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Faith leaders as champions in ending child marriages-Malawi.



Dialogue between faith leaders, youth and health workers

Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA+) is implementing a project known as “Adolescents’ Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights at the fore; working with faith leaders and young people as agents of change for better health outcomes” in Mchinji district. The project is implemented in collaboration with Save the Children International courtesy of funding from Swedish Government. Using the Process Oriented Approach, Religious Leader champions were able to identify opportunities at regional and local levels that they act as advocates against child marriage, teenage pregnancies and Sexual Gender Based Violence. This project was birthed after the realisation that child marriages has long term consequences which include: denying girls and young women educational opportunities thereby contributing to high illiteracy and low education levels, prevents girls and young women from realizing their full potential thus hampering their participation in social and economic life on an equal footing with boys, social isolation, inability to negotiate safer sexual practices thereby increasing vulnerability to HIV infection.

A story from the field- Malawi.



Rev Peterkins Tiyesi (a Religious Leader champion)

In TA Dambe, a twenty-year old boy and a sixteen-year old girl got married. When Pastor Tiyesi of Assemblies of God heard about the story, he engaged parents of the two by telling them to end the marriage because it involved a minor. Parents from the girl child accepted the Pastors' request to end the marriage because their child was indeed young whilst the boy child parents did not agree to end the marriage because they felt their child had reached the legal age for marriage. Pastor Tiyesi continued engaging the boy and girl as well as their parents through counselling sessions. Finally they both agreed to end the marriage as it was against the laws of Malawi. Pastor Tiyesi engaged the boy and girl further in counselling up until they both agreed to re-enrol for school. Pastor Tiyesi facilitated the enrolment of the two in two different secondary schools. They both sat for the Malawi School Certificate of Education and the girl got selected to Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources to study Land Husbandry while the boy got a

pass. We are convinced that faith leaders using their position of influence have a big role in improving health outcomes in our society including ending child marriages. There are a number of strategies that faith leaders are using to end child marriages in Mchinji and these include Advocacy campaigns, community dialogue meetings, capacity building of congregants and adolescents, young people and parents. The faith leaders also engage policy makers at community and district levels.

Kenya Launches an HIV and AIDS Counselling Guide for Religious Leaders



Participants pose for a group photo after the launch of the HIV Counselling Guide for Religious Leaders

The 14th of March marked the launch of the Religious Leaders Counselling Guide for HIV/AIDS which was witnessed by faith communities and different stakeholders. The guide was produced with the support of PEPFAR/UNAIDS-Faith Initiative working closely with African Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP)

and INERELA+ Kenya. The production of the counselling guide was done trailing a repeated need to strengthen psychosocial support for people living with or personally affected by HIV. The guide is theologically sound and is backed by key scriptures from the Christian, Muslim and Sunnah faiths. A number of key speakers graced the launch which include Dr. Samwel Mwenda (Secretary General of the Christian Health Association of Kenya), Sister Mary Owens (Executive Director of the Children of God Relief Institute) and Ms Ludfine (UNAIDS representative). Reverend Jane Ng'ang'a (INERELA+ Kenya National Coordinator) called for the need to enhance holistic care and support. She further noted that ACHAP and INERELA+ Kenya will strengthen their partnership to ensure the roll out, including linkages with key ministries and dissemination of the information appropriately. Religious leaders pledged that they will roll out of the guide.

Training of vulnerable pregnant women on HIV and micro business management-Burundi



Participants posing for a photo after the training

Burundi conducted a five days training from the 11th to the 15th in the capital Bujumbura. The purpose of the training was to provide HIV positive and vulnerable women with basic information on HIV & AIDS and to teach them how to commence income generating projects. 56 participants drawn from different congregations and communities were in attendance. During the training, the participants were given the opportunity to share their experiences, to come up with objectives and action plans on how they will implement income generating projects in their respective communities. Participants came up with business plans and formed groups of 56 people to enable them to jointly access bank loan and repay it later. The training also touched on how to avoid making a loss and be able to repay back the loan. Some participants withdrew from the groups because they thought that the money will be non-refundable. It was agreed that the administrative authorities will carry the training and monitoring of the activities. After receiving the loans some women have started business and have opened individual accounts and some have repaid part of the loan to prove their credibility to get a higher loan. Participants appreciated this initiative as a move to ameliorate poverty among vulnerable and people living with HIV.

