



IN THIS ISSUE

1. Religious Leaders Consultation meeting on ending the AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago
2. UNERELA+ trains Lutheran World Federation (LWF) staff, Religious Leaders and Cultural Leaders in Northern Uganda
3. Aids Fonds Project: SAVE Training for Religious Leaders, Mopani District, South Africa
4. SANERELA+ National Policy Consultative meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa
5. SAVE and SGBV Training for Female Religious Leaders in Bujumbura, Burundi
6. Update from INERELA+ Mozambique (MONERELA+) on Cyclone Dineo
7. Save the Children International mentor's training for East and Southern Africa Regional implementers in Pretoria, South Africa
8. SAVE and SGBV Training for Female Religious Leaders in Kingston, Jamaica
9. Intergenerational Dialogue for women and girls on SGBV and HIV in Accra, Ghana
10. Framework for Dialogue Impact Assessment meeting between Religious Leaders, adolescents, youth and PLHIV held in Nairobi, Kenya
11. MANERELA+ implementing Aids Free Project in Dedza; Trains religious leaders on PMTCT

Religious Leaders Consultation meeting on ending the AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean held on 1-2 February 2017, Trinidad and Tobago

The Regional Consultation of Religious Leaders convened at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad, Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 1-2 February 2017. This meeting brought together 55 Religious Leaders from 14 Caribbean countries from different religious organisations, Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS

(PANCAP), United Nations and other regional officials. The meeting was coordinated by the planning



committee of Religious Leaders and PANCAP and focused on the theme: "Religious Leaders contribution to the End of AIDS BY 2030." Reverend Phumzile Mabizela, INERELA+'s Executive Director, delivered an inspiring address drawing on her experience as a faith leader who is living with HIV and AIDS. She encouraged Religious Leaders to see themselves as a positive force for change, who advocate for the removal of policy and legislative barriers to effective AIDS response. Reverend Mabizela challenged the participants to lead by example to reclaim the dignity of sex and sexuality, and to view HIV as a justice issue that should be dealt with by addressing the structural injustices that make people vulnerable.

INERELA +Secretariat:

Corner Rabie St & Fourth Ave North, Fontainebleau, Randburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2032.

Telephone +27 (0) 11 792 7029 • Fax +27 (0) 11 792 6533 •

Email info@inerela.org

UNERELA+ trains Lutheran World Federation (LWF) staff, Religious Leaders and Cultural Leaders on SAVE in Northern Uganda from the 3-5 March 2017

INERELA+ Uganda (UNERELA+) in conjunction with Lutheran World Federation (LWF) courtesy of funding from Church of Sweden (CoS) carried out a training of Religious Leaders, LWF staff and cultural leaders in two war-torn districts of northern Uganda. A total of 220 participants were trained. The goal of the training was to capacitate the leaders who will then roll out implementation of the SAVE approach in their respective communities.



Figure 1: Participants with the facilitators and the CoS staff at Boma Hotel in Gulu, Uganda at the end of a National level training Phase III in 2016

The project was initially meant to run for 3 years, but after getting off to a great start, LWF, working with UNERELA+, are now poised to scale up a series of multiplier training activities as external facilitators in conjunction with the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC). The trainings will be implemented in four districts and a number of universities in Uganda beginning in March 2017.

Aids Fonds Project: SAVE Training for Religious Leaders on the 7-8 February 2017 in Mopani District, South Africa

INERELA+ and ANOVA conducted a SAVE training of Religious Leaders on the 7th to 8th of February 2016. Seventeen (17) churches from 3 sub-districts of Mopane district were in attendance. Regina Mbeng and Samson Khoza from INERELA+ facilitated the training, assisted by a clinician and a Quality Assurance Coordinator from ANOVA. It emerged during the training that Religious Leaders have scanty knowledge of HIV and AIDS which created misconceptions amongst them and thus their inability to deal with stigma and discrimination in their communities. As such, the training focused more on HIV transmission modes and ways of prevention. The trained Religious Leaders were encouraged to cascade the training to their respective congregations. To support these Religious Leaders, follow-up visits will be done by INERELA+.



