and capacity building in peer education methods and portfolio development, the development of leadership skills and joint community outreach work relating to HIV/AIDS in both countries.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS ON THE EXCHANGE VISITS:

“The programme enabled me to value the fact that cultures are very diverse and even with diversity it is possible to fight HIV/AIDS”.

“It opened up my mind to realise that this is a long term project. This can inspire others to work hard”.

“Its vital because it gives a more general understanding of the problem across countries. This can help us learn new techniques to address the pandemic”.

“From my visit in another country I have learnt that ZAWECA works both inside and off campuses”.

“After ZAWECA activities, I don’t think it is possible to stop talking about HIV”.

“We learnt that ZAWECA is a very useful project because the issue of HIV is not only in one country. Other countries have similar problems.”

“I would like to be involved even after school with the friends I have acquired in the other country.”

The mutual institutional visits have served to consolidate and build collaboration between the two institutions that stretches beyond the focus of the ZAWECA project. The visits provided an excellent opportunity for first-hand sharing of experiences and research relating to the use of peer education as a prevention strategy in the field of HIV/AIDS. In addition the project has led to the expansion of the original aims to include the development of peer counselling initiatives, the use of portfolios as a monitoring tool and for student development, and a variety of new community outreach activities.

With regard to institutional linkages, the project has provided the basis for the development of further collaborative projects, joint research projects and the development of a memorandum of agreement between the two universities. The visits succeeded in nurturing shared ownership

as well as providing a platform for further collaborative work in the area of student development and HIV/AIDS between the two institutions, which would not have otherwise been possible. The spin-offs from these visits will hopefully lead to more joint projects in other areas between the two universities and to the extension of the model/project to include other SADC countries.

IMPACT ON STUDENT LIFE AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

The ZAWECA project has succeeded in placing HIV/AIDS on student agendas both in the student residences and on the main campus at both universities. At UWC this was achieved by involving a number of student governance structures both in training on HIV/AIDS and planning prevention and social marketing events using the peer educators. As a result of the training given by the ZAWECA project, the Student Representative Council became more actively involved in HIV/AIDS awareness raising events on campus over the two years. This led to other student governance structures focusing on HIV/AIDS in their training programmes. The ZAWECA peer educators trained members of the house committees and Central House Committee, mentors in the mentorship programme, tutors in the computer literacy programme and collaborated with the Muslim Students Association (MSA) to present an awareness raising event on campus.

Not only did the project impact on student life and governance, but it also helped focus staff attention on HIV/AIDS. Two events during 2005 serve as good examples. The first involved staff

and students from the sports and recreation department on campus. They arranged a 10 km fun run, with 'The Race against HIV/AIDS' as its central theme, that attracted a thousand runners. The second was the first university RAG (Remember and Give) held during May 2005. This event provided an opportunity for students and staff to express the HIV/AIDS theme by means of float building. Three of the six floats had HIV/AIDS as the central theme. One of these floats was made by staff attached to the technical services' department. The other two were made by ZAWECA peer educators and peer educators from the gender-based programme.

The project at UWC has thus successfully addressed the important issue of student leadership development and quality of student life and helped to get the staff more involved in HIV/AIDS related activities.



At UNZA, the ZAWECA project also involved student leadership in HIV/AIDS-related activities. The Secretary General of the University of Zambia Student Union (UNZASU) attended the training in 2004 and maintained contact with ZAWECA during the 2005 academic year. During the orientation programme for the first year students, his office was pivotal in organising students for the ZAWECA activities. The programme also linked with the Social Committee of UNZASU. The 2005 chairperson of this committee was trained by the ZAWECA programme.

IMPACT ON PEER EDUCATORS

Evaluation of the programme at both institutions shows that it impacted significantly on the peer educators. Interviews with them over the course of the project indicate that they benefited in a number of ways, the most important of which was on the enhancement of their self-esteem and confidence, communication and social skills.

A common view expressed by peer educators was that transformation needs to begin with the individual who is promoting change. The majority of the peer educators at both institutions felt that if they were going to advocate a strategy, such as VCT, they should be able to relate to it from first hand experience. This motivated them to establish their own HIV status. These and other comments are positive indicators that peer educators involved in the ZAWECA project began to take on board the idea that they needed to change their own sexual behaviour as a prerequisite to advocating that others change their sexual behaviour.

