Prayer Chain In India.

People of Hindu faith gathering during a prayer session at the banks of Ganga River in India

Following a call by Reverend Jane Ngăngá of KENERELA+, Dr Asavari performed a small ceremony at the auspicious place by the banks of river Ganga which is also a confluence of the River Yamuna and Sarasvati. It is the Hindu pilgrimage place for spiritual worshiping and praying for the ones departed. The ceremony commenced by lighting the lamp which was trailed with a prayer to the Almighty to give INERELA+ family strength to withstand tragic moments. They wished for the families of the deceased to cope, heal and move forward with peace in their life. The event was a very individual divine approach to pray at River Ganga, Mother Nature, with the Arti (a Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of puja, in which light from a flame is offered to deities for the peaceful conversion of the self/soul) on-going and wishing upon the holy transformation of the lamented towards Moksha.
Visit to the GECK Calvary Temple in Nairobi.

On the 16th, the INERELA+ Secretariat team made three field visits. The first visit was to GECK Calvary temple in Nairobi where the INERELA+ Secretariat team held a meeting with youth who are working with KENERELA+ on a programme called ER & IS (Encouraging, Responsibility & Igniting, and Self-control). 17 people were in attendance. The ERIS programme commenced in 2015 as a flagship of KENERELA+ to bring out sexuality issues affecting young people. It is composed of different youth from various places around Nairobi. Brian Otieno chaired the meeting. Pastor Felix who was the host noted that he preaches of HIV & AIDS in sermons with the assistance of KENERELA+’s IEC materials and they conduct community outreach programmes targeting kids of 9 years and above to know their HIV status through the use of music, games and movies whereupon HIV testing is introduced. However, consent is sought from the parents of kids below the legal age of majority act.

Meeting with Religious Leaders and youths at Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) church in Ruiru.

The INERELA+ Secretariat also held a meeting at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) church in Ruiru which was attended by 14 people. The meeting was between the INERELA+ Secretariat team and the PCEA Health board. The board noted that their focus area is HIV & AIDS because Kenya has a high HIV prevalence rate. They teach pregnant women on adherence to medication to reduce the risk of giving birth to HIV positive babies and to avoid giving birth at home. The health board also conduct prison visits and teach young people on sexuality and HIV and AIDS related issues. However, Odney the Finance Manager for INERELA+
Secretariat noted that while it is very pleasing to have a health board composed of competent people, he preferred the board to be gender sensitive and include men and women of all age groups.

Visit to Kamiti Youth Correctional and Training Centre (KYCTC)

The field trip ended with a visit to Kamiti Youth Correction and Training Centre (KYCTC) in Nairobi. This is one of the places where ER & IS works with young people. In total, there were 149 young people aged between 13 years to 22 years. 44 of them were convicted and 105 were awaiting trial. The INERELA+ team mingled with the juveniles and gave them words of encouragement so that upon their release, they are not supposed to return to a place like prison. Mrs Nomsa Befula of SANERELA+ uttered these sentiments, “We are happy to see you but not happy to see you in a place like this. I advise you to cooperate with your wardens so that upon your release you can go back to school.” KENERELA+ showed a kind gesture by buying the juveniles over 150 loaves of bread and more than 150 sachets of fresh milk. It was Christmas in May for the juveniles who could hardly hide their excitement by giving effusive appreciation to the INERELA+ team. The INERELA+ team toured the prison with the aid of one of the senior officers. The day ended with a meeting between the INERELA+ team senior staff and the Officer In charge. Though the interaction was very touching to see young people in prison garbs it saves as a stark reminder that programmes targeting young people should be given a priority depending on the availability of funding.

Meeting with the KENERLA+ team at KENERELA+ Office.

The INERELA+ Secretariat team visited the KENERELA+ office on the 15th of May 2019 and had a meeting with KENERELA+ staff. In attendance was 14 people which included Mrs Mercy Acquah-Hayford the national Coordinator of INERELA+ Ghana and Nomsa Befula the National Coordinator for INERELA+ South Africa who were on a learning exchange visit to learn from KENERELA+. The meeting commenced with a devotion which was followed by a brief background of KENERELA+ from the National Coordinator Rev Jane N’gan’ga. Rev Jane Ngángá noted that KENERELA+ mainly works with religious leaders, volunteers, government, the National AIDS Control Council (NACC), ministry of education, ministry of health and other organisations. KENERELA+ utilises the framework for dialogue on stigma and discrimination reduction through the utilisation the SAVE Toolkit as a master tool for engagement. KENERELA+ also uses the lettering technique whereby children are requested to write letters to various people and stakeholders expressing their grievances for instance to the first lady, pharmaceutical companies on issues related to teenage pregnancy, FGM, TB, HIV prevention and ASRHR. Currently, KENERELA+ is negotiating with the government to distribute self-testing kits to religious leaders and is also working with the TB control programme to train religious leaders around the country.
Dr Kennedy Bisani Lweya joins INERELA+ as the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Officer.

Dr. Kennedy joined INERELA+ at the beginning of August as a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer. Dr Lweya who hails from Malawi is a Livelihoods (International Development and Applied Economics) professional with over 20 years’ professional work experience in many countries having worked in many roles including monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) and HIV and AIDS programming for many reputable local and international organisations such as World Vision International based in Johannesburg, South Africa and Nairobi, Kenya; USAID funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) based in Pretoria, South Africa; the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) based in Harare, Zimbabwe; the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund based in Glasgow, Scotland; IMA International based in Hurstpierpoint, United Kingdom. He brings to INERELA+ a wealth of experience.