NINERELA+ commemorates the World's International Women's Day.

INERELA+ Nigeria commemorated the International Women's Day under the theme, "Our women our pride" on the 9th of March at Purple Tulip Hotel in Abuja. The activity was organized and funded by NINERELA+. NINERELA+ organized a round table discussion for men and women to drive demand creation for gender balance and equity. The meeting was also meant to celebrate the nobleness of women in society. 40 participants (17 male, 23 female) attended the activity to discuss gender balance and socio-economic importance of greater involvement of women in the Nigerian workforce. Dr Anyanwu was the key note speaker and she spoke of greater involvement of women in the socio-economic diversity. Dr Anyanwu said, "Wear the mindset that we can do it and together we will do it irrespective of our gender." She engaged women to understand that they have a role to play in building the economy. Trailing the key note speech, the round table discussion shifted focus to family approach in balancing for a better home.



NINERELA+ National Coordinator (Amber Erinmwinhe) and key note speaker (Dr Anyanwu).

Prayer Chain Initiative.

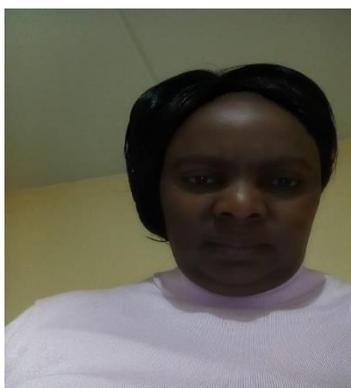
Reverend Jane N'gan'ga birthed the life changing-prayer chain initiative which called for a corporate prayer time in remembrance of our beloved colleagues (Reverend Amin Sandewa, Mrs Febby Kapalaula and Mrs Rozina Nong). The primary goal of the prayer chain is to pray for safety and well-being of network members and their families. The prayer chain also serves as an opportunity for country networks to pray for each other as an interfaith network. The INERELA+ Secretariat therefore urged its country networks to join and make this initiative a success. Several country networks which include (Nigeria, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Peru, Madagascar, Burundi and India) came up with dates when they will be carrying their prayer chain. The Secretariat led the initiative with a week of prayer on the week of the 4th – 7th of March 2019.

INERELA+ Secretariat welcomes the new Administration Officer.



INERELA+ Secretariat acquired the services of Ziyanda's Davashe as the new Administration Officer. Ziyanda joined INERELA+ on the 22nd of March 2019. She previously worked for Vodacom where she held various positions before joining an HIV Wellness Company in 2017 where she was a project supervisor coordinator. Welcome Ziyanda!

Munya joins INERELA+ as the new Programme Manager.



Munya joined INERELA+ on the 8th of April 2019. Munya has successfully and practically worked on a range of Public Health projects in Africa. She has facilitated workshops and engaged in capacity building of health workers, teachers and religious leaders to better understand the unique needs of adolescents. By working broadly with International Development organisations in Africa she has led multi-cultural teams and Partners to implement Projects across Africa. Her areas of expertise encompass strategy development, capacity building, program management, leadership, data analysis and collaboration enhancement. Munya is passionate about gender equality and she weaves her knowledge of it into all of the Projects she has been involved in.

Obituary-Rozina Nong

11 January 1966-26 January 2019



Rozina passed away on the 26th of January 2019 in an automobile accident. At the time of her untimely death, Rozina was aged 53 and is survived by her husband. Rozina was the longest serving member of INERELA+ who joined the organisation in 2004. She was a Senior Administration Officer. During a reminiscing session about Rozina at the Secretariat office, Reverend Phumzile Mabizela had this to say, "Rozina was such a nicest person to work with, a loyal member to INERELA+, she had the institutional memory. During her time with INERELA+, her absence at work could be felt by everyone. She was the pillar of INERELA+ and the face of the organisation. While we mourn her untimely departure, we must give ourselves room to celebrate her achievements at the Secretariat."

Photo gallery dedicated to Rozina Nong