“Before we did orientation we had lots of workshops on like voluntary counselling and testing and learning your status and why its so important and we were told we were going to talk about it and encourage students to go for it. I knew at that point that I had never gone for a test before and I thought well this is really important for me to go for these tests so that I can explain my personal experience. I would know what I am talking about when I tell other students to go for it... I can't help students to go (for VCT) if I haven't done it or I haven't experienced it... Like I sort of I won't tell them to do something if I don't apply it to my own life.”
(UWC peer educator - 2004)

At UNZA peer educators in the programme indicated that the ZAWECA project encouraged them to speak more freely on issues related to HIV to peers, family members and members of their religious communities. This is of particular significance given that HIV/AIDS is hugely stigmatised in Zambian society. Peer educators often also reported on how the project had positively changed their views and attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS.

“The ZAWECA training made me start talking. I am now courageous to talk about condoms. I tell my friends that even in church youths get pregnant and have HIV. Let us not pretend” (A 25-year old female peer-educator in the School of Veterinary Medicine, UNZA, 2005).

“When I attend to ZAWECA activities I consider it a very good time. I have learnt a lot. For instance, how I can contract HIV, the protective measures, nutrition for people living with HIV and AIDS, administering ARVs, counselling and monitoring and evaluation. The ZAWECA training met my expectations because it had a lot of information that I was ignorant about” (23-year old female peer-educator in School of Education, UNZA, 2005).

“Community activities have made me know people’s opinions on HIV. It has also helped me to learn how to speak to adults and in local languages, how to be sensitive about people’s views and positions” (22-year old male peer-educator from Natural Sciences, UNZA, 2005).

RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

The project has stimulated both collaborative and institution specific research. This includes a comparative baseline study of first year students’ sexual behaviour at the two institutions. Research emanating from the project has already been disseminated at a number of different fora. At the University of Zambia, research findings have been shared with the academic community. During the International Student Conference on AIDS (ISCA) from 17th to 23rd July, 2005 held in Lusaka, Zambia, two papers were presented based on the Zambian data. The first was delivered at a one-hour round table discussion which looked at how students can spearhead HIV/AIDS projects at institutions of higher learning. A number of photos, brochures, pamphlets, research and evaluation instrument tools were presented to more than 100 participants. A panel discussion chaired by two UNZA peer educators focused on lessons learned from the UWC-UNZA student collaboration as an example of a SADC initiative. This presentation will be captured in the official ICSA conference proceedings. The second, one-hour paper presentation looked at strategies on implementing peer-education models in institutions of higher Learning, using UNZA as a casestudy.



At the University of the Western Cape a four person research team consisting of the HIV/AIDS Programme Director, Peer Education Programme Manager, a professor from the UWC Statistics department and the external project evaluator has been established. A number of research publications have been and are in the process of being produced and disseminated:

- Project experiences were presented at a two-day Peer Education and Evaluation workshop coordinated by the national Higher Education AIDS task team (HEAIDS) in Pretoria. This presentation took the form of a one-hour multimedia presentation.
- Project progress and experiences have been regularly shared at the quarterly meetings of ACTIW (AIDS Committee of the Tertiary Institutions in the Western Cape) as well as at national meetings of the HEAIDS programme.
- Two abstracts were submitted to the International HIV/AIDS conference held in Bangkok, Thailand in July 2004. Both were selected for inclusion in the extended conference proceedings.
- In collaboration with HEAIDS, the Psychology and HIV/AIDS integrated curriculum has been written up as a research case study in preparation for later publication.
- A poster on the ZAWECA HIV/AIDS Peer education programme at UWC was presented at the 2nd South African AIDS Conference in Durban from the 7th-10th July, 2005.

- The research team are in the process of writing two journal articles on the ZAWECA peer education project at UWC. One will focus on the use of an action research approach to evaluate the project and the other one will focus on developing models of best practice in the area of peer education.

