



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

CONSOLIDATING SUCCESSES, ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES





# I. TABLE OF CONTENTS



*INERELA+ empowered women and girls to exercise transformational change in their own lives through accessing specialist support services, prevention initiatives as well as co-creators in the design and implementation of Projects to end violence against women and girls*

<b>1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2 MUNYA MANDIPAZA APPOINTED AS INERELA+ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4 2022 HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5 CAPACITY STRENGTHENING</b>	<b>18</b>
Religious Leaders In Ghana Trained on Sexual Gender Based Violence	<b>19</b>
INERELA+ Holds a Virtual Bread for the World-Sponsored MEL Capacity Building	<b>19</b>
INERELA+ Held a Virtual Training Of Trainer's (TOT) Workshop on Life And Relationship Skills	<b>20</b>
Leveraging Ambassadors Through Capacity Building	<b>21</b>
INERELA+ Tanzania Visits INERELA+ Kenya For Exchange Learning	<b>22</b>
INERELA+ Hosts Learning Forum For Fifteen Country Networks	<b>23</b>
Strategic Transformation, Effective Planning and Implementation Dominate INERELA+ Secretariat Annual Planning Discussions	<b>24</b>
<b>6 LINKING AND LEARNING</b>	<b>25</b>
INERELA+ Attends Africa – EU Summit Education Plus Initiative 14th – 18th February 2022	<b>26</b>
INERELA+ Secretariat Attends a UN Women Webinar on Resiliency to Crisis	<b>27</b>
INERELA+ Hands Off Programme Mid-Term Review (MTR) Workshop	<b>28</b>
INERELA+ Attends the Commission of the Status of Women Sixty-Sixth Session (CSW 66) from 14-25 March 2022	<b>29</b>
UN Women GBV in Emergencies Help Desk Webinar - 12 April 2022	<b>30</b>
INERELA+ Takes Part In A Briefing on Global Crisis on Food and the Crisis Response	<b>31</b>
INERELA+ Shares Best Practice Of Communicating Results Through Social Media Through Exchange Webinar	<b>32</b>
<b>7 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>33</b>
INERELA+ Malawi Engagement in Outreach on Treatment Adherence and Faith Healing Saved Barton Phiri's Life	<b>34</b>
INERELA+ Congo: Advocacy for Open Access to HIV Testing for Minors without Parental Consent	<b>34</b>
INERELA+ Zimbabwe: Pushing for Improved Safer Practices for Sex Workers Through Economic Empowerment Projects	<b>35</b>
Safeguarding and Protecting Children from Gender Based Violence In Ghana	<b>36</b>
Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 in Burundi	<b>36</b>
Scaling Up Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Youth Leadership In Zimbabwe	<b>37</b>
Strengthening Partnerships Through Advocacy And Campaign For Universal Access To Maternal Child Health Among Religious Women In Nigeria	<b>39</b>
INERELA+ Burundi Ensuring Access to Services for Victims and Survivors of Gender-Based Violence	<b>40</b>
INERELA+ South Africa Delivers Lifeline Support to Survivors of Gender-Based Violence	<b>41</b>
Fostering Youth Engagement to Promote SRHR For Sex Workers Through Hands-Off Change Agents	<b>42</b>
Building Knowledgeable Societies In Sierra Leone	<b>42</b>
Media Engaged to Educate the Public About the Rights of Sex Workers In Zimbabwe.	<b>43</b>

Stakeholder Dialogue to Develop an Agenda for the National Consultation In Addressing HIV-Related Stigma and Human Rights In Nigeria	43
Capacity-Building Workshop on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR), Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and HIV In Ghana	44
<b>8 ADVOCACY</b>	<b>46</b>
INERELA+ Participates In A Global Conversation on Health and Climate Change Nexus – June 2-3, 2022	47
International AIDS Conference 27 July to 2 August 2022	49
Regional Advocacy Roundtable for Strengthening the Role of Religious Leaders in advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and HIV for Vulnerable Populations 17 – 20 August 2022	51



# I. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



*Protecting, Safeguarding and Caring for our children*

**I am delighted to be introducing my first Annual Report as the Executive Director of the International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV AIDS (INERELA+).**

I want to thank the late **Rev Phumzile Mabizela** for her leadership and transformational impact on INERELA+ over her tenure as INERELA+ Executive Director. I intend to build on her legacy as I lead the network on the next stage of its journey. If I had to describe 2022 in a few words, I would say it was a year of leaps, addressing challenges, consolidating successes and momentum building. We kicked it off with determination and clarity on how to achieve



*Munya Mandipaza – INERELA+ Executive Director*

our vision of a world free of HIV driven by a comprehensive faith-based response. We're more certain than ever that our Religious Leaders are one of the best investments in health to **SAVE** millions of lives, contribute to greater equity, stronger societies and to produce substantial health, social and economic gains. Shortly after my appointment I travelled to Ghana and Burundi where I witnessed first-hand the difference we are making in people's lives. I was greatly inspired by the energy of women-led support groups of survivors of gender-based violence and on how individual victims of violence had become more economically resilient with INERELA+ Country Network support. It was also sobering to hear from beneficiaries and stakeholders about how they were hit by the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

The issues we work on are enormous and urgent, and the pressures facing development and humanitarian nongovernmental organisations are often intense. I draw confidence from the fact that we are one part of a wider network, powered by a cause larger than any single organisation. I am privileged to work alongside passionate and dedicated staff, Country Networks, supporters, and partners to realise our vision and mission. The incredible resilience, solidarity and bravery by our Country Networks and partners in giving us hope. We are in an increasingly complex global environment of escalating inequalities of wealth and power are widening. Insecurity, conflict, and violence are leading to massive violations of people's rights whilst environmental destruction threatens our common home. This is all happening in the global context of inflation and on the heels of COVID-19 when gains in access to services and women's rights are being rolled back. As the climate crisis intensifies, it has deepened poverty, socio-economic divides thereby further plunging the most marginalized people further into health, economic and food insecurity. Natural disasters related to climate change shattered the lives of millions of people worldwide, often hitting first those furthest left behind. It is sobering to see the scale of damage caused by Cyclone Freddy in Mozambique, Madagascar, and Malawi. The cyclone largely destroyed an already fragile infrastructure, further jeopardizing access to services and community support systems. It pushed women and girls into situations of intensified and escalated violence. Service providers for survivors of violence are overwhelmed by the high levels of unmet demand as they have to adjust to the rapidly changing context which generated burnout and vicarious trauma.

The war in Ukraine also drove other global crises that dramatically increased levels of poverty and hunger most acutely in underdeveloped countries where rising food and energy prices have deepened a humanitarian crisis. As countries around the world continue to grapple with the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, our work is more relevant than ever. We continue to develop our programmes on climate adaptation and resilience, and to campaign for courageous

action by governments. One of our strengths as a global interfaith organisation is the ability to bring a distinctive perspective to international development.

Throughout the third year of the implementation of our strategic plan for 2020–2024, in the face of disruptive events and adverse environments, INERELA+ documented encouraging results and achievement which were supported by comprehensive iterative capacity development and learning engagements with our Country Networks. In response to the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV AIDS we reviewed and updated the second edition of our SAVE toolkit against the Fast Track Strategy and integrated it with the Framework for Dialogue, whilst retaining its own integrity (Please insert the link of the reviewed SAVE toolkit). The review significantly focused on the new UNAIDS strategy taking into consideration the newly allocated targets. This toolkit was translated to French and Portuguese.

As an organisation we made important investments in our people and in our systems and processes including those of our Country Networks. Through our partnership with Phambano Technology and MCE Solutions INERELA+ migrated from older Microsoft desk versions to Office365 together with our Country Networks allowing standardisation of emails to one domain, improvement in communications cohesion, branding, accountability, security and unifying of processes. We have developed the [Sunshine Path Hub - SharePoint](#) which is a working space which allows INERELA+ Secretariat central project data, document management, communication, and project mapping. Our Country networks can now network, exchange ideas and lessons learnt using the hub. The SharePoint is linked to Microsoft Teams which allows Country Networks to independently set up (Country Network level meetings, knowledge sharing, roundtable discussions among themselves or those implementing the same project without the involvement of the INERELA+ Secretariat.

Due increased production of media material (videos, case studies, documentaries) which in most cases are in large sizes and

pose a challenge in uploading them on social media platforms we developed a dedicated YouTube channel where all the material is stored under categorised themes (<https://inerela.org/case-studies/>). We also developed an HD mode Newsletter which can be accessed online by our targeted audiences from their emails. The HD facility allows targeted audiences to also access the HD newsletter from our Website (<https://inerela.org/newsletters/>), Twitter ((1) INERELA+ Secretariat (@INERELA\_SEC / Twitter) and Facebook accounts. In order to strengthen our Country Networks, we developed and implemented an online [Financial Toolkit](#). The toolkit allows our Country Networks even those that may struggle with the internet to work offline and whenever they are connected to internet the Toolkit synchronises with the central system at the Secretariat by reconciling figures and automatically submitting the reports. Through Southern Hemisphere and our internal programmes team we conducted a series capacity building training workshop with 15 Country Networks on effective projects management, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and governance. The online Salesforce system have been put in place so as to provide online functionalities such as leave application, asset management, supplier bid analysis.

