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Intergenerational dialogue on Sexual and Gender Based Violence for Women and Girls, Nigeria

A 2-day intergenerational dialogue on Sexual and Gender Based Violence for women and girls was held in Abuja on 18th and 19th April 2018. In attendance, was the Executive Director of INERELA+, stakeholders, faith leaders, SGBV survivors, and representatives from the Federal government of the Ministry of Health, National Agency for Control of AIDS, Nigeria Prison



Stakeholders at the intergenerational dialogue on Sexual & Gender Based Violence

Service and the National Human Rights Commission. Participants discussed strategies in the elimination of SGBV in the faith communities. Faith leaders were implored to promote the importance of gender equality and equity to their congregants.

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Regional Forum for Strengthening the Role of Religious Leaders in advocating for the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and HIV for Migrant Populations

A meeting on Sexual, reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and HIV among adolescent migrants, young people and migration-affected communities was organized through collaboration between INERELA+, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Save the Children Netherlands (SC), the Witwatersrand School of Public Health (WSPH) from the 11-12 June 2018. This meeting aimed at implementing a holistic regional advocacy response to improve SRHR-HIV amongst these communities in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia through collaboration with Religious leaders. The 77 participants were educated on how to effectively advocate for change at all levels. Additionally, a Regional Steering Group was created and its mandate would be to facilitate the establishment of country advocacy networks and structures. Also, review the existing SRHR policy, legal framework and identify SRHR RL champions in the SADC countries



Participants at the regional Advocacy forum

Religious Leaders dialogue on faith healing versus medication, South Africa

A dialogue involving representatives from the Azali Health Care, South Africa Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS+, Takuwani Riime in partnership with ANN7TV channel, Religious Leaders,



A cross-section of participants at the faith versus medication dialogue.

INERELA+'s Executive Director and SANERELA's National Coordinator, was held on 24th January 2018 in Germiston. This was necessitated when concerns were brought to the attention of the South Africa National AIDS Commission and Commission of Religious Leaders (prophets and pastors) by local community members, that some Religious Leaders were persuading their congregants to discontinue with their medication and instead take "holy water" to be cured of their chronic ailments and diseases. The discussions were on the issues of faith healing vis a vis anti-retroviral treatment; allegations that there are some religious leaders who claim to cure chronic illnesses and were exploiting their followers in the process; and, what current programmes are available that could complement religious beliefs and biomedical science. In the end, consensus was agreed

upon that even though faith healing practices shall be upheld in some religious sects, religious leaders will continue emphasizing to their congregants the importance of strict adherence to their intake of medication.

INERELA+ New Board

INERELA+'s General conference was held on 8th May 2018. During the meeting, the members were briefed on the financial and programmatic progress of the network and they discussed and adopted the constitution. In addition, the existing international members were retained and Jide Macaulay was elected to the board as the Europe representative. Swamiji Advyananda Sarasvati Techer was also elected as the Asia Representative. The board will continue to provide an oversight role and strategic guidance to INERELA+.



INERELA+ Secretariat board members

INERELA+ learning forum, South Africa



Participants at the 2018 learning forum in South Africa.

In order to further carry out its mandate and improve its program response, INERELA+ organized a 3-day learning forum from the 8th-10th May 2018 in Johannesburg aimed at providing an opportunity for the network to review, reflect and learn on different elements of its organizational and programing capabilities in the HIV and AIDS response. The meeting was attended by various INERELA+ country network national coordinators and chairs from Africa, Europe and Asia and representatives from International Organization for Migration (IOM), Save the Children, Anova Institute, Act Alliance, SafAIDS, Gin-SSOGIE and UNFPA. The meeting was also graced by the presence of Ms. Angeline Siparo, Chair of the NACC in Kenya who officially opened the learning forum and gave a key note message.

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. It was in particular 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.

Winners at the INERELA+ Learning forum



During the forum, the participants were guided on the use of a gallery walk to promote network discussion, reflection and cooperative learning as well as team building. During the gallery walk, assessors were identified to evaluate the quality of different network booths across different parameters with the best network gallery taking home an award for their display. NINERELA+ emerged as the overall winner in the presentation of the booths while KENERELA won for the best written impact story.

Winners at the 2018 INERELA+ learning forum.

INERELA+ Sierra Leone conducts HIV friendly Fridays and Sundays.

INERELA+ Sierra Leone in agreement with Religious Leaders, sets aside every Friday and Sunday as HIV and AIDS friendly days. The objectives are to raise HIV and AIDs awareness, promoting HIV counselling and Testing, issue condoms, educate on the dangers of related stigma and discourage discrimination for people living with HIV and AIDS to their congregants. In 2017, a total number of 270 were reached and 30 were tested for HIV. In 2018, INERELA+ Sierra Leone partnered with Sierra Leone social marketing and development agency and the Door Christian Fellowship church where they successfully carried out a HIV testing campaign. In total, 60 people agreed to be tested and were given T-shirts and pens.



