



Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention Project-  
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## Promoting the rights of infants and young children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS: Experience from urban Zimbabwe

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# Author Slide

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# Introduction


- ▶ Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention Project UZ is a collaborative research organization that was established in 1993 between University of Zimbabwe, Department of Community Medicine and Stanford University, School of Medicine, USA
- ▶ With funding from Save the Children Zimbabwe and Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation, ZAPP UZ established community based PSS centres for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in Chitungwiza in 2006




# Background

- ▶ Keeping HIV exposed infants in follow up for the provision of care and treatment following PMTCT interventions is critical to decrease morbidity and mortality among young children.
- ▶ In Zimbabwe, concerted efforts have been made to strengthen the existing follow up system by identifying HIV exposed infants during routine immunization and well baby clinic visits through:
  - use of antenatal and infant handheld cards
  - community home visits

# Background Continued

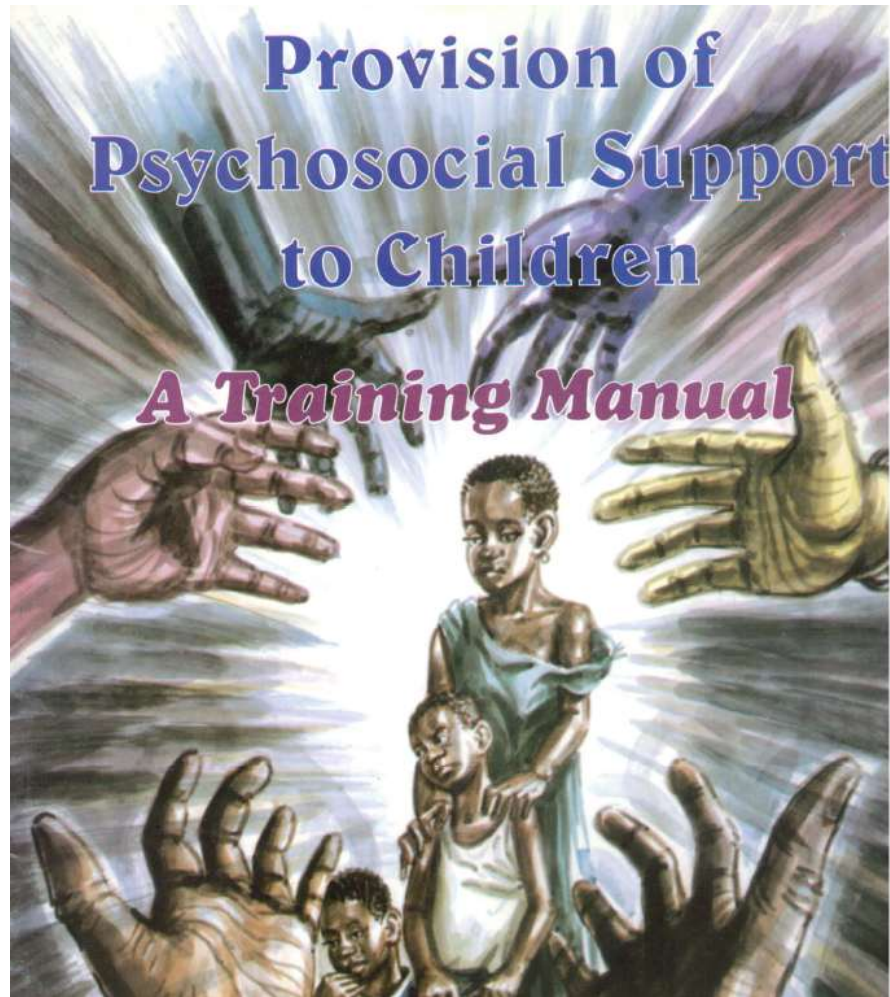
- ▶ Loss to follow up of HIV exposed infants remains a major challenge within the PMTCT program
  - ▶ Provision of psychosocial support services (PSS) to HIV infected and affected children below 5 years is not always prioritized within the PMTCT program
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# Objectives of PSS Centers

