

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE FIGHT  
AGAINST HIV AND AIDS: A CASE STUDY OF BULAWAYO PUBLIC LIBRARY**

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## ABSTRACT

In view of the high infection and death rates in Zimbabwe, this study sought to assess the role of Bulawayo Public Library in the fight against HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS services at BPL are only limited to the AIDS corner which only has pamphlets and ephemera materials. Literature revealed that services offered should be appropriate in all dimensions, users' perceptions are of importance to libraries to assess the kind of services whether they are meeting the needs of users or not, HIV and AIDS resources should be of quality, current, accessible, in convenient format and language and the challenges faced by users and staff included lack of funds, infrastructure and language barrier among others. A descriptive survey research design was utilized, the sample size was 4 for BPL staff and 46 for users however, respondents were 40 out of 46 but all staff members responded. The study revealed that BPL was not meeting its mandate as a public library through its limited services, both the library users and staff were not satisfied with the services provided, outdated resources that were in-house use, in print format only and in limited languages and users faced challenges in accessing information such as language barrier, the hidden AIDS corner thereby limiting access and the format which is print only. Bulawayo Public Library therefore should source for funds either through lobbying the government or asking for donations from NGOs. In addition, BPL staff should carry out user needs assessment as well as community profiling by staff members and advocating for policies by organizations that deal with HIV and AIDS issues.