



## STORIES of HOPE

### ZIMBABWE



Primary Care Counselor Edward Mupunga is part of a new cadre of workers in Zimbabwe's national health system trained with Emergency Plan support.

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### A Counselor Turns Despair into Hope

The first thing Primary Care Counselor Edward Mupunga says to new clients is, “My name is Edward. I am also HIV-positive and taking ARVs [antiretroviral drugs].”

Edward first came to the Opportunistic Infection Clinic at Harare Hospital as a patient. “I was very sick. You could say I was without hope,” Edward said. But time and antiretroviral treatment turned Edward’s despair into a strong desire to help others. “I have a passion for counseling. Now, I help others have hope because clients see that I am working and living positively with HIV,” he added.

Edward is a Primary Care Counselor (PCC), part of a new cadre of workers in the national health system in Zimbabwe. PCCs are individuals with no prerequisite medical education, who are trained to fill a critical need for HIV counseling services in hospitals and community clinics. Before the advent of PCCs, severely overburdened nurses provided the majority of counseling in clinical settings in this country where an estimated one-in-five people are living with HIV/AIDS.

With support from the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR), the Zimbabwe Association of Church Hospitals (ZACH) took the lead in training PCCs. About 300 newly trained PCCs are being integrated into the health system. The PCC cadre was adopted by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare as part of the national health system.

As a PCC, Edward is a valued member of the Opportunistic Infection Clinic team. “Sometimes, the doctor refers patients to me for counseling because he has identified a need,” Edward explained. “Sometimes, I see what I believe to be a medical issue during a counseling session, and I go to discuss it with the doctor.”

“Helping others keeps me going,” Edward said. “Every time I counsel someone, I grow from the experience because I know that I’m helping that person face his fears and live more positively.”

#### The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Department of State | U.S. Agency for International Development | Department of Defense | Department of Commerce  
Department of Labor | Department of Health and Human Services | Peace Corps

Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator  
[www.PEPFAR.gov](http://www.PEPFAR.gov) | [SGAC\\_Public\\_Affairs@state.gov](mailto:SGAC_Public_Affairs@state.gov)