The action research approach used to evaluate and reflect on the project over two years contributed toward the development of an excellent peer education programme at UWC (see separate research report). Although peer education programmes are widely used strategies in HIV/AIDS prevention education, very few have been thoroughly evaluated. The knowledge and expertise gained in rigorously evaluating and developing the intervention over a two-year period will thus help contribute to the knowledge base of peer education programmes in the field of HIV/AIDS.

This project has also contributed towards establishing models of best practice for peer group intervention. A number of key elements of this project could potentially be used by other institutions both locally and internationally where similar programmes are offered. Of these the following were particularly successful:

- The use of interactive methodologies during group interventions
- Using interactive theatre to raise awareness as part of a preventative strategy when working with youth
- Portfolio development as a monitoring and evaluation technique

- Evaluating the programme on an ongoing basis using action research

It is envisaged that an article highlighting lessons learned from the collaboration between the University of the Western Cape and the University of Zambia will evolve from the research data collected by the two research teams. Data collected during the two KAP surveys has laid the foundation for a comparative study focusing on sexual practices among first year students in two institutions in Africa

ZAWECA PROJECT REPORTS, PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Selikow, T., Jacobs, J. & Vergnani, T. (2005). Peer Education and Action Research at the University of the Western Cape. Poster presented at the 2nd South African AIDS Conference, Durban, 7-10 July.
- Jacobs, J. & Bosman, V. C. (2004). HIV/AIDS in the curriculum: a critical intervention point. Abstract accepted for publication in the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, 11-16 July.
- Malungo, J. (2005). Strategies for implementing peer education models in institutions of higher learning: the case of the University of Zambia. Paper presented at the International Student Conference on AIDS (ISCA), 17-23 July, Lusaka.

- Atkins, L. (2005). Interactive theatre as a training technique in HIV/AIDS prevention. Paper presented at the UWC-Engender Health Student Colloquium, 16 July, Bellville: University of the Western Cape

- Cook, M. (2005). Beyond the borders - Reflections on the University of the Western Cape and University of Zambia HIV/AIDS peer education collaboration. Paper presented at the UWC-Engender Health Student Colloquium, 16 July, Bellville: University of the Western Cape

- Groenewald, L. (2005). Reflections on a brief HIV/AIDS training with institutionalised youth. Paper presented at the UWC-Engender Health Student Colloquium, 16 July, Bellville: University of the Western Cape

- Peters, F. (2005). Male constructions of sexual consent. Paper presented at the UWC-Engender Health Student Colloquium, 16 July, Bellville: University of the Western Cape

EVALUATION AND OTHER REPORTS

- Selikow, T. (2005). External project evaluation of the HIV/AIDS peer education project at the University of the Western Cape (ZAWECA project). Bellville: University of the Western Cape. Unpublished research report

- Vergnani, T. & Jacobs, J. J. (2004). ZAWECA Semi-annual Report to SANTEd for the period October 2003 - June 2004. University of the Western Cape.
- University of Zambia (2004). ZAWECA Semi-annual Report to SANTEd for the period October 2003 - June 2004. University of Zambia.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Vergnani, T., Jacobs, J.J. & Selikow, T. Using action research to develop and evaluate a HIV/AIDS peer education project. (provisional title - in progress)
- Vergnani, T, Jacobs, J.J. & Selikow, T. Developing models of best practice in HIV/AIDS peer education programmes (provisional title - in progress)

RESEARCH REPORTS

- Vergnani, T., Blignaut, R. & Jacobs, J.J.. (2004). HIV and AIDS-related knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviour of first time entering students at the University of the Western Cape. Bellville: University of the Western Cape. Unpublished research report
- Vergnani, T., Blignaut, R. & Jacobs, J.J. (2005). HIV and AIDS-related knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviour of first time entering students at the University of the Western Cape.

Bellville: University of the Western Cape.
Unpublished research report.

- Vergnani, T., Malungo, J, Blignaut, R.J., Ndubani, P., Jacobs, J.J & Selati, F. (2005). A comparison of HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviour of first time entering students at the University of the Western Cape and the University of Zambia. Research report (in progress).



