



UPDATES

Kids with Kids study joins regional SRHR conversations

On 1 October 2025, Nonhlanhla Ndondo presented key findings from the Kids with Kids research study at the 9th International Workshop on Adolescents, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV in Gaborone, Botswana. Her presentation earned 13 Continuing Medical Education (CME) points from the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME), recognising the high quality and relevance of the work.

She also joined the expert panel for Session 1: *Adolescents Living with and at Risk of Acquiring HIV – Unintended Pregnancy, Antenatal and Postnatal Care: Best Practices and Challenges*, where she contributed to discussions on strengthening adolescent-centred care and policy.

This follows the recent launch of phase two of the study in Harare, Zimbabwe — bringing together policymakers, programme implementers, and community organisations to identify gaps in post-conception care and promote coordinated, trauma-informed support for pregnant children.



Highlights from the Kids with Kids showcase in Gaborone and Harare

Community-led hypertension care spotlighted at the Newlands clinic symposium

Dr Trevor Chivandire and Fadzaishie Mhino presented findings from the Community Blood Pressure (Com-BP) pilot study — including [study films](#) — at the 3rd Annual Newlands Clinic Symposium in Harare.

The Com-BP study tested how community support groups, adapted from the successful HIV Community ART Refill Group (CARG) model, can improve blood pressure management in Chitungwiza and Mazowe.

Key findings:

- Community-led care works – Co-creating blood pressure groups improved understanding and treatment adherence.
- Better control & stronger support – Groups improved blood pressure outcomes and peer motivation.
- Sustainable systems – Proven HIV care structures can be adapted for other chronic diseases.

The team highlighted that this approach could be a game-changer for low-resource settings where continuity of care is difficult.



Com-BP team at the Newlands clinic symposium in Harare

THRU-ZIM takes part in data protection workshop

BRTI's Data Officer, Tawanda Nyengerai, recently took part in a stakeholder workshop organized by the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ). The workshop focused on developing implementation guidelines for the Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07].

Discussions centered on practical measures to strengthen compliance, including Data Protection Impact Assessments, cross-border data transfers, and continuous professional development for certified Data Protection Officers (DPOs).

BRTI-THRU ZIM's involvement demonstrates its commitment to ethical research governance and global privacy standards.



Tawanda at Potraz workshop in Harare

PROMISE Trial kicks off with strong community support

The PROMISE Trial officially launched on 22 September 2025, enrolling its first participants at Kambuzuma Polyclinic in Harare. This milestone marks the start of a city-wide effort to evaluate how diagnostic-led STI screening within antenatal care can improve newborn and maternal outcomes.

On 1 October 2025, PROMISE held its first Community Advisory Board (CAB) meeting, bringing together pregnant women, young women, grandmothers, fathers, and local advocacy leaders from all 15 study sites across Harare. During the meeting, members discussed ways to encourage early antenatal care (ANC) booking, shared insights on culturally sensitive recruitment, and identified barriers to participation.

The PROMISE team also introduced several sub-studies and invited feedback on how to keep participants actively involved throughout the research process. As recruitment continues, the CAB will play a key role in ensuring the trial remains community-led, respectful, and responsive to the needs of pregnant women and their families.



The real cost of Hip fractures in Zimbabwe

Hip fractures are a serious health event for older adults, often leading to severe illness, disability, or death. As Zimbabwe's population ages, these fractures are expected to rise—and with them, the burden on the health system.

To guide resource allocation and policy, a cost-utility analysis of hip fracture management was undertaken in Zimbabwe. The study, led by Nyasha Mafirakureva and colleagues and published in *Bone & Joint Open*, provides the first data of its kind in the country.

Key findings include:

- Surgical treatment adds approximately two extra months of perfect health over one year.
- Early surgery (within 15 days) results in even greater health gains.
- Surgery costs about USD 1,676 per patient, roughly equivalent to Zimbabwe's gross national income (GNI) per capita.
- Without financial protection, these costs could push families into poverty or delay access to care.

Read the publication here: [Bone & Joint Open](#)



THRU -ZIM celebrates MSc achievements

THRU-ZIM is delighted to celebrate the academic achievements of four team members who completed their Master of Science (MSc) degrees.

Congratulations to:

- **Trevor Chivandire** – MSc Public Health, University of Manchester
- **Onismo Mufare** – MSc Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy and Programming, University of London (LSHTM)
- **Fionah Mundoga** – MSc Anthropology, University of Zimbabwe (UZ)
- **Cuthbert Sekanevana** – MSc Child Sensitive Social Policies, Women's University in Africa (WUA)

We are incredibly proud of their achievements and wish them continued success.