Today, our message remains the same, and the clue is in our amazing name – INERELA+. We are here to stand together with people living with and affected by HIV AIDS, and that is what inspires me. INERELA+ has a strong vision and track record of building the agency of people living with and affected by HIV AIDS and helping them to transform their lives. We believe in a world where everyone is able to live with dignity, where all can thrive and flourish, and where the voices of people who are excluded, marginalised and unseen are listened to and acted on. This work is rooted in the conviction that all humans are created in God's image and likeness.

To the INERELA+ board we are grateful to your personal, collective, and unwavering commitment that you have fostered. I would especially want to thank the INERELA+ staff who demonstrated remarkable resilience and commitment throughout the year. My gratitude and appreciation go to partners

who have generously contributed to our collective 2022 achievements: from the generous donors who have enabled us to sustain our work, INERELA+ Country Networks, to individuals and ambassadors who have relentlessly pushed forward our agenda. It is your collective commitment, energy, resilience and patience that has successfully led us to achieve milestones in 2022. You have risen to this moment and

demonstrated the promise and strength of working in solidarity. Congratulations to you all.

I look forward to working with all of you to further pursue the INERELA+ vision in practical and effective ways.

**THANK YOU!**

**Munya Mandipaza**

*Acting Executive Director*



# 2. MUNYA MANDIPAZA APPOINTED AS INERELA+ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**A**fter the passing on of Rev Phumzile Mabizela in July 2021, the International Network of Religious Leaders Living With or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+) Board of Directors set out to find a candidate with the right vision and experience to lead the organisation. Following a comprehensive search, the Board of Directors of INERELA+ is delighted to announce that Munya Mandipaza has been appointed as the Executive Director effective 1 June 2023. A highly skilled and dynamic professional with profound expertise in leadership, policy design, strategy, programmes and evaluation, she has a strong history of orchestrating operational excellence, crisis management, systems strengthening, resource mobilisation and partnerships.



*Munya Mandipaza – INERELA+ Executive Director*

Munya is a principled development specialist by profession who holds several impressive academic qualifications which include a Social Sciences Degree, Masters in Development Studies, and Management Advanced Program. As an accomplished executive and well networked leader, she has devoted 18 years of her career to cumulatively work with alliances, networks and leading Christian international development NGOs globally in partnership with major international donors where she has held a number of senior management positions. She has a sterling reputation as a non-profit executive who is committed to driving positive social outcomes, durable change, creating and accomplishing relevant strategic goals. She

has worked with diverse stakeholders across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Munya has passionately and professionally involved herself in improving the lives of marginalised groups and countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable and people-centred development having served in different capacities on a number of national, regional and international programs in the Non-Profit sector. A leading luminary in gender equality, sexual reproductive health and rights, poverty eradication and youth empowerment, Munya is also a fierce advocate of social justice particularly the reduction of stigma, discrimination, health disparities and promotion of sustainable socio-economic development towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. She believes in mobilising the power of mass communication and storytelling to document social, policy and organisational change and facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement for consensus building. Ms Mandipaza continued building an exceptional career at INERELA+ spanning four years where she has been a key member of the Management Committee. She gained valuable exposure and leadership experience, satisfactorily delivering across a range of senior roles at INERELA+ when she served as (Programmes Manager from April 2019 to August 2020, Deputy Director Programmes - September 2020 to June 2021, Acting Executive Director – July 2021 to May 2023.

With an enviable track record for navigating demanding and complex environments, since July 2021 when she has been the **INERELA+ Acting Executive Director**, she has not only worked hard to build on the incredible legacy left by her predecessor **Rev Phumzile Mabizela** but went on to weather the storms of the COVID -19 pandemic and to steer INERELA+ through some significant leadership and operational challenges. Throughout her term as Interim Executive Director, the board observed her commitment to openness, steady hand, strategic mind, and authentic leadership style which has been both refreshing and truly welcomed. She has demonstrated outstanding leadership, strong commitment, dedication and loyalty to the organization, her team, partners and stakeholders.

Ms Mandipaza brings in a unique breath of knowledge, experience, global perspective, and a core understanding of INERELA+ mission and vision. It is fitting that Munya's leadership be recognised, and we believe that she is well placed to be a purposeful leader at this time of growth, development, and transformation of the organisation. Armed with these qualities, we look forward to her charting a direction for the network which preserves the values and moral

leadership of INERELA+ while re-invigorating the network's engagement across the globe.

We wish to thank Munya for her contribution during this time and we look forward to working with her as she leads an exciting future for the network and the embedding of INERELA+ vision of championing a world free of HIV driven by a comprehensive faith-based response.



# 3. INTRODUCTION



*Gender inequality and the escalating violence against women and girls have prompted INERELA+ to double its efforts to realize gender equality through capacity building, dialogues, advocacy, and partnerships.*



## 2022 Country Networks Membership Figures

Over the years, the networks have grown; there are now more than 40 000 members across the globe who mobilise their respective faith communities to provide resources and referrals to over 3 million people worldwide, helping curb HIV-related stigma, shame, and discrimination and to reduce new infections through the holistic SAVE (Safer practices, Access to services, Voluntary and regular HIV testing services, and Empowerment toolkit).

INERELA+ has 15 networks in the following African countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Membership numbers per country are presented below:

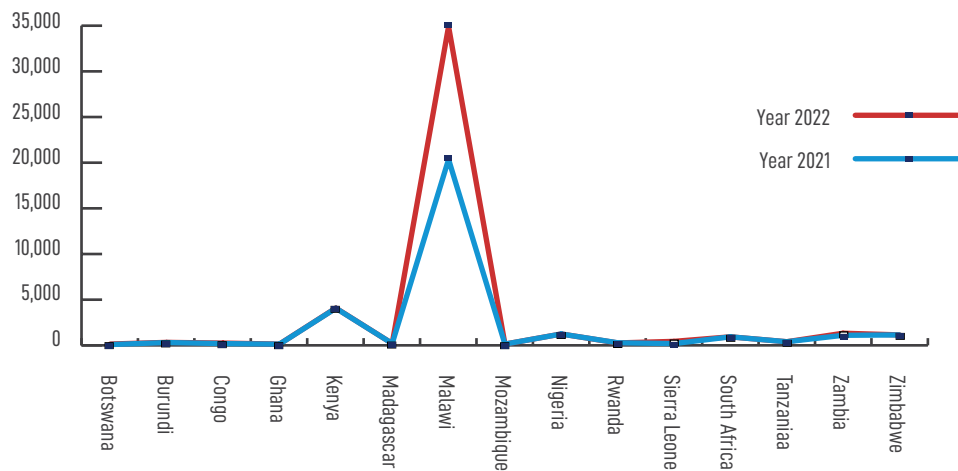
The organization has recorded a significant number of female members in 2022 as compared to males. The organization is looking into strategies for attracting more male members as they play a key role in influencing behaviour change in faith and marginalized communities. They are key through an influential role in upholding society's moral values, policy advocacy, enforcement and by being a voice for the vulnerable people in society.

**Table 1: INERELA+ Country Network Membership Figures (2022)**

NO.	COUNTRY NETWORK	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	Botswana	35	21	56
2	Burundi	149	90	239
3	Congo	119	41	160
4	Ghana	32	18	50
5	Kenya	1856	2156	4012
6	Madagascar	70	47	117
7	Malawi	18723	16277	35000
8	Mozambique	9	40	49
9	Nigeria	571	592	1163
10	Rwanda	82	114	196
11	Sierra Leone	250	100	350
12	South Africa	260	590	850
13	Tanzania	212	98	310
14	Zambia	565	681	1246
15	Zimbabwe	594	469	1063
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23527</b>	<b>21334</b>	<b>44861</b>

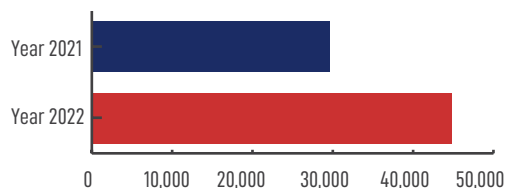


### Comparative Analysis of Membership Numbers Between 2021 and 2022



The organization recorded a significant increase in membership throughout our Country Networks. This can be attributed to Country Networks' good work in providing services to the communities that they serve. However, more could also be attributed to the hard work put in by the INERELA+ Secretariat in trying to make sure the organization and the work of the networks are visible and accessible to a larger audience through our informative website, social media platforms, and information-sharing platform (hub). In 2022, the INERELA+ Secretariat team were invited and actively participated at a partner's virtual forum Social Media Practice hosted by the UN Trust Fund where they showcased INERELA+ Country Networks' work and the impact of the network's interventions.

### Membership Growth Rate



Using the **formular**<sup>1</sup>, the organisation had a growth rate of approximately 30% with all factors stable, however, the growth rate can be slightly higher or lower as by the time of reporting the number might shift due to unpredictable, unavoidable economic, social, natural, and human factors which determine the environment in which our members live. The network is growing and will continue to increase in membership thanks to the support from our funders, Country Networks, INERELA+ Secretariat, partners, stakeholders, and the beneficiaries that we serve.

