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HIP HYGIENE IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT

SUCCESS STORY

INTEGRATING WASH PRACTICES

Home-Based Caregivers Apply Training and Ingenuity to Improve Hygiene Practices of PLWHA



[Photo: R. Berry (AED)]

A home-based care worker demonstrates how adding a strap to a latrine can enable weak clients to use the facility more independently.

Tesfagoh, Amharic for Dawn of Hope, is a small Ethiopian care and support organization based in Bahir Dar that works with people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and their families. In January 2009, USAID's Hygiene Improvement Project trained 348 home-based care workers from Tesfagoh and two other local NGOs, OSSA and Mekidem Ethiopia, to integrate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices into their home-based care programs for PLWHA. This hands-on practical training focused on treating and safely storing drinking water, hand washing with soap or ash, and safely disposing of feces.

Two months after the completion of training, Tesfagoh workers report that almost 80 percent of their clients have built tippy taps—water-saving devices made from plastic containers for washing hands. In addition, Tesfagoh has adapted its monitoring form to include a place to report on WASH activities. One such weekly reporting form indicates that a home-based care worker discussed personal hygiene during 81 visits with clients and discussed water saving techniques during 73 visits.

Adisnakew, an HIV caregiver who works in the Kebele 14 neighborhood in the northeastern part of Bahir Dar explained, "I wanted to use what I had learned to help my clients." In one household, Tagegn Dessie, 30, who is living with HIV/AIDS, became too weak to use the latrine. Adisnakew constructed a strap made of rope to help support her. "It really helped my legs so I wouldn't collapse when I went to the bathroom," said Dessie. "Adisnakew installed a water bottle next to the latrine and attached a piece of soap on a rope in front of the latrine. This made us remember to wash our hands after using the latrine and then my children started to wash their hands after going to the bathroom. Before only my husband and I washed our hands."

Tesfagoh and its caregivers have embraced the WASH concepts. They have also become inventive. Using a shallow clay pot they found in the market, Tesfagoh caregivers created a potty for bedbound clients. They cover the rugged edges of the clay pot and then either use it as a bed pan or put it under a hole cut out of the bed. Fortunately, many PLWHA are now on antiretroviral therapy and the number of bedbound clients that Tesfagoh caregivers see regularly has declined.

These home-based care workers have internalized the WASH practices they have learned and are proud to share them with their families, neighbors and clients to improve people's lives.

For additional information: www.hip.wastan.net



[Photo: R. Berry (AED)]

Caregivers developed these bedpans using clay pots available from local markets.