1. To provide psychosocial support services to children under five years of age who are affected and infected by HIV
  2. To improve access to care, treatment and support to HIV–exposed and HIV–infected children living in Chitungwiza
  3. To monitor adherence to treatment for HIV exposed children
  4. To strengthen the capacity of parents, families and the community, on HIV prevention, care and support to children affected and infected with HIV
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# Intervention

- ▶ ZAPP–UZ established community based PSS centres for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) under the age of 5 years
  - 5 PSS centres for children less than 5 years and
  - 1 support group for school going children
- ▶ In collaboration with the Chitungwiza community, ZAPP–UZ identified appropriate venues (faith based organisations) to use as PSS centres
- ▶ Selected 30 community volunteers (2 men and 28 women) to work as child minders.
- ▶ The Community Volunteers were:
  - literate
  - resided in the community
  - parents/guardians of OVC below 5 years
  - willing to work without pay



Child Minders were trained using standard **Save The Children Zimbabwe** PSS training curriculum




# Child Minder Training

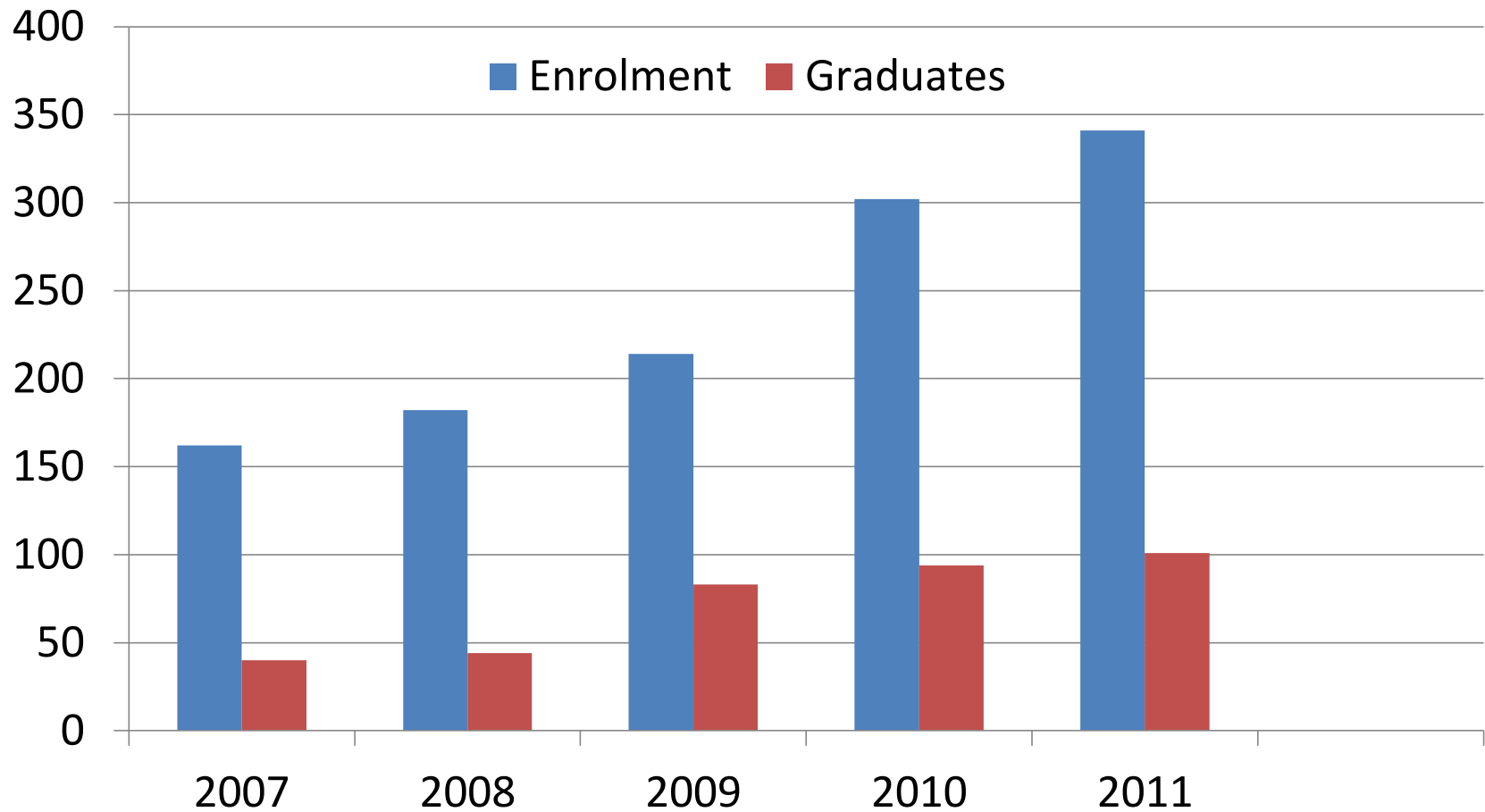
Child Minders were trained in the following:

