Research and key populations in eastern and southern Africa

EHPSA commissioned Nordic Consulting Group to explore the research environment for key populations (KPs) in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. They interviewed over 100 researchers, policymakers, implementers, donors and KP organisations.

The good news

- All countries have national HIV/AIDS strategic plans that include KPs
- Most countries have multi-stakeholder technical working groups (TWGs)
- Some countries have KP reps in the TWGs
- KP organisations play a valuable role in research

The bad news

- Only one country in the region has a national HIV research agenda for key populations
- Domestic research capacity is weak in all but two countries
- Around 90% of HIV research is funded by donor agencies
- The adverse socio-legal environment for KPs is an obstacle to both national leadership and research

Implications

- More domestic resources are needed for research if governments are to lead the national research agenda
- TWGs can be used to coordinate diverse research stakeholders
- Key populations should be empowered to engage at all phases of the research continuum.