<sup>1</sup> Current(44 861) - Base (29 714) = Difference (15 147) then Difference (15 147) / Current (44 861) = 0,337 (34%)

# 4. 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



*Implementing the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan by leaving no one behind, reaching the most marginalized and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination*

15

INERELA+ secretariat hosted a virtual M&E training funded by Bread for the World (BftW) and facilitated by Southern Hemisphere. The training which took place over 7 days between April and May 2022 was attended by 15 Country Networks and it covered five basic Project, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL) topics namely: Introduction to Monitoring & Evaluation; Monitoring & Evaluation Plan Development; Data Collection and Reporting tool; Outcome & Impact-oriented Planning Monitoring and Evaluation and developing a coherent project description, case study and a success story.

500

INERELA+ Zimbabwe reached out and sensitised over 500 sex workers on the need for sex workers' support groups to help each other on issues related to safe practice while conducting their business.

15

INERELA+ secretariat hosted a virtual learning forum which was attended by the 15 Country Networks

7

Ambassadors from seven (7) different Countries namely, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were trained to promote the work of INERELA+ and assist in creating and building visibility of INERELA+ in countries where they are based ensuring that INERELA+'s work is known and recognized.

250

INERELA+ Country Networks trained 250 Religious Leaders to become agents of change on key issues affecting sex workers and SRHR using the Hands-Off training manual.

75

At least seventy-five Religious Leaders were trained on the SAVE Toolkit

7

A total of 50 participants, three (3) trained Religious Leaders, 25 young adults, and 22 parents attended the congregational sessions on ASRHR training targeting children and parents at the TC Hardy School Ruwa in Zimbabwe. The 25 young adults who attended the sessions have the potential of reaching out to over 1500 young adults with the information and knowledge acquired.

6

Participants from six (6) Country Networks that are implementing the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) project namely (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) attended a virtual Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on Life and Relationship skills. The training aimed at equipping participants with the required skills to facilitate sessions, guide, and coach their peers, especially adolescent boys and girls between the ages of 10 to 24.

1612

Beneficiaries reach with food, hygiene, and sanitation supplies

96+

community leaders, 200 faith leaders, and 106 traditional leaders were capacitated to advocate for changes in behaviours, practices, and attitudes towards ending Violence Against Women/Girls

130

Women/girls and men trained as champions, participating in community initiatives aimed so they can mobilise their peers

9857

Women/girls who had access to information and have improved knowledge on issues of Violence Against Women/Girls

540

Women and girls (survivors) who accessed essential services (health, judiciary, police, courts)

315

Marginalized women and girls reached



# 5. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING



*Transforming the needs of women survivors of violence through information, goods and services*





INERELA+ Ghana Training Of Religious Leaders On Sexual Gender Based Violence 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

## Religious Leaders In Ghana Trained on Sexual Gender Based Violence

Gender Based Violence (GBV) comes in many ways that include sexual, emotional, physiological, financial and physical abuse. In all abuse, the chances are high that women and girls are the victims. In Ghana, like most countries in the African continent, GBV remains high. To amplify the campaign against GBV, from the 21st to the 23rd of March 2022 INERELA+ Ghana held a three-day capacity-building workshop for selected Religious Leaders in Accra. The main aim of the workshop was to educate participants on the best ways to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for women and girls, HIV, counselling, and mental health issues in their line of work. Speaking at the workshop, INERELA+ Ghana National Country Coordinator Mrs Mercy Acquah-Hayford said the training was necessitated by the need to equip Religious Leaders with the requisite skills to reduce the high rate of SGBV and divorces in their communities. After the workshop, the participants were expected to form an advocacy group to hold community outreaches and lobby for policy changes against societal norms that are harmful to vulnerable and underserved communities. The workshop appealed to churches and

Religious Leaders to assist by providing safe spaces for GBV victims across the country, encouraging women to speak out and report perpetrators of GBV. Speaking at the side-line of the workshop one of the participants Ms Juliet Ewurasi Koomson thanked INERELA+ Ghana for organising such an insightful network. *"I now have a clearer understanding of how to handle GBV, stigma and discrimination issues, I have learnt to overcome and how to address the fears related to exposing people who abuse their partners,"* she said. ■

## INERELA+ Holds a Virtual Bread for the World-Sponsored MEL Capacity Building

In an effort to strengthen our Country Networks, INERELA+ hosted a virtual M&E training workshop funded by Bread for the World between 21 April and 19 May 2022. The training workshop was facilitated by Southern Hemisphere and 15 INERELA+ Country Networks were in attendance. The training workshop was conducted over seven days covering five basic Project, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL) topics namely: Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation; Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Development; Data Collection and Reporting tool; Outcome and Impact-oriented Planning

Monitoring and Evaluation, development of a coherent project description, case study and success story development.

The training did not only build and strengthen the capacity of the participants in project monitoring and evaluation, but it also promoted knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas on project implementation between Country Networks through assigned group work. Participants had practical exposure to project monitoring, and impact reporting through case study development and storytelling. Speaking on the last day of the training Pastor Tharcisse Harerimana, the Country Coordinator for INERELA+ Burundi said, *"We would like to thank the INERELA+ Secretariat and Southern Hemisphere for organising this training, in the last few days we have learned a lot on how to collect information that can be used for reporting purposes, how to write a report, we have also learned how to create a case study and how to write a story. This training has been very useful, and we want more of them."* ■

## INERELA+ Held a Virtual Training Of Trainer's (TOT) Workshop on Life And Relationship Skills

INERELA+ secretariat hosted a virtual Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on Life and Relationship skills from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. The training sought to sensitize and further equip the trainers after the first TOT workshop that was held from the 26<sup>th</sup> – the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. The training was offered to five participants per country from a total of six INERELA+ Country Networks that are implementing the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) project namely (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). The aim of the training was to equip the participants with the required skills to facilitate sessions, guide, and coach their peers, especially adolescent boys, and girls between ages 10 to 24.

The facilitator covered several topics that included understanding life skills, gender-based violence, living and preventing HIV/

Life Skills Training Of Trainer's (TOT) Workshop Participants





AIDS, teenage pregnancy, decision-making, coping with emotions, and advocacy among others. The participants indicated that the 2021 training impacted their lives positively. For example, participants from Sierra Leone testified that they refused to go through the female genital mutilation/cutting process after attending the training. The group of enthusiastic young people who attended the training indicated that they are ready to share the skills and knowledge acquired from the training with other young people from their respective countries. ■

## Leveraging Ambassadors Through Capacity Building

INERELA+ organized a two (2) days Ambassador's virtual training on the 16th and 23rd of July 2022. The aim of the workshop was to train Religious Leaders leading constituencies of INERELA across Africa to be better ambassadors for the network. These

Ambassadors promote the work of INERELA+ and assist in creating and building visibility of INERELA+ in countries where they are based, and they ensure that INERELA+'s work is known and recognised. The training was virtually facilitated by Fr Francis Nseka based in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rev Jide Macaulay based in Manchester, United Kingdom.

The trained Ambassadors were from seven (7) different countries namely, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The training covered topics such as: Who is and what is the role of an Ambassador; The history of INERELA+, objectives of INERELA+; INERELA+ Vision, Mission and Values, role of Country Networks and advocacy among other important issues. Furthermore, during and after the training, ambassadors were given the opportunity to network, share ideas and identify good practices, principles, or strategies which they can adapt and use in their respective countries. ■



*INERELA+ Tanzania Country Coordinator, Mossy Ismail (On the far right), Mary Kirafa (standing), Joylyn Chepkorir (white top) With INERELA Kenya staff member during Tanzania exchange visit to Kenya, from 2nd to 5th October 2022*

