

## ZAMBART awarded new grant to study Improving equity in access to HIV care and treatment

ZAMBART, the University of Zambia, Department of Social Development Studies and the University of Basel, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (Switzerland) have been awarded a 3-year (2009-2011) grant to undertake a study on improving equity in access to HIV care and treatment in Zambia. The research collaboration is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). Through this collaboration, ZAMBART will be sub-granted 200,000 Swiss Francs, and one Evidence for Action member of staff will be given support to conduct a PhD at the University of Basel.

Zambia, a sub-Saharan Africa country devastated by HIV, has a prevalence rate of 14.3% (ZDHS, 2007). Despite the increasing availability of ART, a significant proportion of the Zambian population is unaware of their HIV status. Statistics indicate that about 20% of the Zambian population have ever been tested for HIV, and only 149,199 people living with HIV are receiving antiretroviral therapy, accounting for 50.6% of people in need of treatment (MoH, 2008). Therefore the study investigates how structural inequalities and socio-cultural factors (particularly stigma and aetiology) contribute to the under utilization of HIV/AIDS related health services. The study will be conducted in contrasting settings (urban/rural) and mixed social science research methodologies will be used.

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