- ▶ Psychosocial Support for children including play therapy
- ▶ Child development and basic needs of children
- ▶ Basic facts about HIV and AIDS including PMTCT
- ▶ Children's rights and responsibilities ; child abuse and child protection
- ▶ Communication and basic counselling
- ▶ Basic infant and young child feeding counselling
- ▶ Loss, grief and the Memory Box
- ▶ Community follow up, conducting a home visit and referral
- ▶ Nutrition, growth monitoring and immunization

# Role of Child Minders in PSS

- ▶ Promote child development through play
  - ▶ Sensitization of communities on child health, child rights and child abuse
  - ▶ Basic counselling of parents/guardians
  - ▶ Identification of treatment defaulters using registers
  - ▶ Follow up of defaulters and appropriate referrals for health and other social services
  - ▶ Actively participate in child protection committees within the community
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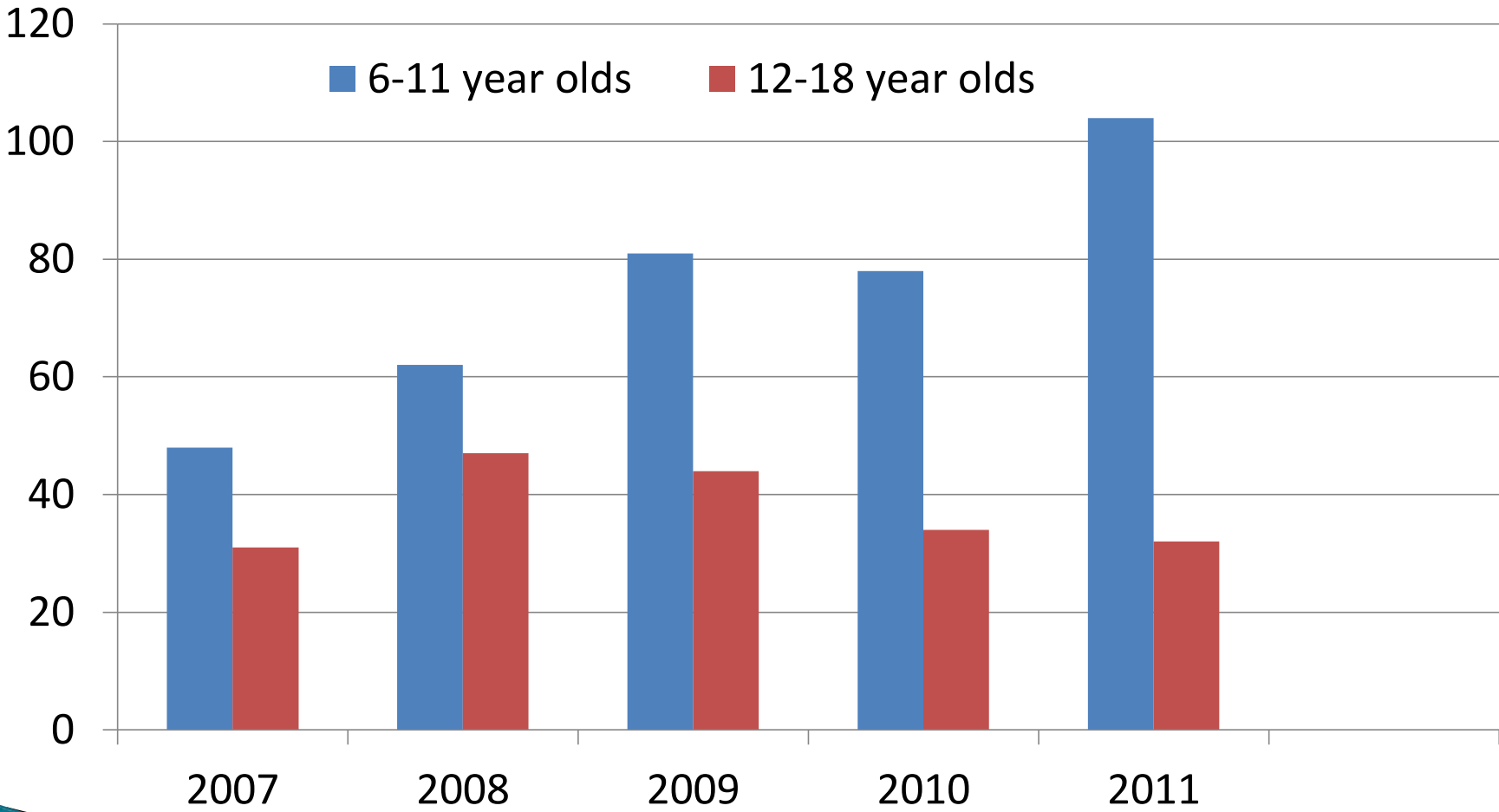
# Enrolment of under 5's into PSS Centres