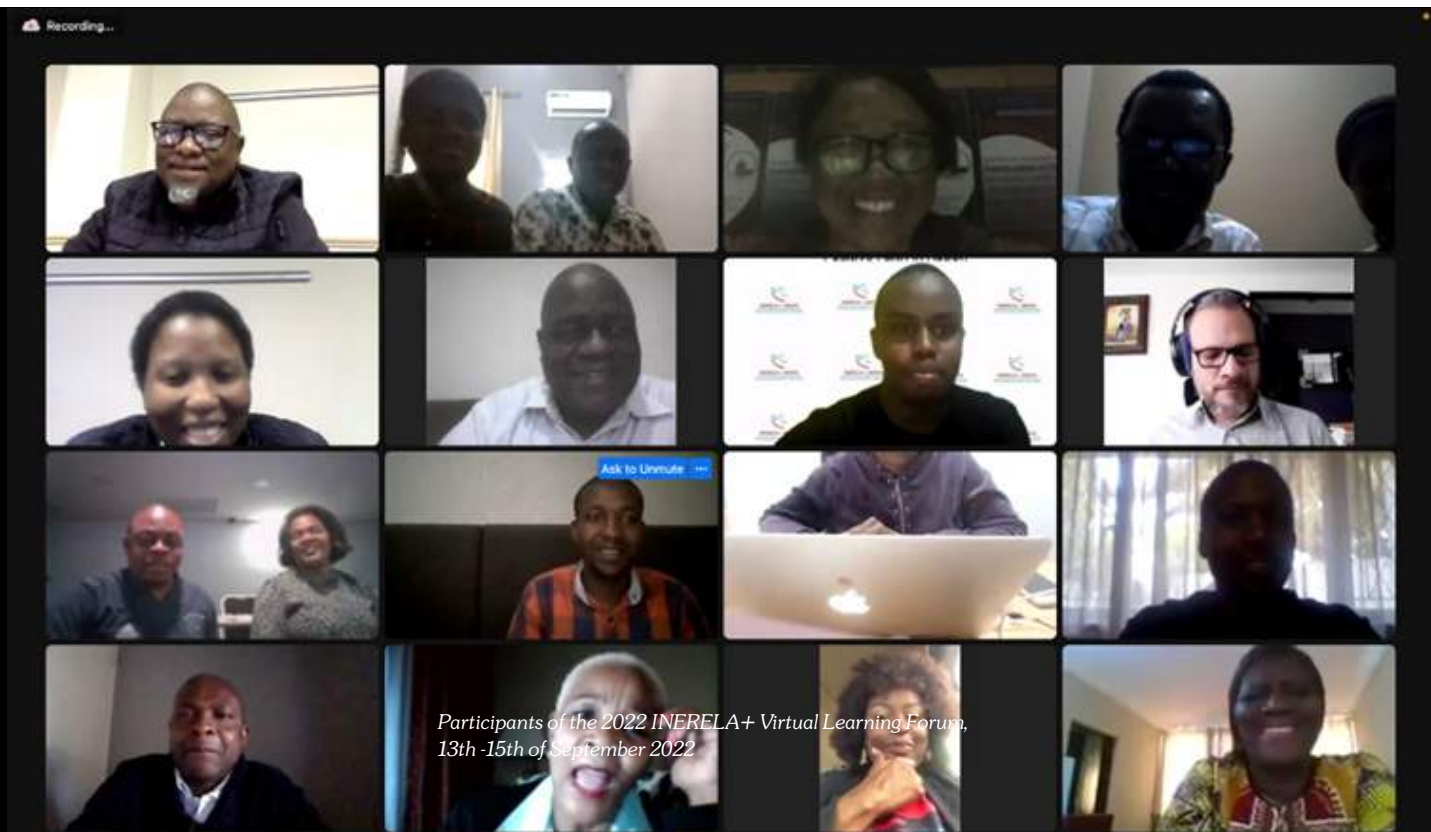
## INERELA+ Tanzania Visits INERELA+ Kenya For Exchange Learning

INERELA+ Tanzania Country Coordinator, Mossy Ismail (On the far right), Mary Kirafa (standing), Joylinn Chepkorir (white top) With INERELA Kenya staff member during Tanzania exchange visit to Kenya, from 2nd to 5th October 2022

To facilitate better project implementation through exposure to countries with countries of similar contexts, INERELA+ Tanzania embarked on a four (4) days exchange visit to INERELA+ Kenya from the 2nd to the 5th of October 2022. The aim of the visit was to; encourage knowledge sharing between the two country networks: learn from Kenya’s project implementation experiences: understand INERELA+ operational and engagement processes and learn how to adapt or adopt good practice principles and approaches that have been used in achieving remarkable successes in Kenya.

On the first day of the visit, INERELA+ Tanzania Country Coordinator Mossy Ismail met with the INERELA+ Kenya team at their INERELA+ Kenya office to understand the scope of work such as reporting, governance, communication technology, and general administration. On the second day, she met and engaged with Religious Leaders, CHES advocates, and Mwangaza youth champions. As part of this exchange visit, the team reached out to the juvenile prison where INERELA+ Kenya showcased the social impact of previously conducted activities on young people who were in prison. Juvenile crime in Kenya is firmly rooted in poverty where 80% of children appearing before the juvenile court are street children who are arrested for committing different crimes.

On the third day, a community outreach activity on SRHR/HIV was done in Narok region where INERELA+ Kenya supports victims (women and girls) of SGBV by providing psychosocial care, advocating for an inclusive legal framework, strengthening the capacity of criminal justice actors to respond appropriately to SGBV cases on



women and girls and enhancing public knowledge and awareness through community dialogue forums. On the final day of the visit, INERELA+ Tanzania was taken through INERELA+ Kenya's institutional systems such as fundraising, INERELA+ Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, strategic planning documentation, and communication strategies. After the exchange, INERELA+ Tanzania designed an Action Plan to improve their own project implementation by creating synergy between lessons learned and existing experience. ■

## INERELA+ Hosts Learning Forum For Fifteen Country Networks

INERELA+ 2022 Learning Forum was held virtually from the 13th to the 15th of September 2022. The workshop's main aim was for participants to learn from the work being done by Country Networks, identify

areas that require further development, and improvement, and facilitate communication, learning and collaboration among the Country Networks. The workshop commenced with day-long presentations from the 15 Country Networks about their key achievements, challenges, and lesson learnt since the 2021 Learning Forum. The presentations were followed by capacity-building sessions from INERELA+ Secretariat programmes and finance teams.

In the last session of the Learning Forum workshop, INERELA+ board chairperson, Sergio Rodrigo Bueno Montealegre delivered the keynote address by first congratulating the secretariat and the Country Networks for a job well done and for continuing to be the voice of the most vulnerable people in our society. Furthermore, the chairperson cautioned the participants that the fight against HIV/AIDS is far from over citing the UNAIDS global report he stated, "The progress in prevention and treatment is faltering around the world, putting millions of people in grave danger."



*INERELA+ team members attending the 2023 Annual Planning Meeting. Standing from left: Bobo Chazireni, Catherine Muwayakufa, and Heinnry Khalidozo. Seated from left: Thabo Sibiya, Calvin Mashate, Munya Mandipaza, and Madu Setlogelo*



In line with the forum's purpose to "provide a platform for dialogue, reflection, and action to strengthen INERELA+ and Country Network participants were trained by seasoned experts in Finance Management and Accountability, Corporate Governance, and ICT for Social Change. The workshop was also attended by the representatives of some INELERA+ partners. Their attendance was primarily to learn about key achievements and challenges in the projects implemented by Country Networks. ■

### **Strategic Transformation, Effective Planning and Implementation Dominate INERELA+ Secretariat Annual Planning Discussions**

INERELA+ Secretariat held an Annual planning meeting from the 22nd to the

24th of February 2023. As part of INERELA+ strategy, the organization plans for the year with input from the secretariat staff on finance, programmes, operations, and team affairs. During the Annual planning session which was led by the Acting Executive Director (Munya Mandipaza), more emphasis was placed on the operational plan, with presentations and analysis on the budgets, Country Networks' progress on planned programmatic activities, governance, and operations. The meeting was held in person thereby allowing interactive and face-to-face traverse of ideas among teammates from the secretariat. The Acting Executive Director opened the meeting by devoting the word of prayer from 1 Corinthians 12 v 5. She dedicated the year 2023 to a theme "DOMINION" challenging the team to execute their purpose at INERELA+ and not forgetting that INERELA+ works as one body to achieve the vision of the organisation. The annual planning meeting ended on the 24th with an Action Plan which spelt out tasks and responsibilities to be achieved in the short to long-term operational period. ■

# 6. LINKING AND LEARNING



## INERELA+ Attends Africa – EU Summit Education Plus Initiative 14th – 18th February 2022



Munya Mandipaza- INERELA+ Acting Executive Director

From February 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Education Plus Initiative UN co-lead agencies together with the African Union Commission's African Union International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), the European Commission, Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+), Education Plus champion countries of *Benin and Sierra Leone*, the governments of Finland, France, Portugal, and Spain co-hosted a virtual pre-summit event during African Union - European Union week. The INERELA+ Acting Executive Director, Munya Mandipaza was in attendance. Adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa continue to be disproportionately affected by the AIDS epidemic. Approximately 4200 adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa acquire HIV every week. In 2020, five in six adolescents aged between 15 and 19 years newly acquiring.

HIV in the region were girls. An estimated 23 300 adolescent girls and young women died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2020 in sub-Saharan Africa, making it the second leading cause of death of adolescent girls and young women after maternal mortality. The figures represent lives disrupted and lost as AIDS remains a public health threat to survival, well-being, human rights, and fundamental freedom.

The African Union-European Union pre-summit event which was hosted under the theme *Adolescent Girls in Africa Completing Secondary School, Safe, Strong, Empowered: Time for Education Plus* held high-level policy dialogues with decision-makers alongside adolescent girls and young women at global, regional, and country levels calling for greater investments to guarantee girls' education and health. As a high-level political advocacy drive, the *Education Plus* initiative rallies for accelerated action and investments to prevent HIV, centred on the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women and the achievement of gender equality in sub-Saharan Africa, with secondary education as the strategic entry point to prevent teenage pregnancies, early marriages, harmful practices, gender-based violence and HIV infections. The pre-summit event reflected on old and emerging challenges to the education and health rights of adolescent girls and young women and the opportunity for countries on both continents to collaborate and make transformative changes.

Participants shared their recommendations for advancing gender equality, empowerment and the rights of adolescent girls and young women at all levels. Best practices and new initiatives at the country level were showcased. Speakers called for robust action to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' education in Africa. ■



## INERELA+ Secretariat Attends a UN Women Webinar on Resiliency to Crisis



*Ms. Munya Mandipaza, INERELA+ Acting Executive Director*

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, INERELA+ has invested in organizational resilience of its Country Networks which are implementing Projects covering three broad outcome areas namely preventing violence against women, providing safe adequate multifactorial services, and supporting effective implementation of laws policies and reforms. This has been essential to enable them to adapt to the rapidly changing context so they can be able to support women and girls survivors throughout the challenging times.

INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2022 had an opportunity to participate in the discussions between Civil Society and other stakeholders on resilience to the continuing impacts of Covid and other crises in efforts to prevent Violence Against Women and Girls co-hosted by UN Trust Fund to end Violence Against Women and Spotlight Initiative Secretariat. Vesna Yardage the Acting Chief of the interest on violence against women co-hosted the webinar together with Erin Kenny head of the technical unit of the Spotlight initiative (the world's largest investment which was launched in partnership with the United Nations and European Union 2017 so as to end violence against women and girls).

The webinar which focused on resilience in crisis lessons from civil society organizations in the prevention of violence against women

and girls was a learning forum organised by UN Women to share some practices on the prevention of violence against women and girls. This platform presented an opportunity for the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director to discuss critical issues and to share lessons on what she had learned on the continuing ongoing and negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls. Speaking at the Webinar, she shared on how INERELA+ is mobilizing communities through Religious Leaders to prevent violence and how their work is positioned across the spectrum of prevention and response to meet the urgent needs of beneficiaries. This learning platform was also essential for her to highlight the effect of intersecting and coinciding crises like climate change-related disasters and the impacts of the intensifying environmental degradation on women and girls as well as promising practices. This event was also hosted when another major crisis was unfolding and occupying people's minds with concerns for the safety and well-being of all civilians who had suffered from death, destruction, and displacement in Ukraine. Women and girls were also disproportionately affected by this conflict. It gave participants the opportunity to showcase strategies that are potentially transferable to other intersecting and compounding crisis settings. INERELA+, a grantee of UN Women has continued to pivot and adjust its operations to support women and girls survivors of violence in challenging circumstances through the use of its faith leaders who have always made a transformative change within their communities by facilitating change in attitudes and behaviours that enable violence.

After the interactive panel discussion amongst civil society partners participants were introduced to the interactive virtual safe space/knowledge hub by the name of Sunshine. Sunshine is a new online hub for knowledge exchange that UN Women created for a global learning exchange on ending violence against women and girls. This was developed in partnership with the Spotlight Initiative and the UN Trust Fund as a way of adapting to the new normal and securing a space for ongoing and continuing conversation in over 50 languages on various topics related to violence against

women and girls. Shine gives an opportunity to organisations to connect with other networks related to the work of ending violence against women and girls. It is a convening platform and multilingual tool to inform global policy programming and advocacy on ending violence against women and girls. Its aim is to connect a range of partners and change-makers, civil society and women's organizations. Shine offers a spirit of inclusiveness and accessibility whilst overcoming language and time zone barriers through instant translation for everyone engaged. The platform provides opportunities to collaborate across networks and to share knowledge to co-create and improve resources and tools. It allows networking and convening of opportunities that connect partners across the globe, to advocate for and influence programming and policies which end violence against women and girls. Anyone is allowed to join, so they can share their own experiences and collectively increase knowledge and meaningfully influence programming and policies on ending violence against women and girls. ■

## INERELA+ Hands Off Programme Mid-Term Review (MTR) Workshop



*Bobo Chazireni, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Advisor*

The Hands-Off Programme coordinated by Aidsfonds focuses on the reduction of violence against sex workers in Southern Africa through prevention, care, and support. INERELA+ is implementing this programme in five countries in the SADC region. The programme acknowledges that one of the major driving factors to the continued persistence of HIV and AIDS in the region is the existence of widespread "sex networks" that are created by multiple sexual partners and in which sex workers feature prominently. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 Ms Munya Mandipaza, Acting Executive Director and Bobo Chazireni, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Advisor at INERELA+ secretariat attended the Hands-off Mid-Term Review (MTR) Workshop. The MTR Workshop was to provide space for reflecting on sex workers' movement(s), collective exploration of areas of potential improvements, and offer an in-person space to reconnect and enable dialogue among Hands-Off project implementing partners.

The programme works with sex worker-led groups, law enforcement, health, support services and other key stakeholders towards achieving safer environments for sex workers with the aim to ultimately influence favourable law and policy reforms in Southern Africa. The purpose of the MTR was to provide a participatory review of the programme. In the MTR the focus was on analysis and documentation of the progress of the Hands-Off programme, as well as providing recommendations to sharpen the strategic direction and operation for the remaining years. The MTR workshop was facilitated by Balise Trading consultant. After the MTR process, the consultant was expected to deliver an MTR report, including a set of four case studies on each of the Hands-Off outcomes, recommendations to inform the strategic direction of the programme, recommendations for Hands-Off partner programming per country, sustainability of the programme, stakeholder engagement and strategies on increasing programme impact on the cross-cutting themes. ■

## INERELA+ Attends the Commission of the Status of Women Sixty-Sixth Session (CSW 66) from 14–25 March 2022



INERELA+ Acting Executive Director – Munya Mandipaza

The INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza virtually attended the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66) which took place from 14 to 25 March 2022. CSW is the largest and among the most attended gender equality and women's rights events held every year at the UN Headquarters. It ran under the priority theme *"Achieving Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, Environment and Disaster risk reduction policies and programmes"*.

Due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSW66 took place in a hybrid format. This event happened at a time when the impact of covid 19 had ravaged the world and Munya clearly agreed that the current financial, social and environmental order must shift. This event was also crucial to the commitments and social justice work of INERELA+ Networks and members in all regions of the world. INERELA+ remains committed to addressing the current climate emergency, God of the Bible is a God of justice who protects, loves, and cares for the most vulnerable. Humanity has an impact on the global ecosystem and what we do now decides the future. We are not only caretakers, but we all depend on Mother Earth's health. This is at the centre of

INERELA+'s work on climate justice. INERELA+ is addressing climate change because it is a spiritual and ethical issue of justice, equity, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability. When creation is threatened, churches and Religious Leaders are called to speak out and act as an expression of their commitment to life, justice, and love.

The effects of climate change are more severely impacting women than men, because of gendered norms. Food, water, health, and energy are particularly affected by climate change, form the base of women's livelihoods, and fall within the purview of women's responsibilities. Women are often in charge of growing and preparing food, gathering firewood for fuel, collecting water, and caring for the sick in their families. These tasks become more gruelling and time-consuming with the intensification of floods and droughts. Women's economic insecurity increases more than men's in the aftermath of natural disasters.

While women have a good understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change and have the knowledge and skills to mitigate, adapt and build resilience to it, they are consistently underrepresented in policy and decision-making around climate change at local, national, and global the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director emphasised.

### INERELA+ recommended that:

- It is imperative to tackle the roots of the climate emergency by radically cutting national greenhouse gas emissions, according to science and Paris Agreement objectives with wealthy and historically polluting nations taking the lead and eliminating subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.
- There is a need to invest in sustainable alternatives and climate solutions that foster poverty eradication and gender equity such as community-based renewable energy systems, sustainable/ climate-smart agriculture, fishery, and forestry, among others.
- There is a need to ramp up the transfer of finance from wealthy, polluting nations to low-income and vulnerable countries for mitigation and adaptation, and



ensure that such finance is accessible to grassroots, rural and indigenous women.

- The voices of young people and children, young women and girls should be taken into consideration while formulating and implementing climate policies as their future is at stake and they are our hope for a sustainable future.
- Climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience-building, disaster risk reduction and migration policies need to respond to women's priorities and needs, e.g., livelihoods, food sovereignty, access to water, and health by enabling women's representation and participation in climate change policy-making processes.

There is a need to address social, economic, and racial factors related to climate displacement and disaster response, especially for women's access to safe and dignified water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and encourage the provision of WASH resources in rural communities to reduce the risks of sexual and gender-based violence. ■

## UN Women GBV in Emergencies Help Desk Webinar – 12 April 2022

On the 12th of April 2022, UN ERAW Trust Fund GBV partners were introduced to services that can be offered to them through the Social Development Direct help desk of which the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director was in attendance. Joanne Creighton the GBV technical expert and GBV Help Desk Programme Director from Social Development Direct explained through her presentation that the help desk is an external support service that they provide independent from the UN trust funds which are operated by Social Development Direct through their internal team. Social Development Direct who manages the help desk from the UK is then supported by the global roster of GBV and gender experts who have a wealth of training and experience and expertise ranging from 10 -20 years. The experts are always on standby to support the queries as they come in. They work

collectively to improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian response for GBV prevention risk mitigation and response.

The GBV help desk is a free and confidential technical research and advice service for humanitarian actors working on GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and response at the local, country, regional, and global levels. This is to ensure that the agency and capacity of survivors are recognized and reinforced, and the primary prevention efforts are effectively employed to address underlying gender inequality issues.

Joanne explained that the help desk is there to help GBV actors working on emergencies, at whatever level they may be across the globe. The actors can be Coordinators, Managers or GBV specialists. Social Development Direct is available through their in-house team to help actors working with UN ERAW partners with more specific technical queries around GBV. Additionally, the in-house or core team is supported in turn by a global roster of gender experts who have a wealth of training and experience, and expertise.

### Social Development Direct provides services like.

- Rapid technical support on GBV programming and coordination in emergencies in line with international standards, guidelines, and best practice
- Research - they carry out global literature and evidence reviews, on behalf of UN ERAW partners working in emergencies and produce reports which highlight the best practice in GBV in emergencies programming relevant tools and resources.
- They also carry out quarterly research learning and evidence digest. These reads are thematic summaries of existing research evidence in relation to GBV in emergency programming.
- They also prepare and issue guidance in-depth guidance notes on best practices in GBV to assist with programming and policy engagement in relation to current and emerging issues and trends.