SANERELA+ National Policy Consultative Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa from the 6-7 February 2017

INERELA+ South Africa (SANERELA+) held its National Policy Consultative meeting with the provincial structures at the Lakes Hotel and conference Centre from the 6 -7 February 2017. The NPC meeting endorsed some of the activities, and members were briefed on the meeting that the national leadership had with the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC). The AGM was excited to hear that SANERELA+ was elected a permanent member of SANAC, that is chaired by the Deputy President, Cyril Rhamaphosa. SANERELA+ will now form part of the SANAC People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and religious sectors. SANERELA+ is now expected to draft a five-year strategic and operational plan to implement the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2017-2022. UNAIDS, the Presidency and SANAC are in the process of fundraising through the Telethon campaign to support the PLHIV sector which comprises:



South Africa Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV & AIDS (SANERELA+), Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), National Association of People Living with HIV and AIDS (NAPWA), Positive Women’s Network (PWN). The AGM made the following resolutions: (a) SANERELA+’s current constitution needs to be amended; (b) provincial leaders need to organise their membership; and (c) SANERELA+ should be branded.

SAVE and SGBV Training for Female Religious Leaders held in Bujumbura, Burundi on the 6-7 November 2017

INERELA+ Burundi conducted a SAVE and SGBV training for Female Religious Leaders on the 6th to 8th November 2016 at the Royal Palace Hotel. The purpose of the

training was to familiarise participants with the basic concepts of HIV and AIDS and Gender-based Violence (GBV) through the SAVE approach. Twenty-five participants (22 Christians and 3 Muslims) from 15 congregations were in attendance. Dr Scholastique Manyundo, Mrs Mukarushema Violette and Mrs Inabashengezi Emilienne Joy facilitated the training in their specific areas of expertise. Dr Manyundo presented the basic facts of HIV and AIDS and emphasised that HIV is rampant in polygamous marriages where partners are not faithful.



Participants were encouraged to undertake HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ending HIV and AIDS by 2030. Mrs Joy urged Religious Leaders to utilise the respect accorded to them by the community by mobilising people for HCT, particularly men. The training shifted focus to anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) with much emphasis on sticking to medication and avoiding deception by unscrupulous Religious Leaders who preach only faith healing as this can result into serious repercussions on the health of PLHIV. The feedback from participants was that they were enlightened about stigma and discrimination, and the misconceptions and patriarchal beliefs which they previously had, which perpetuate GBV.

Update from INERELA+ Mozambique (MONERELA+) on Cyclone Dineo

The tropical cyclone Dineo wreaked havoc in Mozambique's Inhambane province in February 2017, which is a stronghold of MONERELA+ membership. An estimated number of 653 000 people were affected and school activities were halted as people were evacuated to safe places. This worrisome scenario might have negative spinoffs in the battle against HIV & AIDS as there is a likelihood of an immense opportunity cost, diverting resources of the international community from public health, including HIV and AIDS and poverty alleviation, to humanitarian efforts. Like it has happened in other parts of the world, this shift is likely to impact negatively on the lives of PLHIV. The management and care of HIV and AIDS relies heavily on good nutrition which is threatened by floods. Despite the gains made scientifically in the management of HIV and AIDS through antiretroviral therapy (ART), the same is likely to be lost due to complexities arising from natural calamities like flooding. More so, adherence needs of PLHIV can be affected, which is likely to aggravate gender inequalities, thus increasing transactional and coercive sex, leading to higher HIV incidence, especially when people are placed in concentration camps.



Figure 2: A health facility and school affected by floods in Inharime district

Save the Children International mentor's training on ASRHR for East and Southern Africa Regional Implementers in Pretoria, South Africa from 30 January - 4 February 2017

Save the Children International East and Southern Africa Regional Office conducted the first phase of the adolescent, sexual, reproductive health and rights (ASRHR) project that is to be implemented in eight countries in East and Southern Africa (Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The INERELA+ Secretariat was represented by Richard Nyengera. Twenty-eight (28) participants were in attendance. The primary objective of the training was to assist civil society organisations to increase their ability and efficacy in responding adequately to issues of sexuality, gender and SRHR within the context of HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights education and services for children. The training is very cardinal in assisting organisations already working in the field of HIV and SRHR as it provides information, education and services for the internalisation, integration and mainstreaming of issues around sexuality and gender into existing policies. The first phase of the training was very fruitful and informative. The second phase is scheduled for April 2017.