INERELA+ organized a 2 day workshop for programme officers, finance officers and national coordinators from the 12th -13th May 2019 in Nairobi aimed at providing an opportunity for the network to review, reflect and learn different elements of its organizational and programing capabilities in the HIV and AIDS response.
The meeting was attended by 8 INERELA+ country networks namely Burundi, Ghana, DRC, Rwanda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Nigeria. INERELA+ Kenya hosted the event. As a learning event, the main process techniques for implementation was through the use of a mix of field based experiential and participatory adult learning techniques. These processes were undertaken over the two day period. The workshop was designed to explore different implementation dynamics, results and good practices, embracing and learning from success and mistakes, planning together and linking all this knowledge to action. The overall goal of the training workshop was to capacitate the country network finance officers and National Co-ordinators on the best practices to strengthen the internal controls, improve efficiency and quality reporting throughout the entire organisation. The Secretariat reported that 9 laptops and portable printers will be bought and be given to needy country networks to enhance efficiency and also provide staff with good working tools to produce quality results.

The effectiveness of Community Treatment Observatories in improving health outcomes for PLHIV in Chamwabvi and Bua Health facilities, Kasungu district.

Malawi introduced models of differentiated care for stable HIV recipients of care on antiretroviral therapy in 2018 to ensure patient-centred and efficient care. MANERELA+ has established the community treatment observatories at Chamwabvi and Bua health centres to solicit views of care recipients. MANERELA+ conducted focus group discussions at each facility (Bua and Chamwabvi). Participants reported that the models of differentiated care have yielded benefits which include reduced clients’ visit time and decongestion at health facilities. Participants suggested that these benefits could have led to more HIV treatment outcomes for recipients of care if the Community ART Adherence Groups model was also adopted in the guidelines. The participants recommended CAG approach as they felt the approach will help to register a non-default rate and further reduce the levels of the disease burden and other infections among PLHIV and enhanced social support which will help to ensure that the viral load tests are done timely with low levels of suppression while decongesting the health facilities. MANERELA+ is doing this work in Kasungu district with support from International AIDS Society (IAS) through the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) and the AIDS Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA).
Dialogue with Female Genital Mutilation initiators, traditional chiefs, religious leaders and other stakeholders on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation.

INERELA+ Sierra Leone conducted a dialogue meeting of religious leaders, female genital cutting initiators to denounce FGC and SGBV. An FGC initiator who attended the dialogue meeting promised that she will embark on an advocacy campaign to denounce the practice trailing the dialogue. She also promised to go as an ambassador in her community to engage other initiators to abandon this cruel practice. Four support coordinators were given some amount of money to help victims of SGBV in their communities. Two female genital cutting initiators and one traditional chief who used to support the practice of FGC had a different perception after the dialogue and promised to abandon it. The dialogue meeting also served as an eye opener to other participants. The Family support unit coordinator from the Sierra Police southern region Mrs. Lucy Tucker participated and facilitated a session. She said, “Nobody will go unpunished for child rights abuse and SGBV/GBV matters”.

KENERELA+ and NINERELA+ commemorates the Menstrual Health Day on the 28th of May, 2019 at City Carton Slum, Nairobi County.

Every May 28 Menstrual Hygiene Day raises awareness and combats taboos associated with menstrual hygiene with the goal of enabling women and girls to achieve their full potential. The date 28 May has been chosen for its special significance. To mark this day NINERELA+ engaged country networks to commemorate the Menstrual Health Day under the theme, “It’s Time for Action! The day was used to break the silence and raise awareness as well as to change negative social norms around menstrual hygiene management for women and girls. The theme of Menstrual Hygiene Day 2019— “It’s Time for Action” not only emphasized the urgency of this public health issue but also highlighted the transformative power of improved menstrual hygiene to unlock economic and educational opportunities for women and girls. Meanwhile KENERELA+ engaged congregational champions and religious leaders to disseminate key messages and distribute
sanitary towels to women in a low income zone in Nairobi County in City Carton Slum A total of 100 women (60 adult women above 25 years and 40 women between 12 – 25 years) were reached with key messaging as well as sanitary towels and were overjoyed by the generosity of KENERELA+.

School pupils posing for a photo during the menstrual hygiene day in Nigeria

A visit to RWANERELA+ Office in Kigali, Rwanda.

INERELA+ Secretariat staff and RWANERELA+ Coordinator, Celestin Bigirimana

INERELA+ Secretariat staff; Munya Mandipaza and Richard Nyenger attended the life skills and relationship training in Kigali, Rwanda courtesy of Church of Sweden. The 5 day training was meant to capacitate
members of civil society and non-governmental organisations to become facilitators for the training of children aged between 5-9 years. On the last day of the training, Munya and Richard paid a visit to RWANERELA+ office in Kigali and had a short meeting with the national coordinator Celestin Bigirimana. Celestin pointed out that RWANERELA+ was appointed by the Rwanda president to be one of the organisation responsible for organising the International Conference on AIDs and STI’s In Africa (ICASA) 2019 to be held in Kigali, Rwanda. This event will offer unparalleled opportunities to both commercial and non-commercial organizations to showcase their products and services to the world’s leading HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria professionals and key players.

Photo Gallery