GBV response queries are the most popular queries they have dealt with and general requests across all areas of programming. A range of queries from response prevention assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and risk mitigation have been received and dealt with as well. ■

## INERELA+ Takes Part In A Briefing on Global Crisis on Food and the Crisis Response



*Munya Mandipaza – INERELA+ Acting Executive Director*

On 25 May 2022 a briefing featured experts from the UN, civil society, and churches who discussed crucial updates on the global food crisis and food security with participants from the World Council of Churches (WCC), ACT Alliance, regional and national councils of churches, and others working on agriculture, food, and humanitarian assistance. The INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza attended the briefing session.

### Key Takeaways:

- Poverty, more than any other factor, determines vulnerability to climate change and limits adaptive capacity. Existing gender inequalities combined with poverty magnify women's vulnerability to climate change and undermine their ability to adapt.

- Climate change is a threat multiplier for hunger, destroying livelihoods, driving displacement, widening social inequalities, and undermining sustainable development.
- The number of extreme weather-related disasters has doubled. Harvests have decreased, and food prices have risen as a result. The climate crisis is fuelling the hunger crisis, and with our food systems more global than ever, we all stand to lose.
- Higher temperatures, water scarcity, droughts, floods, and greater CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere affect staple crops around the world. Corn and wheat production has declined in recent years due to extreme weather events, plant diseases, and a global water crisis.
- If climate change reduces the amount of food produced, then it makes sense that it also reduces the amount of food people can access. This simple instance of supply and demand, however, has big impacts. If one part of the food system is interrupted due to a climate event (big or small), that can lead to inflation. We've seen this happen over the last two years after international trade was suspended due to COVID-19. Price spikes leave the poorest families most vulnerable.
- Climate change affects the global food system in such a way that those who already suffer from hunger and undernutrition are the most vulnerable to losing more as the climate crisis continues. In order "to end hunger" — one of our top Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030 — we need to address the causes of climate change, particularly at the governmental and policy levels. We also need to prioritize climate justice to support the communities at the frontlines of the crisis, communities that often contribute very little to greenhouse gas emissions. ■

## **INERELA+ Shares Best Practice Of Communicating Results Through Social Media Through Exchange Webinar**

On the 21st of September 2022, the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza and the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Advisor had an opportunity to share with one hundred and fifty UN Women-funded grantees how INERELA+ use social media as a communication channel, for engagement, advocacy and to communicate results. The duo managed to shed light on the use of social media as an information channel which INERELA+ uses to share key information about their work and to raise awareness to the wider audience on ending violence against women and girls through the website, reports, and knowledge products. As a medium for engagement, INERELA+ uses social media to engage stakeholders through important calendar dates and hashtags in order to take a stand on violence against women and girls. Through campaigns, INERELA+ uses social media to advocate for transformational change at all levels that guarantee women and girls' rights to live free from violence.

Considerations in developing communication content were shared by the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director. She emphasised that it was important to look at the target audience, the channels of communication that the target audience accesses most in their context, and the times that they regularly use those platforms. It was noted that cultural values and norms also play an important role when developing communication content. The need to use appropriate messaging is central to content development.

To maintain an online presence the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director stressed that it is important to use briefly written texts with key statistics to keep on inspiring the target audience. A communications calendar with important dates guides INERELA+ in the type of content to develop and the timelines for posting it. In overall INERELA+ keeps on referring to its strategic plan and the overall goals and objectives which are part of the strategic plan.

In order to track what has worked and what has not worked INERELA+ uses the monkey survey to interact with the target audience and to solicit feedback on their personal experiences after a campaign, social media engagement, and offering of services. Use of ongoing analytics on INERELA+ Facebook pages and interactions via Twitter. The target audience assists INERELA+ by assessing the content for our communications. ■



# 7. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT



## INERELA+ Malawi Engagement in Outreach on Treatment Adherence and Faith Healing Saved Barton Phiri's Life



*Barton Phiri*

The treatment, adherence and faith healing seek to challenge the false separation that places treatment and faith healing at opposite ends of the spectrum. To achieve this, INERELA+ Malawi engaged in outreach about HIV&AIDS prevention and treatment and faith, Barton Phiri (36), a husband and a father of four (4) benefited from this outreach. Phiri was diagnosed with HIV and AIDS at Mpemba Health Centre after attending an awareness meeting organised by young people who were trained in Faith Healing and Adherence organised by INERELA+ Malawi. Before testing, Phiri struggled with his health, he was always sick and couldn't work effectively. He survived on antibiotics, but he was not getting any better. "I took it as normal life, and I spent a lot of money on things that could be avoided." Said Phiri while thanking MANERELA+ for training youth on the importance of getting tested and sharing the news with other community members. Phiri further explained "I had to choose life and not death; I must live positively at any cost. I explained my status to my wife who also went for testing, but her results were negative". ■

## INERELA+ Congo: Advocacy for Open Access to HIV Testing for Minors without Parental Consent

In DR Congo, the law on the protection of people living with HIV and affected persons in article 37 states: The HIV test on a minor or on any other incapable person is practised with the consent of the parents or guardian, except if his or her best interest requires it. Over the years, civil organisations organised campaigns for free access of adolescents to HIV testing without the consent of the parents or guardianship, but they failed to influence the policies or change the narrative of Article 37. INERELA+ CONGO (CONERELA) through the National Coordinator Cesar Mombunza Azuba in collaboration with Réseau des Associations Congolaises des Jeunes (RACOJ) youth network and Réseau des journalistes et communicateurs pour la population et développement (RCP) a network of journalists and communicators for population and development organised an advocacy TV show (link: <https://youtube/gqI88j2ZSrE>) to remind parliamentarians and parents the importance of adolescents HIV testing without their consent. The advocacy TV show funded by the Robert CARR Foundation RCF – EOF grant was based on the argument that besides the provisions of Article 37, there was a need for authorities to consider, prioritise and encourage adolescents' voluntary HIV testing as the age of first sexual intercourse in DR Congo is around 13 years. ■





*Sex workers Empowerment Project in Zimbabwe*

## **INERELA+ Zimbabwe: Pushing for Improved Safer Practices for Sex Workers Through Economic Empowerment Projects**

INERELA+ Zimbabwe through the Hands-off Programme organised training and sensitization meetings for Religious Leaders and sex workers in Harare and Gweru. The main aim of these meetings was to reduce violence against sex workers at community and national levels in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, there are over 44,500 female sex workers in Zimbabwe, around 40% of whom are living with HIV. This is concerning in an environment where sex work is illegal, condoms are being confiscated and gender inequality makes condom negotiation difficult. Sex workers' vulnerability to HIV is exacerbated by police intimidation, harassment, and unjustified arrests. This creates fear causing sex workers to stop accessing health care services. In collaboration with Sex Workers' Organization and The Centre for Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Research (CeSHHAR), INERELA+ Zimbabwe reached out to sex workers and religious leaders. Individual Religious Leaders and sex workers were identified for further training and sex workers' support groups were established. INERELA+ Zimbabwe

reached out to and trained 100 Religious Leaders on the reduction of violence against sex workers in Zimbabwe through HIV prevention, care, and support. Over 500 sex workers were sensitized on the need for sex workers' support groups where they can help one another on issues related to practising safer practices while conducting their business. The trained sex workers went on to form support groups and support young sex workers when they are in trouble with the law. In 2021 a Good Samaritan paid a visit to Hopley to meet sex workers. In 2022 through this Good Samaritan, a young Swiss couple managed to help 10 sex workers with income-generating projects in Hopley. The sex workers are now into raring projects, flee marketing and fish marketing. They have stopped going out to sell sex as a means of survival.

One of the leaders of the sex workers' support group, Vengai Hadji transformed positively. She is now a full-time business owner and paralegal champion who is championing the welfare of the girl child and women who are sexually abused in Hopley. Using skills, she has gained from INERELA+ Zimbabwe trainings Vengai now provides sex workers with accurate knowledge on condom use, pre-expose prophylaxis, post-exposure prophylaxis and sex work communication skills, how to report to police when abused during work and all these are safer practices that the sex workers need to know about. ■



## Safeguarding and Protecting Children from Gender Based Violence In Ghana

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful practices mostly affect women and children. GBV manifests in several ways and is sometimes justified as a traditional practice and culturally grounded. INERELA+ Ghana through funding from United Nations Women Trust Fund (UNTF) has been at the forefront of fighting GBV in the country. On the 12th of February 2022, INERELA+ Ghana held a community meeting in Nima Village with the main aim to sensitise community members on the need to protect the vulnerable members of society, women, and girls, through eradication of domestic violence in the communities.