CAPACITY BUILDING

An important outcome of the project was to build both individual and institutional capacity, particularly in the field of peer education. The project has enhanced the capacity of staff, students and beneficiaries at a community level to address and live with the threat of HIV/AIDS. In addition it has built leadership at a number of levels-students, peer educators, project administrators and managers. The project has also increased expertise in project coordination and evaluation at UWC and UNZA. It has also enhanced cross-cultural sensitivity and collaboration, provided experience in developing partnerships across countries and has helped in creating a shared vision of how to use peer education for HIV/AIDS prevention.

A combined total of 115 students have been trained as peer educators in the ZAWECA project at the two institutions over the past two years. Not only have they received intensive training and experience in peer education, they have also taken their newly gained expertise into various community projects. In addition, they have learned how to document and reflect on their experiences as peer educators in portfolios, which can in turn be used advantageously when they enter the job market.

The institutional exchange visits stand out as an important vehicle for capacity building across the two institutions. These visits have allowed both staff and students the opportunity for training and capacity building. Thus, for instance, during the first year of the project UNZA staff and students received training in portfolio development during their visit to UWC, which

they were in turn able to present to UNZA students in the project's second year. The UWC student visit to UNZA in year two of the project, allowed UWC peer educators an opportunity to gain knowledge and experience of one-on-one peer counselling in the context of reproductive health. The assistant programme manager at the University of Zambia was a student at UWC and spent a year as administrative assistant in the UWC ZAWECA project before joining the ZAWECA project team at UNZA. This gave her first hand experience in the administration and management of the peer education project at UWC, which she applied in her position at UNZA.

In addition, the project has trained student leadership at UWC and UNZA in the field of HIV/AIDS. This is an important contribution to the future of both countries as student leaders often take up leadership positions in a range of different organizations and government departments once they leave university. By training them and sensitising them to issues relating to HIV/AIDS, the project has made an important contribution to addressing the pandemic at a broader societal level.

The project has also contributed to the building of staff capacity and expertise at both institutions to design, manage, implement, monitor and evaluate peer education programmes. Working with each other in a Sub-Saharan Africa context has increased the knowledge-base and experience of the staff involved and thus contributes positively to building expertise in teaching, research and program delivery in the field of HIV/AIDS in the region.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Although not intended as a primary objective, the project led to a series of community outreach projects using peer educators at both institutions. The perceived success of the project at UWC resulted in numerous requests from NGO's, schools, churches and community-based organizations to use the ZAWECA peer educators for HIV/AIDS prevention and also to use the interactive theatre group. They were also involved in presenting HIV/AIDS prevention programmes to a number of marginalised groups. These included learners with special needs, centres caring for juvenile delinquents and two refugee groups from the SADC region based in Cape Town. By doing so, it highlighted the needs of these communities. This is in line with the university's strong emphasis on nation building.

The UNZA programme started a community outreach project involving churches from the local communities, doing work with both adults and youth groups. These activities focused on reproductive health issues and working with people living with HIV/AIDS.

During student exchange visits peer educators from both institutions were supervised by staff to present joint community outreach activities. This allowed a mutual exchange of ideas and insight into cultural specific practices and beliefs relating to HIV/AIDS. Students were thus able to gain first hand experience of the complexities of the disease in the two countries.



PROJECT CHALLENGES

Working collaboratively over a large distance in two different countries with very different (as well as common) problems relating to HIV/AIDS presented the project teams with a number of challenges:

Coordination of the project across two countries was often difficult due to communication problems. Communication sometimes broke down for long periods of time as computer systems were either overloaded or off line at UNZA. The systems at both universities could not handle large file attachments. These challenges meant that extra unforeseen visits between the two project teams had to be undertaken. This, however, also had positive spin-offs in that it strengthened the relationships between the two teams.



A project of this nature cannot succeed without identifying common goals as well as indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The distance between the two institutions and the difficulties with technology meant that this took more time than originally envisaged. The teams only succeeded in collecting comparative baseline data on student sexual behaviour from representative samples at both institutions during the second cycle (2005). Although both institutions managed to collect baseline data during 2004, this was not comparable due to the different times of data collection and different samples. This was partly due to the later start of the project at the University of Zambia. However it can be seen as a major achievement that the two institutions managed to resolve the initial problems and actually collect comparative data by the second year of the cycle, given the above-mentioned communication difficulties, the distance between the two institutions, different project management styles and staff turnover problems at UNZA. The two institutions also had to deal with different administration systems, different cultural contexts and different resources

available to support the peer education programmes.

