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Title: Contribution of Livelihood Economic Volunteers to HIV Load Suppression

- **Authors Information;**

- **Authors' names:** ¹Michael Machera, ¹Aika Mallya, ¹Godson Maro, ¹Vailet Mollel, ¹Mussa Ndile, ¹Aminiel Mongi, ²Paschal Wilbroad
- **Affiliation:** ¹Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Headquarters – Health and Diakonia-USAID Kizazi Hodari Northeastern Zone Project, ² USAID Tanzania Health Office
- **Corresponding author:** Michael Machera, mmachera@elct.or.tz

- **Background:** The overall Tanzania viral load suppression rate is 78.1%, with a high rate for women (15 – 24 years) at 87.3%, and a low rate for men (25 – 34 years) at 57.0% (THIS 2023). Several factors are attributed to this but mainly food insecurity. A recent study found that as household hunger increased the rate of ART adherence declined. The situation is worse for out-of-school CLHIV (aged 15 – 17) as they cannot be employed or initiate their business.
- **Method:** Through the Hazina Yetu Model, the ELCT-USAID Kizazi Hodari Project uses community volunteers to mobilize out-of-school youth (15 – 17 years) to form groups. These groups are given different training and followed up until they establish businesses. Using an in-depth interview and direct observation, the ELCT team conducted a study on one of its youth groups, “Rich Before Forty” which contains 30 members with 2 CLHIV.
- **Results:** When joining the group, the 2 CLHIV had poor ART adherence which was caused by unassured meals hence high viral load. After joining the group and being trained by the LEV, the group opened a business. Currently, the group runs a business that helps the two CLHIV get income to support their meals. Now they have good ART adherence and have suppressed their viral loads to the Target Not Detected (TND) level.
- **Conclusion:** Viral load suppression requires multiple levels of interventions. To attain 95% viral load suppression by 2030, the government should invest more in community volunteers to provide relevant services to the needy.