While addressing community members at the meeting Chief Baba Issah, Chairman of the Ayawaso Council of Zongo Chiefs, called on parents in Nima and its surroundings to make a keen interest in their children to protect them from social evils. He further

urged police to ensure the prosecution of all domestic violence cases especially rape and defilement. His call came after a recent alleged defilement of a 5-year-old girl in Nima by a 52-year-old teacher. In attendance were Imams, queen mothers, and various leaders including law enforcement agencies. In his speech the chief noted the violent crimes, including rape recorded in and around Nima and parents had little interest in the welfare of their children. ■

## Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 in Burundi

INERELA+ adapted and scaled up its operations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring the continuity of vital interventions through a covid mitigation grant that gave Country Networks the opportunity to mitigate the impact of COVID on inadequately served populations. The grant was raised in December 2021 through Robert CARR Foundation. It is through the same grant that a pipeline of Religious Leaders was trained and equipped by INERELA+ Burundi with a focus on COVID-19

Chief Baba Issah





Protocols, HIV, SRHR, GBV, counselling, and mental health issues so they can build resilient communities with hope. INERELA+ Burundi Country Network team has been able to better protect themselves and the communities from the virus through support to purchase personal protective equipment and hygiene items.

The emergence of COVID-19 saw a widespread of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation. Through the same COVID mitigation grant from RCF, some IEC materials indicating COVID requirements and safe practices were developed and distributed to our Country Networks to navigate the COVID maze as well as fight disinformation and promote access to accurate and reliable information.

To learn more about this story please click: [here](#). ■

## Scaling Up Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Youth Leadership In Zimbabwe

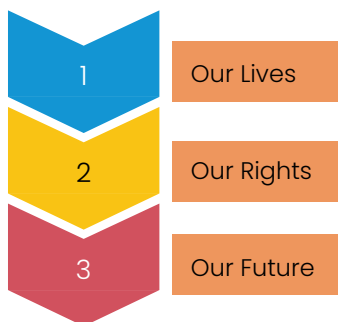
Looking at the current HIV prevalence in Zimbabwe, most new infections are sited between the ages of 10 to 24 for the young females and this has been a growing concern in terms of what methods to use to ensure our young people are safe. We envision a sub-Saharan Africa where positive health, education and gender equality outcomes are a reality for children and young people. INERELA+ Zimbabwe Comprehensive Sexuality Education to children and adolescents in and out of school has greatly broadened their knowledge and understanding of their selves, their bodies and their rights in a country that is patriarchal in nature. Children and adolescents are prone to all forms of abuse, emotional, neglect, physical and sexual; thus, requiring comprehensive information



on how their environment functions and how they can protect themselves in the face of danger. INERELA+ Comprehensive Sexuality Education has aided children and adolescents in schools and communities with information, knowledge, and power to understand their rights and how to exercise these rights in the face of danger. Through this Project parents and caregivers have been educated that teaching children and adolescents on Comprehensive Sexuality Education does not harm or increase their sexual activity but rather reduces their

sexual risks and regulates their behaviour with respect to engaging in early sexual debut. This Project has ensured that young people have comprehensive information that is scientifically correct, age specific and culturally sensitive and empowered the young minds to be productive citizens.

To read more about this story click [here](#). ■



*TC Hardy High School Students in Zimbabwe*





Left: Dr Tyo Terhile, BenSACA, Executive Director, Dr Abigail Gire, INERELA+ Nigeria, Mrs Doshima Ageh Director of Woman affairs of Women Affairs and social Development, and Religious Leaders, 06 April 2022. Right: Dr Abigail Gire, INERELA+ Nigeria and Female Religious Leaders, 06 April 2022

## Strengthening Partnerships Through Advocacy And Campaign For Universal Access To Maternal Child Health Among Religious Women In Nigeria

Over 70 percent of complications Hence the need to start planning early for 2022. Dr. Terhile joined religious leaders that lead to maternal deaths delivery” encourage their followers to seek medical care during childbirth can be prevented early enough especially when they notice those according to Dr Tyo Terhile, the Dr Terhile spoke at the flag-off campaign of early warning signs.

Executive Director of Benue State Action Access to Maternal and Child Health Among Committee on AIDS, (BenSACA). Terhile further stated that “all complications that lead to the death of women during childbirth are not predictable, but they all have warning signs. Religious Women Leaders campaign was organised by INERELA+ Nigeria in collaboration with BenSCA held at Pauline Makka Centre, Makurdi, the Benue State capital on Wednesday, 06 April 2022.

Mrs Doshima Ageh, the Director of Women's Affairs in the Ministry who was representing Mrs Tabitha Igirgi the Commissioner for Women's Affairs and Social Development lamented the increasing rate of maternal mortality in the state and urged religious leaders to encourage women in their congregations to take their health seriously. She expressed worry that teething problems about maternal and child health are still being discussed in the 21st century even as she called on religious leaders in the state to encourage their followers, especially pregnant women to always seek medical care in time.

Mrs. Doshima Ageh further explained that science is ordained by God, and advised that rather than wait for miracles, pregnant women should seek medical attention regularly and on time to nip such avoidable deaths in the bud. “It is good we have some of our religious leaders here because they have an influence on their followers. We should know that science is an answer to prayer”.

The state Coordinator of the Nigeria Network of Religious Leaders Living With All Personally Affected By HIV And Aids, Dr Abigail Gire, said that the aim of the campaign was to ensure that religious leaders come on board with the need to step up awareness of the religious point of view to help reduce mother



and child mortality. “Women are still dying, particularly in the rural areas. Since religious organizations like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and Jama’atu Nasril Isl (JNI), have structures at the grassroots, it will help to reach all nooks and crannies of the state in the campaign” she said.

The event was featured in the TVC News Nigeria, refer to [this link](#). ■

## **INERELA+ Burundi Ensuring Access to Services for Victims and Survivors of Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence targets or affects women and girls disproportionately. Violence against women and girls is an issue that is deeply rooted in Burundian culture. The role of toxic masculinity in gender-based violence in Burundi is that it creates very bad expectations of females being passive, submissive, weak, powerless, and dependent on men. In post-conflict Burundi, the

influx of returning refugees and displaced persons, the presence of large numbers of demobilised ex-combatants, the high prevalence of female-headed households, widespread lack of economic opportunity and a general breakdown in social norms all contribute to increased levels of sexual violence. Some of the GBV cases die a natural death when victims are threatened by perpetrators or victims and survivors lack knowledge of their rights, knowledge on how to handle GBV, or steps to take to make sure perpetrators are brought before justice.

INERELA+ Burundi with support from UN Women, Robert CARR Foundation and Church of Sweden is implementing a Project to help prevent sexual violence and improve the physical, economic and psychological health of victims and survivors of gender-based violence through capacitated Religious Leaders and female champions within congregations and communities. They also raise awareness about GBV as well as provide linkages with service providers to allow victims and survivors to access services. ■



*INERELA+ Burundi GBV Survivors Who Are Support Group Members*



INERELA+ South Africa Project Officer Thembi Mbele and GBV Survivor

## INERELA+ South Africa Delivers Lifeline Support to Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a profound and widespread problem in South Africa, impacting almost every aspect of life. GBV which disproportionately affects women and girls is systemic, and deeply entrenched in institutions, cultures, and traditions in South Africa. Population-based surveys show very high levels of intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (SV) in particular, with IPV being the most common form of violence against women.

Socio-economic stressors such as financial pressure, employment, food insecurity and family relations stand out as having a significant impact not only on experiences of safety (or violence), but also on women's well-being in overall. Many women and girls have been victims of abuse or witnessed femicide in their homes often at the hands of men who are alcoholic.

INERELA+ South Africa monitors cases of sexual and gender-based violence as well as gives support the families of survivors. Campaigns are coordinated by trained

female change agents who are equipped with knowledge about HIV and violence prevention, unequal gender norms, the importance of HIV testing and adhering to treatment, responsible sexual behaviour, and how socio-economic factors can drive HIV infections among men and women. They tirelessly coordinate the prevention of violence and facilitate access to essential services, such as health, justice and policing, social services, and helplines to those who have experienced and/or witnessed violence.

Read more about this article on [this link](#). ■

## Fostering Youth Engagement to Promote SRHR For Sex Workers Through Hands-Off Change Agents

In Mozambique sex workers are often harassed by police officers and treated unfairly by health professionals. Harassment, stigma, discrimination coupled with an unprotective laws are preventing sex workers from accessing their Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). INERELA+





*Pastor Delfonso Afonso Morais Training Young People on Safeguarding the Rights of Sex Workers*

Mozambique has been in the forefront in advocating the health and safety of the sex workers through the Hands-off Programme. Pastor, Delfonso Afonso Morais (44), from Evangelical Assembly of God church in Matola, Maputo Province is one of the Religious Leaders who was trained by INERELA+ Mozambique as an agent of change through the Hands-Off Programme. After the training pastor Morais set up a programme to engage young people in his church to address issues related to sex workers SRHR.

Pastor Morais indicated that at first, he felt uneasy about engaging in issues that are related to sex work because it has always been seen as an immoral act. However, the presence of other religious leaders and the knowledge he gained about human rights during the training made him realise there's a role the church can play to safeguard human rights, including those of sex workers. Morais stated "At the training I learnt more about human rights and as I read the bible every day after the training, I got excited as I read about the role of the church regarding challenges the church needs to tackle" To share the knowledge he gained, he started a programme to educate young people in his church about sex work, HIV, GBV and the role of the church in addressing these issues. "First, I had to put a program with the youth before engaging the other groups. The young people had knowledge on these issues as most of them were part of youth programs at school regarding the youth and adolescent initiative". The Pastor indicated that the next step is to engage other groups in the church regarding the SRHR issues. ■

## Building Knowledgeable Societies In Sierra Leone

Capacity building and training activities play a crucial role in the work of INERELA+. They enable the organisation to provide and develop competencies and skills of our members. From the 29th to the 31st of July 2022 INERELA+ Sierra Leone conducted capacity building activities for 40 Religious Leaders at the Madam Wokie Hall. The training aimed at providing religious leaders with skills and knowledge on how to contribute to the reduction of gender-based violence (GBV), and female genital mutilation (FGM). In addition, Religious Leaders were equipped on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and HIV/ AIDS and COVID 19 prevention. The sessions were facilitated by the INERELA+ Sierra Leone Coordinator Pastor Albert Freeman and Pastor Kadija Kargbo. The facilitators took participants through in-depth learning sessions on the topics.