Pastor Albert Freeman taking the lead during an HIV friendly Sunday

Advocacy meeting with faith leaders on Faith healing, Malawi



A cross section of participants at the advocacy meeting

A meeting organized by the Malawi Interfaith AIDS Association (MIAA), Malawi Network on Religious Leaders Living and Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA+), Nationals AIDS Commission (NAC) and the Pentecostal and Charismatic Network of Malawi (PECHANOMA) was held at the Sun Hotel in Blantyre on 23rd February 2018. Sixty Religious Leaders from across the country participated. The objective was to engage with PECHANOMA faith leaders and hear their views on faith healing and antiretroviral drugs. A consensus was reached upon, that even

though Religious Leaders might be looked upon as having divine healing powers through prayers, they also have an obligation to recognize the power of God in healing human beings through clinical medicines. Participants therefore agreed to conduct more sensitization meetings where basic information about HIV & AIDS will be disseminated to address any misconceptions that people may have.

Safe Sexual practices in marriages, Zambia

After Sister Nalomba Nkana from Apostolic Faith Mission attended a Female Religious Leaders training workshop on SGBV and HIV in October 2015, she has been at the forefront in championing the rights of married women in rural Zambia where many of them have no say on issues of sex in their marriages. Sister Nkana, provides education by correcting poor narratives on traditional theories that continue to be harmful and inhumane. She provides information on the harmful use of herbs for sex, involves and educates husbands on the importance on healthy sexual engagements.

INERELA+ participation at a conference on Religion, Gender and sexuality in Africa



Participants displaying messages at the Destabilizing Heteronormativity meeting.

INERELA+ participated at the Destabilizing Heteronormativity (DH) meeting from 21st to 25th May, that was organized by Collaborative for HIV and AIDS, Religion and Theology (CHART), a project of the UKZN School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics. The DH project seeks to deconstruct the narrative of homophobia through robust discussions and dialogues targeting cis-gender persons and their use of cis-normativity to

justify hate crimes, stigma and discrimination of the LGBTIQ+ citizens. Reverend Phumzile Mabizela lead the discussions after the screening that focused on how different faith traditions respond to LGBTIQ+ persons; the use of culture and tradition to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ persons was cross-examined.

Rado's story, Madagascar

Rado, a young transgender who is HIV+, earned his living through sex work to provide for his single mother and four siblings. Rado wanted a change of lifestyle after becoming sick and hospitalized for many weeks. The Madagascar INERELA+ network (OMASAVE) was able to provide Rado with social assistance, medical support, meals, prayers and encouragement through supportive counselling. This constant support and encouragement helped Rado's health to greatly improve and in the process he became a believer. The intervention by OMSAVE has enabled Rado to continue leading a healthy and positive lifestyle.

From stigma to hope, Kenya

In 2014, Reverend Samson was introduced to INERELA+ Kenya by one of the board members. He was able to receive love, support and counselling from his fellow pastors who are living with HIV and thus his journey towards self-acceptance, disclosure and healing became bearable. Reverend Samson has not only become a champion for sexual reproductive health and rights for children in his county of Makueni but also a beacon of hope to people living with HIV & AIDS. Reverend Samson has partnered with some of the local hospitals to create referral linkages for PLHIV and provides support to other religious leaders living with or that are personally affected by HIV & AIDS. He has also started a programme targeting parents on the importance of disclosure and counselling. To date, he has reached over 3000 young people and parents with positive HIV messaging. In his faith community, he offers refuge and a place of hope to people living with or who are personally affected by HIV & AIDS.

INERELA+ welcomes Abu Baker Seebela, Senior Advocacy Officer



INERELA+ Secretariat is pleased to introduce Mr. Abu Baker Seebela, the Senior Advocacy Officer who started on 1st February 2018. Mr. Seebela's role will be to strengthen our current advocacy programmes. Prior to INERELA+, he was a senior trainer at Sonke Gender Justice and successfully coordinated the One Man Can in Soweto and Brothers for Life in Mpumalanga programmes. As a result, he was posted to the South African HIV Prevention Advocacy Expert Group as well as its secretariat in the Northern Province.

INERELA+ in Pictures



INERELA+ country network coordinators at the INERELA+ learning forum



Director General of NACA and INERELA+ Nigeria Team carrying out inspections during the World AIDS Day



Pastor Freeman and wife in one of the churches during and HIV friendly Sunday in Sierra Leone



Church members posing for a photo during the HCT in Alexandra, SA



Prophet Dr Kalolo stressing a point "ask your clients to go for HTC after prayers and not stopping them taking ARVs", SA



Sierra Leonean congregants posing for a photo during and HIV Friendly Sunday



Keynote speaker Angeline Siparo with Jane N'gan'ga at the INERELA+ Learning forum



INERELA+ board members at the General conference



Dialogue with Religious Leader Champions on faith healing versus medication.

