

Children Affected by HIV and AIDS Initiative

Summary



Photo credit: James Pursey for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

WHY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV AND AIDS?

What happens early has long-term impacts. Neuroscience, behavioral, and developmental research show that during the first few years, brain architecture is built that sets the stage for life, including cognitive function that will determine success in school and beyond. However, more than one-third of the world's children younger than 5 years do not reach their full potential. For those affected by HIV and AIDS, the consequences are more severe.

By integrating early childhood development as part of a broader package of services (including health, nutrition, protection, and poverty alleviation), there is opportunity to mitigate harm and ensure that children not only survive, but thrive.

A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ADDRESSING KEY GAPS

When compared to other health issues, relatively little funding is directed to the developmental needs of young children affected by HIV and AIDS. Plus, children from birth to 5 years have been missed within orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) programs as well as in HIV prevention, care, and treatment efforts, and national policies. Following a landscape review and expert consultations, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation identified that a gap existed in addressing cognitive, social, and physical development. The Foundation launched the Children Affected by HIV and AIDS Strategic Initiative that focuses on improving developmental outcomes for young children from birth to 5 years living in high HIV prevalence settings in five countries in East and Southern Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia). The Foundation's Board approved the strategy and made an initial investment of \$50 million over five years in late 2011. The strategy focuses on building the skills of caregivers, on strengthening community-based organizations, linking families and children to health, educational, and social services, as well as effective practice and policy. Learn more at hiltonfoundation.org/children-affected-by-HIVAIDS and melycaba.com.

Vision

Children affected by HIV/AIDS can survive and thrive in the communities where they live.

Initiative Areas

1

Skilled Parents and Caregivers

Able to meet children's
developmental needs

2

Strong Community- Based Organizations

Delivering quality childhood
development services

3

Effective Practice and Policy

Informed through global and
national knowledge-sharing

PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Within each of the five focus countries, Foundation partners include government departments, international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, and academic institutions. In a wide range of projects and programs, these groups have joined forces to increase attention to meeting the developmental needs of young children affected by HIV and AIDS. Momentum is building for policy change, and for delivering an integrated package of services at multiple levels.

Partners are coaching parents and caregivers of young children on age-specific approaches to early learning, stimulation, and nutrition as part of services provided during households visits, support groups, clinic settings, and early childcare centers. They are training and mentoring community health workers and volunteers, health care professionals, community-based organizations and networks, service providers, and government officials. Strong emphasis is placed on monitoring, evaluation, and learning in partnership with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Learnings to date include:

- the need to reinforce early learning and stimulation messages which have not typically been included in training packages—and to ensure that the youngest children from birth to 2 years of age are reached in addition to pre-school age children
- the importance of addressing program quality, including the impact of training and mentoring
- the need to use monitoring and evaluation data for program improvement
- the need to integrate approaches as part of existing systems to facilitate scale and sustainability

PRIMARY IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by international business pioneer Conrad N. Hilton, who founded Hilton Hotels and left his fortune to help the world's disadvantaged and vulnerable people. The Foundation currently conducts strategic initiatives in six priority areas: providing safe water, ending chronic homelessness, preventing substance abuse, helping children affected by HIV and AIDS, supporting transition-age youth in foster care, and extending Conrad Hilton's support for the work of Catholic Sisters. In addition, following selection by an independent international jury, the Foundation annually awards the \$1.5 million Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize to a nonprofit organization doing extraordinary work to reduce human suffering. From its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1 billion in grants, distributing \$92 million in the U.S. and around the world in 2013. The Foundation's current assets are approximately \$2.4 billion. For more information, please visit www.hiltonfoundation.org.

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