

“HIV, Disability and Rehabilitation: An Analysis of Research and Innovation between Canada and Sub- Saharan Africa”

Visit the **study report** told with images:

<http://icdr.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SRC-Environmental-Scan-Final.pdf>

What was this project about?

Canadian researchers have been leaders in research on disability and rehabilitation related to HIV care, treatment and support, in both Canada and in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Many of these researchers embrace a “shared innovation” approach where collaborations between Canada and SSA have a positive impact on the response to HIV in Canada as well as SSA. That is, instead of the common approach where research done in Canada is used to develop programs in resource-poor countries, there are also lessons to be learned from SSA which could have a positive impact on the lives of people living with HIV in Canada.

The project team, which included researchers from Canada and SSA, undertook a project which was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Social Research Centre in HIV Prevention.

This project aimed to identify and describe research on disability and/or rehabilitation related to HIV in SSA that involved Canadian partners. The objectives of this project were to:

- (a) provide an overview of what was currently going on with research on HIV, disability and rehabilitation in SSA,
- (b) identify areas where researchers in Canada and SSA could do further work together, and
- (c) figure out what research needs to be done next.

How did we do this project?

We searched for all of the research projects that: focused on HIV, disability and rehabilitation in SSA; involved researchers affiliated with a Canadian organization; and took place since 2010.

We searched for these research projects by: (a) approaching individuals who we knew who were undertaking research in this area, (b) sending out an open call for survey participants within the project team’s networks, and (c) sending out an open call for survey participants to other organizations with an interest in HIV, disability and/or rehabilitation.

What did the project find?

A total of 15 projects were identified that met the criteria. 11 were research studies and 4 were published commentaries or reviews. The majority were conducted in Zambia, in partnership with researchers from the University of Toronto. The most common funder was CIHR.

The projects had many different sources of research funding and we viewed this as a strength. The new and innovative research topics addressed in the studies were also identified as a strength. Research topics centered on:

- disability experienced by people living with HIV
- the role of rehabilitation in addressing HIV-related challenges
- attention to both adults and children living with HIV
- stigma and discrimination related to HIV and/or disability
- how lessons about HIV and rehabilitation learned in Canada might have relevance in SSA, and how lessons learned in SSA might have relevance in Canada.

One important finding was that the same few researchers were involved in most of the projects – often because graduate students were involved. This is an area to build on. We also found that not all projects included investigators from SSA and/or community-based partners, which is a shortcoming to address in the future. Most of the studies were conducted in Zambia or in multiple countries.

Study findings were most often made available through academic journals, which can limit their accessibility to non-academic audiences, including people living with HIV. Some but not all studies had community-friendly reports. All projects had budgets less than \$300,000 CAD or no formal budget at all, indicating room for increased project size and scope. Areas that we did not address in this study, which should be considered in the future include: (a) research on HIV, rehabilitation and disability in SSA that does not involve Canadians, (b) analysis by gender, or (c) research conducted prior to 2010.

For more information

- See our user-friendly report: <http://icdr.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SRC-Environmental-Scan-Final.pdf>
- Contact Stephanie Nixon at Stephanie.nixon@utoronto.ca