SAVE and SGBV Training for Female Religious Leaders in Kingston, Jamaica from the 6-8 February 2017

Jamaica Council of Churches conducted a SAVE training for women Religious Leaders on the 6th to 8th February 2017. Reverend Phumzile Mabizela (INERELA+'s Executive Director) and Dr Nyambura Njoronge (WCC) jointly facilitated. The



training was organised by the Jamaica Council of Churches under funding from Robert Carr Network Foundation. The aim of the training was to empower women on the SAVE methodology as well as to sensitise them on the effects of SGBV in relation to HIV and AIDS. Reverend Mabizela presented on the basic facts

on HIV and AIDS, the use of proper terminology which does not constitute discrimination and the move from ABC to SAVE. She emphasised on the importance of engaging kids early on the topic of sex, HIV & AIDS. The participants were warned on the excessive belief in faith healing by deceptive pastors who discourage people from taking medication. Dr Nyambura led the participants through the contextual bible studies on abuse using the story of Tamar in the bible (2 Samuel 13: 1-22) and advised women not to be passive victims of SGBV as this may lead to suicide. The training touched on issues of transformative masculinities and SSDDIM, and culminated into action planning at congregational level.

Intergenerational Dialogue for women and girls on SGBV and HIV, 8-9 March 2017 in Accra, Ghana

In an effort to address issues of HIV and AIDS, stigma and SGBV, Women of Faith organised a two-day intergenerational dialogue in Ghana. INERELA+ Ghana hosted the dialogue. Twenty-four (24) participants who comprised Religious Leaders, community leaders, a lawyer, police and social welfare attended. Grace Kerongo, the INERELA+'s Programme Manager attended the dialogue. The purpose of the dialogue was to bring together influential people and those affected by SGBV into a safe place to interact on issues related to HIV & AIDS and SGBV so as to assist them identify the types, causes, consequences of SGBV and the link between SGBV and HIV. This would lead to the development of approaches to address SGBV through religious organisations and communities. It emerged that unequal employment opportunities and patriarchal beliefs place women in risky sexual relationships, hence the need for Religious Leaders to halt the use of sacred texts to oppress women as this can fuel the transmission of HIV and SGBV.



Framework for Dialogue Impact Assessment meeting between Religious Leaders, adolescents, youth and PLHIV held on the 7-8 February 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya

INERELA+ Kenya convened a 2-day interfaith framework dialogue for impact assessment at the Weston Hotel that brought together over 110 Religious Leaders, PLHIV, development partners, adolescents and young people, representatives of



government institutions from Kenya and development partners, to evaluate the milestones achieved towards the fast-track agenda to end HIV related stigma and discrimination. The meeting was part of the collaborative engagement geared towards implementing the Joint Actions that were developed in 2015 at the first Framework for Dialogue meeting. The theme of the meeting was *“Faith on the Fast Track: Eliminating Stigma and Discrimination through love and*

dialogue.” Dr. Jantine Jacobi, the UNAIDS Country director, Kenya, highlighted the need for contributing towards the fast track agenda by the faith communities and PLHIV by ensuring that stigma and discrimination is eliminated so that adolescents, young people and PLHIV are able to access HIV services. She emphasized UNAIDS’s commitment to support the joint action plan and continued technical support to the faith sector presentation from INERELA+ Kenya. The National Coordinator of INERELA+ Kenya, Jane Ng’ang’a provided a summary of the activities and outcomes that had been carried out after the first national dialogue which included initiation of county dialogues.

MANERELA+ implementing Aids Free Project in Dedza, trains religious leaders on PMTCT

As reported in the Nyasa Times Newspaper of 28 April 2017, Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected with HIV and Aids (MANERELA+) is currently implementing an AIDS free project in partnership with Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) and IMA World Health Organization (WHO) – a United States faith based organisation in Washington DC. The project is being carried out in Dedza District with support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is focusing on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT). Harold Kachepatsonga, the project officer, was quoted as saying: *“the project is on the pilot phase and is targeting health facilities that are under CHAM and MUA. The duration of the project is from March to December, but chances are that there will be a continuation if the pilot phase is successful. The project is targeting Religious leaders as champions on PMTCT because they have a large constituency which they serve, and especially as almost 90% of the people in Malawi belong to a faith grouping and that Religious Leader’s command respect in our society”*. He further revealed that the other reason is that religious leaders are good in terms of confidentiality and that when building capacity on PMTCT, they will be able to reach out to many people as possible and that they pass on information to their congregants for free.



INERELA+

International Network of Religious Leaders
Living with or Personally Affected by HIV & AIDS