

## Peer Health Education Programme, Kitwe, implemented by CHEP

*In our last annual report, we said we would work with CHEP to:*

- train and support 50 new peer health educators;
- reinforce the management of the programme for possible future expansion;
- continue to encourage knowledge-sharing between CHEP and other organisations implementing similar programmes; and
- work with CHEP and Hodi to improve the career prospects of this group of young people with real potential.

*How did we do? In 2008/09 with CHEP we:*

- recruited and trained 50 young people as peer health educators;
- supported them to run school workshops with over 7,000 children;
- reviewed and improved the programme in collaboration with CHEP's management, the health educators themselves and the teachers who provide links with the schools;
- put CHEP in touch with Students Partnership Worldwide (SPW) to exchange experience with SPW's peer health education work in schools in rural Zambia;
- supported CHEP to work with Hodi to run careers talks in schools for grade 11 and 12 students; and
- supported peer health educators with teacher training applications. 12 enrolled in colleges this year and 22 have applied for places next year.

*Children listening attentively during a peer health education session. The young educators are taught to use a variety of methods including song, humour and drama to convey the serious messages about HIV. This information can literally save the lives of these children, who are at the threshold of their adult lives.*

**Our grant funding to CHEP in 2008/09 was £42,610 (2007/8 – £37,568)**



### *Activities in 2008/09:*

Throughout 2009, our talented young peer health educators conducted sessions in 25 schools in Kitwe, reaching over 7,000 students aged between 12 and 23 with vital health and human rights information. They also gave confidential advice to those who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to ask questions. In evaluations, young people said they found it easier to talk about sexual health issues to the peer educators, who were closer in age than their teachers. Children frequently approached peer health educators after the sessions to ask for advice. Peer health educators referred them to others for voluntary counselling, testing and treatment as needed.

Paul Kasoka, the Programme Coordinator, worked closely with schools this year to encourage them to support the peer educators in their work and to educate teachers about the value of this programme. Thanks to this training and their interaction with the peer educators, some teachers are now active in running anti-AIDS clubs and in teaching about HIV.



## Peer Health Education continued...

We have, however, found that there is less understanding and support for the programme within the wider community, and this is something that we plan to address next year.

With support from Pimmy Muzyamba, CHEP's Child Programmes Officer, Paul developed the content of training and teaching materials to address some of the recurring questions and issues, such as sexual abuse, which were raised by children in the previous year.

This year, Paul linked the peer health educators with representatives from local youth service clinics to learn about what clinics provide. This is an important development given that peer educators refer on average 50 individuals to clinics each month. The link will also help us observe whether peer education sessions actually encourage use of health clinics.

Ten of last year's peer educators are now at university studying a broad range of subjects, twelve are training as teachers and one is studying to be a pre-school teacher at a private college. Others have found work in local businesses.

**Kennington Overseas Aid is aiming to raise over £21,000 in 2009 to support our peer health education programme.**

### *In 2009/10 in partnership with CHEP we undertake to:*

- train 50 young people as peer health educators;
- support them to run awareness-raising sessions for at least 7,000 children in 25 schools;
- continue to train contact teachers to support the Ministry of Education's commitment to incorporate HIV awareness in lesson plans;



Peer health educator, Laston Mwelwa, preparing his sessions for the next day. "I decided to become a peer educator because we've got so many pupils with no-one to lean on. It touched my heart. Peer educators encouraged me and shed more light on aspects of life like beer drinking, love, relationships and how we run our lives. I wanted to do the same for other youths.

Some pupils approach me after the session saying 'what you taught me was very helpful'. One boy of about 15 said to me 'I used to drink, but ever since you told me about the dangers<sup>13</sup> I've stopped drinking.' It was very satisfying and encouraging."

- develop and refine our monitoring of the programme with the participation of our partners, young people and the wider community;
- strengthen youth access to reproductive health services by working more closely with clinics;
- organise workshops with parents and community members;
- incorporate information about peer educators into Hodi's database;
- review the recommendations of an external evaluation of the programme which has been commissioned; and
- support Paul's personal development through training or exchange visits.

<sup>13</sup> Alcohol and drug abuse can lead to behaviour that increases the risk of HIV infection