Sweet reward for MSc success

Bright Minds-Open Doors
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMPETITION

Turn your research into an experience that inspires the public!

Propose a creative public engagement project that makes research accessible, relatable, and exciting for non-specialist audiences.

Who can apply?
All THRU ZIM staff
Apply individually or in teams

Up to USD5000 total funding available

5 winning projects will receive maximum of USD1000 each

APPLY HERE

Applications are open until 15 December 2025

THRU- ZIM launches Public engagement competition

This November, THRU-ZIM launches a new opportunity for researchers to step beyond the page and into the public eye. The Bright Minds – Open Doors Public Engagement competition invites team members to share their work in ways that spark curiosity, conversation, and connection.

Whether through interactive workshops, community pop-ups, art installations, or online campaigns, the competition is looking for bold ideas that connect research with people and drive meaningful engagement.

Competition Details

- Up to USD 1,000 available for each of five winning projects
- Training and one-on-one support provided by the Public engagement team
- Winning projects to be showcased at the THRU-ZIM Public Engagement Showcase (date to be announced)

[Apply Here](#)

Leadership Updates at THRU-ZIM

Ethel Dauya – continues in her role as **Acting Director General, Biomedical Research and Training Institute**, bringing steadfast leadership and dedication.

Jacqueline Kabongo - steps into the role of **Acting Director of Field Operations, THRU-ZIM**, leveraging her experience to strengthen field initiatives across THRU-ZIM.

Karlos Madziva – joins the leadership team as **Staff Representative, THRU-ZIM**, playing a key role in fostering collaboration across the organization.

Learn more about their journeys and contributions on the [THRU-ZIM website](#).



Ethel



Jacqueline

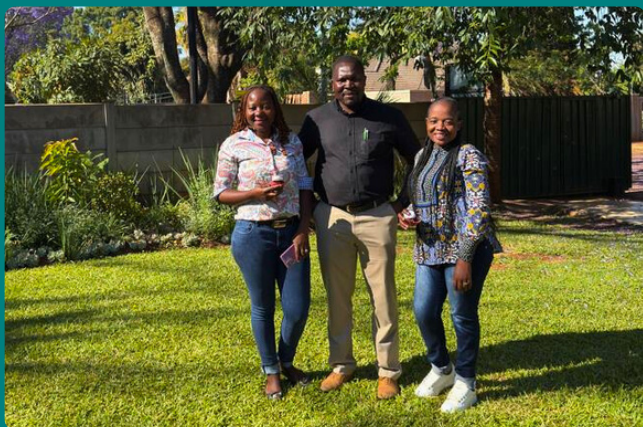


Karlos

THRU-ZIM bids farewell to Tadias and Stephania

Tadias Manyanga will be taking up a new position as Registrar of Nursing at the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC). THRU-ZIM thanks Tadias for his dedication and significant contributions during his time with the organization.

We also say goodbye to Dr. Stefania Vergnano (pictured in the red t-shirt), who has spent the past six months working with Neotree in the paediatric ward at Sally Mugabe Central Hospital. Her expertise and commitment have made a lasting impact on the team and the patients she cared for.



Goodbye and good luck, Ted and Steph

New members

THRU-ZIM is pleased to welcome Tsitsi Makuni, who joins the Neotree team as Quantitative Research Assistant. Looking forward to the fresh perspective she brings.



Tsitsi Makuni

5 MINUTES WITH...

Francis M Simmonds



What do you do and when did you start?

I am a public health researcher with a multidisciplinary background spanning public health, data science and statistics, and health economics. I will be starting my PhD Fellowship under the PROMISE Trial here at THRU- ZIM in November 2025, where my research will focus on investigating the impact of maternal bacterial sexually transmitted infection on infants. As part of this fellowship, I am applying for a PhD in Infectious and Tropical Diseases with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) for the January 2026 intake.

I bring over ten years of experience in implementation science, having contributed to the introduction of point of care early infant diagnosis (POCEID) for HIV and the development and rollout of new biomedical HIV prevention products across multiple African countries. My work integrates clinical and implementation research, data analytics, and public health program design, with a strong emphasis on using evidence to inform policy and strengthen health systems.

I am deeply passionate about eliminating the vertical transmission of infections and improving the survival and long-term outcomes of infants born to affected mothers, a focus that continues to shape my research and professional journey. In recognition of my contribution to implementation research, I was honoured with the Young Investigator Award at the 2018 International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, under the track Implementation Research, Economics, Systems, and Synergies with Other Health and Development Sectors.

Who and/or what inspires you?

