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SUCCESS STORY

Pediatric AIDS Handbook Improves Care

Pediatricians and health professionals seek to expand expertise

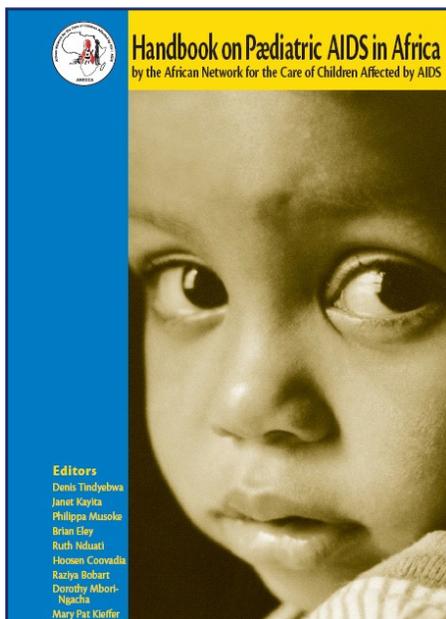


Image: ANECCA

The Pediatric HIV/AIDS Handbook is in high demand by medical professionals caring for HIV-positive children.

“I love this handbook — people in offices will use it, but those of us in the clinics will carry this in our pocket so that we can refer to it many times each day,” said Dr. Déogratias Niyungeko of Burundi.

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Nearly 200,000 African infants are born each year infected with HIV. About half that number die before their second birthday. The need for specialized knowledge and treatment among the region’s pediatricians is evident. In cooperation with the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID is supporting an initiative to expand expertise and share knowledge among health professionals in the region: the African Network for Care of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS (ANECCA). The group brings together clinicians and social scientists committed to making HIV prevention, treatment, and care a reality for all children in Africa. With help from USAID, ANECCA has published the first-ever *Handbook on Pediatric AIDS in Africa*, a practical resource for all levels of health workers written by leading experts in pediatric HIV/AIDS care in Africa.

Before the handbook’s publication, there were no specialized tools or information resources for medical professionals caring for HIV-positive children. The first 5000 handbooks were in such demand that a second print run was necessary within four months. In response to the demand for more information, USAID helped ANECCA develop a training curriculum based on the handbook and hold training sessions on the material. Demand for both the handbook and training remains high. In fact, the Ministries of Health in Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania adapted the curriculum for national workshops on HIV-infected children.

In addition, healthcare professionals in francophone Africa requested a French translation. USAID helped sponsor both a French version and a workshop in Togo with pediatric HIV experts from 11 francophone countries. The sense of excitement among participants was palpable. One after another, members of the group stood up to tell how important the handbook is for Africa. “This is information that we need desperately to take care of our children,” said Dr. Louise Wemin of Côte d’Ivoire. “This handbook is excellent – it is practical, it is easy to use, the language is simple enough for all types of health workers to benefit from it,” said Dr. Phillipe Mselatti of Burkino Faso.

Since the publication of the handbook, ANECCA’s role and visibility in Africa have grown tremendously. With help from USAID, pediatric expertise in HIV/AIDS in Africa is expanding, benefiting infected children throughout the region.