

LOCAL CAPACITY INITIATIVE (LCI) PROJECT

SUCCESS STORY



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Addressing the social-emotional barriers in young PLHIV living in Care Homes.

The Local Capacity Initiative (LCI) project funded by PEPFAR/USAID and implemented by the PANCAP Coordinating Unit in collaboration with University of the West Indies, Health Economics Unit worked to build the policy advocacy capacity of local civil society organisations (CSOs) that specifically focus on key populations to become more sustainable as they continue to support the overall goal of reducing transmission of HIV in the Caribbean.

Soroptimist International of Port of Spain (SIPOS) is a civil society organisation that works to primarily transform the lives of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities. SIPOS collaborated with the Cyril Ross Nursery in Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago, which houses 35 young PLHIV to implement the 'Crescendo Project' aimed at improving the quality of life of the children at the Cyril Ross Home.

Under the LCI Project, SIPOS developed a music therapy programme for children and PLHIV who continue to face stigma and discrimination to develop their communication, cognition, sensorimotor development, and socio-emotional well-being. SIPOS posited that through music and music-related activities children manage trauma and address non-musical goals in the areas of communication, cognition, sensorimotor skills, and socio-emotional behaviour.



SIPOS Mentoring Workshop (Picture courtesy of SIPOS)

Data gathered from the SIPOS music therapy and mentoring sessions highlighted the positive influence of music therapy and mentorship on the development of the young PLHIV. Children demonstrating progress in music were enrolled and supported in their preparation for UWI Steelpan Examinations (Grade 1). These results along with testimonials from interviews with the children, music therapists, and the staff at Cyril Ross Home were used to gain the support of the community, ministries and NGOs.

Through their advocacy efforts, SIPOS has achieved the following:

- Community, government and CSO Support and awareness of issues affecting young PLHIV.
- Fostered relationships with many influential and passionate PLHIV and the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC) to ensure that young PLHIV who are leaving the Home to join society are provided with training in Disclosure, Treat All Messaging, and Risk Reduction.
- Received funding from the Massy Foundation and the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts to continue their activities aimed at improving the lives of young PLHIV at Cyril Ross Home.

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