I am inspired by the infants whose lives are touched by our work; each healthy child reminds me why the mission to eliminate preventable infections and improve infant health outcomes matters. I am also inspired by mentors and colleagues who exemplify compassion and innovation in public health.

Why is what you do important, and what do you enjoy most about it?

What I do is important because it turns data into action, guiding interventions, shaping policies, and improving lives. I enjoy working at the intersection of data and implementation, where evidence translates into real world solutions. The most fulfilling part for me is seeing how research helps prevent infections, protect mothers and babies, and strengthen health systems.

PUBLICATIONS

Taxes for tuberculosis: could tobacco and sugar tax revenue fund tuberculosis control interventions?

Coleman M, Coussens AK, Calderwood CJ, Schoeman I, Bhargava M, Sinha P, Marais BJ, Kranzer K. BMJ Glob Health. 2025 Sep 8;10(9):e019770. doi: 10.1136/bmjgh-2025-019770. PMID: 40921613 Free PMC article. No abstract available.

Hospital referral patterns amongst older adults in Zimbabwe: a cross-sectional study.

Stanley JL, Hettle D, Chingono RM, Mhino F, Bandason T, Mpandaguta CE, Madziva K, Ferrand RA, Chipanga J, Vere M, Chonzi P, Dixon J, Gregson CL, Kranzer K, Olaru ID. Glob Health Action. 2025 Dec;18(1):2547495. doi: 10.1080/16549716.2025.2547495. Epub 2025 Sep 2. PMID: 40891239 Free PMC article.

Brief Report: Youth Who Acquired HIV Perinatally Have Poorer Viral Suppression Than Those Who Acquired HIV Later in Life: Findings From a Population Survey in Zimbabwe.

Simms V, Kranzer K, Dziva Chikwari C, Dauya E, Bandason T, Dzavakwa N, Ferrand RA. J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr. 2024 Sep 1;97(1):1-5. doi: 10.1097/QAI.0000000000003459. PMID: 40788228

HIV Testing Uptake in a Sexual and Reproductive Health Service for Youth and Impact on Population-Level Prevalence of Undiagnosed HIV in Zimbabwe.

Larsson L, Simms V, Chikwari CD, Bottomley C, Bandason T, Mugurungi O, Apollo T, Dauya E, Tembo M, Mavodza C, Mackworth-Young CRS, Bernays S, Khan PY, Hayes RJ, Kranzer K, Ferrand RA. J Adolesc Health. 2025 Sep;77(3):557-564. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2025.05.018. Epub 2025 Jul 23. PMID: 40699172 Free article. Clinical Trial.

Implications of reference equations for interpretation of spirometry in three African countries: a cross-sectional study.

Banze D, Calderwood CJ, Nhamuave C, Marambire ET, Mfinanga A, Larsson L, Malhotra AM, Minja LT, Ivanova O, Zurba L, Heinrich N, Ferrand RA, Fielding K, Kranzer K, Rachow A, Hurst JR, Khosa C. ERJ Open Res. 2025 Jul 21;11(4):00932-2024. doi: 10.1183/23120541.00932-2024. eCollection 2025 Jul. PMID: 40692839 Free PMC article.

endTB-Q results in the face of rising bedaquiline resistance.

Heinrich N, Ndjeka N, Khosa C, Howell P, Kranzer K, Vambe D, Wasserman S, Hoelscher M. Lancet Respir Med. 2025 Sep;13(9):773-775. doi: 10.1016/S2213-2600(25)00246-2. Epub 2025 Jul 16. PMID: 40683299 No abstract available.

Incidence of and outcomes of pregnancy in adolescents with perinatally-acquired HIV infection in Southern Africa.

Dzavakwa NV, Chisenga M, Banda-Mabuda H, Namukonda C, Kasonka L, Bandason T, Redzo N, Mujuru HA, Kranzer K, Simms V, Ferrand RA. Int J STD AIDS. 2025 Oct;36(11-12):885-891. doi: 10.1177/09564624251352066. Epub 2025 Jun 27. PMID: 40577386 Free PMC article.

Integrated community-based HIV and sexual and reproductive health services for youth: a cluster-randomized trial.

Ferrand RA, Dauya E, Chikwari CD, Bandason T, Bernays S, Mackworth-Young C, Doyle AM, Grundy C, Indravudh P, Terris-Presholt F, Mavodza CV, Mugurungi O, Apollo T, Ncube G, Larsson L, McCarthy O, Simms V, Tembo M, Kranzer K, Hayes RJ. Nat Med. 2025 Sep;31(9):3081-3088. doi: 10.1038/s41591-025-03762-z. Epub 2025 Jun 24. PMID: 40555749 Free PMC article. Clinical Trial.

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THANK YOU!