# Graduation Day From PSS to school



# Enrolment of above 5 year olds into PSS



# HIV Care and Treatment


	2008	2009	2010	2011
Enrolled	182	214	302	341
HIV Exposed	93	96	148	182
HIV Tested	44	61	118	167
HIV Positive	6	5	9	5
On ART	6	5	9	5
On CTX	18	17	24	17

# Assistance with Birth Registration

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Without birth record (BR) on enrolment	103	86	101	82
No. successfully assisted to acquire BR	62	49	52	41
Percentage who acquired BR	60%	57%	52%	50%

Community advisory board members who include Teachers, Police Officers, Social Workers, Councillors and Health Officials assist with social services like birth registration.

# Challenges


- ▶ Unavailability of permanent conducive environment for play centres
  - ▶ Urban communities not keen to do voluntary work. Low morale among the child minders due to poor incentives
  - ▶ Long walking distances to available play centres
  - ▶ Inadequate funding for continuous on-job training of volunteers
  - ▶ Community based activities not always prioritized in PMTCT program planning and implementation
  - ▶ Inadequate financial resources to expand to other needy communities
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# Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Linking HIV exposed and HIV infected children from the PMTCT program with community based PSS services offers an opportunity to improve infant follow up and monitoring of both health and social well being of the children outside health institutions.
- ▶ Meaningful involvement of PMTCT beneficiaries in community activities enables PLWH to take a lead role in the response to HIV
- ▶ Trained community volunteers can help to improve long term access to care and support for HIV infected and affected children and their families
- ▶ In urban settings there is need to consider a cash living allowance for community volunteers

# Recommendations

- ▶ Community-based PSS centres should be an integral part of a comprehensive PMTCT program to keep children in care and treatment
  - ▶ Trained community volunteers should be utilized to promote and protect the rights of children in resource limited communities
  - ▶ Funding agencies to allocate adequate funds for community-based activities
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# Children at a PSS Centre



# Acknowledgements

- ▶ Chitungwiza community
  - ▶ Play centre Child-minders
  - ▶ ZAPP-UZ Community Mobilisers
  - ▶ Chitungwiza Municipality
  - ▶ Save the Children Zimbabwe
  - ▶ Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation
  - ▶ Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
  - ▶ Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
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# THANK YOU

Gracias

Siyabonga

Asante

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