Student apathy with regard to the issue of HIV/AIDS is a common problem at both universities. Students often enter university with high levels of HIV/AIDS 'fatigue' or 'saturation', having been exposed to AIDS information (often of questionable quality and accuracy) both at school and via the media. Engaging them requires careful planning and the use of new and innovative methods. The ZAWECA project has shown that innovative techniques such as interactive theatre, quizzes, informal one-to-one counselling and information session have been particularly well-received.

A key challenge in peer programmes of this nature relates to time and human resource demands. Peer education is a very labour intensive and costly intervention as it requires ongoing training, supervision and support of peer educators. Peer education programme models such as those piloted at UWC and UNZA over the last two years require the services of a dedicated peer education manager or management team in order to function efficiently. The experience at both institutions has highlighted the importance of having the right person with the right attitude and expertise in this post. Ideally the person should have expertise in peer education management, have an insider knowledge of how the university functions in order to ensure smooth running of the programme, be able to work independently as well as in a team, have knowledge of research methods and above all, be committed to and enjoy working with students and be available for after-hours and weekend training and supervision. It can be quite

challenging to find the right person for this position. This is very difficult to do in addition to other university work. Ideally, the peer education manager should be a full-time position. In order to sustain such a programme, both universities will have to consider investing in such a post. This may prove to be difficult given the financial constraints, staff shortages and work overload that both institutions face.

One of the most important questions that remains unanswered, is to what extent the peer education programmes at the two institutions actually impacted on student behaviour. This was unfortunately beyond the scope of the research brief for this project. To gauge the cost-effectiveness of programmes such as this, it is recommended that future studies attempt to document and track student sexual behaviour particularly during their first year at university. This will entail a much more complicated and costly research design, with matched control groups. However research such as this, would provide key information on efficacy that is currently missing in international research. In addition, it is recommended that more in-depth qualitative research be conducted to find out more about student sexual practices at university. This could then inform the content of the peer education programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ZAWECA HIV/AIDS Peer education programme funded by SANTED is a clear example of what can be achieved by higher education collaboration in the SADC region. It provides a model of a mutually beneficial and enduring partnership around the critical area of HIV/AIDS prevention. It has led to the building of a close partnership between the two participating institutions, expertise in peer education, impacted on student knowledge and attitudes relating to HIV/AIDS and thus, hopefully, impacted on the spread of the epidemic among this target group. It has also built capacity of staff and students in the field of peer education and research.

It is recommended that the project be expanded to include other universities in the SADC region. Each institution should develop culturally sensitive peer education initiatives that are based on their individual needs. Linking the various institutions via a common platform that fosters research and exchange of knowledge and best practice in peer education, as modelled by the ZAWECA project, will develop and promote longer term partnerships. These will then hopefully lead to closer collaboration across a range of disciplines between the institutions participating in the project. This will contribute to the achievement of the goals of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and the Declaration of the Association of African Universities (AAU).

The experience gained through this project highlights the need for higher education institutions to develop a comprehensive



HIV/AIDS prevention strategy which includes:

- Establishing partnerships in the SADC region
- The use of youth-centered interventions, particularly the use of peer education
- Sustaining awareness and education
- Situating prevention in a community context
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of interventions
- The development of culturally appropriate prevention messages

CONCLUSION

The ZAWECA project was a direct response to the challenge of fostering regional SADC collaboration among tertiary institutions in addressing the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is thus aligned with the SADC protocol on Education and the Declaration of the Association of African Universities.

As a pilot this project provided an excellent testing ground for regional collaboration in the context of HIV/AIDS peer education. Not only has it succeeded in setting benchmarks for peer education programmes in general, but has contributed to the development of best practice models in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention.

On behalf of the two university councils, the two Vice-Chancellors, participating staff and students, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Norwegian government and its South African representatives for providing the funding and support to make this project a success.



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