



STORIES of HOPE

ZAMBIA

Religious Leaders Promote Care and Compassion



A Catholic group participates in a march as part of the PEPFAR-supported Care and Compassion Movement.

More than 700 religious leaders and members of their congregations, mosques and temples from Christian, Muslim, Bahá'í and Hindu faiths participated in a launch event held in October 2005.



In 2005, approximately 1.1 million adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS in Zambia.¹ In response to the epidemic, religious and traditional leaders joined together under the new Care and Compassion Movement to promote care, support and compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS. Mobilizing religious and community groups, the movement is designed to engage Zambia's religious and community groups to get passionately involved in efforts directed at preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

With support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR), the Care and Compassion Movement is being implemented by the Johns Hopkins University Health Communication Partnership in collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Council, and the Zambia Interfaith Networking Group on HIV/AIDS (ZINGO).

More than 700 religious leaders and members of their congregations, mosques and temples from Christian, Muslim, Bahá'í and Hindu faiths participated in a launch event held in October 2005. Seven religious leaders signed a declaration calling on all religious and community leaders to make the formation of care and support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS a priority. They also strongly condemned all forms of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in their churches, mosques and communities, and called on all Zambians to go for HIV counseling and testing.

At the launch event, 13 local musicians sang a new song about HIV/AIDS in English and seven local languages. Television and radio spots, posters and brochures carrying messages of hope, care and compassion were displayed at the event.

¹ UNAIDS, Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2006.