Sierra Leone has one of the highest rates of GBV and FMG in the world, Many adolescents in the country lack the information and resources to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health rights. Because of their influential position in communities religious leaders are in a unique position to create awareness around the issues of SRHR, GBV, FMG and educating the communities about HIV and Covid-19. ■

# Doctors engage sex workers on legal and reproductive rights

2022 INERELA+ ANNUAL REPORT

By Zindai Gumbo

The International Network of Religious Leaders living with or personally affected by HIV and Aids (INERELA+) recently hosted commercial sex workers in Gweru to empower them on their legal and reproductive health.

The event, which was held at the Gweru Memorial Library on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, was also aimed at reducing violence against commercial sex workers in communities.

Speaking during the event, INERELA+ Zimbabwe Country Director Elder Paul Carrion (pictured) encouraged commercial sex workers to fight for their legal and reproductive rights so that they are not abused unknowingly.

"I would like to urge you to seek the face of God and also try to empower yourselves with knowl-



edge that can help you in the industry.

"Luckily in Zimbabwe we have organisations like Musasa Project, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZOWELA) and Sexual Rights Centre (SRC) which can help you when you get to know your rights," he said.

Speaking at the same event, Venancio Tawadzwa encouraged the sex workers to perfect their life skills and to stand their ground when faced with challenges in the trade.

"My children, I want you to be principled in such a way that you stand your ground and let your no be a no and let your yes be a yes.

"Be someone who can protect herself and also be a good decision maker," he said.

The conversation also helped one of the commercial sex workers, Priscilla Murray to come out and give a confession on how she was once burnt with paraffin by one of her

clients.

Another sex worker, Tendai Mubvumba, said INERELA+'s engagement was very helpful as they got to hear the word of God without being judged by anyone.

"I had since stopped going to church because I was being stigmatised, called 'the ruff' (that prostitute) by my fellow church members who made me feel out of place in such a way that I ended up feeling like an outcast and I had to leave.

"After today, I would like to thank INERELA+ for making me realise that at church I am going to pray and not for people," she said.

"I am going to make sure that I implement what I have been taught here. I promise you today that I am going to make sure that I know my health status and now I know my value as we were taught today," added Mubvumba.

Pastor Mawesji, the INERELA+ Midlands Chairperson encouraged the commercial sex workers to take good care of their children and turn to God to be saved.

"I encourage you all to make sure that you go to the registry so that you can apply for birth certificates for your children so that they get to have an identity, even if the father is not available the child can get to carry your surname.

"The law in Zimbabwe allows you to take birth certificates as a single parent, so take the opportunity and do so," he said.

**Editorial**

**Midlands Monitor**  
The Paper that led the Midlands story

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## Media Engaged to Educate the Public About the Rights of Sex Workers In Zimbabwe.

NERELA+ Zimbabwe through the Hands-Off Programme trained Religious Leaders as change agents. The aim of the training was to provide Religious Leaders with skills and comprehensive knowledge on how to contribute to the reduction of violence against sex workers through creating an enabling environment and lobbying for law and policy reforms. As part of advocacy activities to tackle the challenges that sex workers experience and to make sure that sex workers exercise their SRHR, INERELA+ Zimbabwe trained Religious Leaders and sex workers began a mass media campaign on radio and print media on the work of sex workers. The main aim of these media campaigns was to educate different communities and groups about sex workers and the importance of safeguarding their safety, and health rights. ■

## Stakeholder Dialogue to Develop an Agenda for the National Consultation In Addressing HIV-Related Stigma and Human Rights In Nigeria

INERELA+ Nigeria has been at the forefront to put an end to stigmatization challenges in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the country. Stigmatization and discrimination are the major challenges in fighting the scourge and efforts are on to put an end to the challenges. Through the UNAIDS-Faith Based Initiative project INERELA Nigeria in collaboration with the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), and the Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN) held a national stakeholder dialogue to draft an agenda for the national consultation addressing HIV-related stigma and human rights on the 23rd of July 2022.

The theme of the dialogue was "setting the agenda for faith-based consultations on stigma and human rights, in the context of HIV." According to UNAIDS stigma,



Participants of the stakeholder dialogue organized by INERELA+ Nigeria on the 23rd of July 2022

discrimination, and other rights violations continue to impede progress in the HIV response by increasing risk and vulnerability and deterring many people from seeking or accessing services. Speaking at the event, INERELA+ Nigeria Board Chair, Bishop Mike Akpami noted that religious leaders have the ability to change the narratives and bridge the knowledge gaps and practices that instigate stigma in society. He further stated that "INERELA+ Nigeria is working to strengthen the participation of faith communities in the pursuit of social safety for persons living with HIV"

The representative of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs Mrs Khadijah Oladipupo said, "The Council is working hard to ensure the reduction of HIV prevalence rate among the ummah." The Secretary-General of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Mr Joseph Daramola noted that CAN is passionate about the fight against HIV and called on the government not to relax in supporting NGOs. The North East Zonal coordinator National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) Mr Tobias John said, "religious leaders, play significant roles in reducing incidences of stigmatization of persons living with HIV". The stakeholders emphasized that Faith Based organizations play a significant role in fighting HIV. Through using their influential positions in communities they can teach the general public about the reality of HIV, its prevention, treatment, care, and support. ■

## Capacity-Building Workshop on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR), Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and HIV In Ghana

INERELA+ Ghana held a two-day capacity workshop from the 05<sup>th</sup> to the 06<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR), Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV), and HIV. The aim of the workshop was to capacitate both Religious Leaders and young adults on ASRH, SGBV, and HIV. The workshop was necessitated by the sharp increase in rape cases as well as HIV infection in the country. A total of 23 495 people in Ghana tested positive for HIV in the first half of the year (January to June 2022).

Speaking at the workshop, INERELA+ Ghana country coordinator Mercy Acquah-Hayford said the country was paying a heavy price for rejecting the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) policy which was meant to empower adolescents and young people on issues relating to SRHR and HIV/AIDS. In 2019 the government and the United Nations introduced the CSE, and the programme's content led to a public





*Capacity-Building Workshop For Religious Leaders and Young People on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR), Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV), and HIV at the Consir Executive Lounge Ridge, Accra Ghana on the 05th – 06th October 2022*

uproar with some stakeholders accusing the government and the UN of attempting to promote LGBTQI values. The Ministry of Education subsequently withdrew the Programme. INERELA+ Ghana believes that CSE would have helped stemmed the cases of rape and HIV infection because the programme was meant to empower adolescents and young adults with relevant information about sexuality to overcome sexual harassment and make informed decisions. INERELA+ Ghana used the workshop to call for the government to reintroduce the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) policy.

The workshop also focused on the role of

religious leaders in reducing SGBV and HIV infections. Speaking at the workshop, Mrs Pauling Essel, a counselling psychologist said religious leaders had a critical role to play in reducing Sexual Reproductive Health challenges for young people. She advised Religious Leaders to use the pulpit to educate the public on the consequences of SGBV.

Refer to the media links below for the Workshop:

- [TV Video](#)
- [Newspaper article](#)



# 8. ADVOCACY







## INERELA+ Participates In A Global Conversation on Health and Climate Change Nexus – June 2-3, 2022

Fifty years ago, Stockholm hosted the first UN conference ever on the “*human environment*” – what it will take to keep an environment in which humans can prosper. It inspired a generation of people and institutions committed to improving the environment that surrounds us and sustains us.

This year UNEP turned 50 and the world returned to Stockholm to contemplate the future of our human environment. INERELA+ Acting Executive Director participated in the Stockholm +50 side event “*Together for a healthy, resilient, and green recovery*” was organised by IFMSA, Karolinska Institute, UNDP, UNFCCC, UN OCHCR and WHO at the margin Stockholm +50 international meeting (June 2-3, Stockholm, Sweden). The event brought together various UN agencies, NGOs and academic institutions working on the intersection between the human right to health, environment, and sustainable development to discuss and elevate the 6 Prescriptions of the Who Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID- 19.

Everything that is dear to us, is a gift from nature. Our lives, the very air we breathe – an endowment passed on from generation to generation. It is time to think of our responsibility – to ourselves, to our children and to the future.

- Protect and preserve the source of human health: Nature.
- Invest in essential services, from water and sanitation to clean energy in healthcare facilities.
- Ensure a quick healthy energy transition.
- Promote healthy, sustainable food systems.
- Build healthy, liveable cities.
- Stop using taxpayers’ money to fund pollution.

The six prescriptions of the Manifesto are accompanied by over 70 actionable, or practical steps, for implementing the Manifesto and creating a healthier, fairer and greener world while investing to maintain and resuscitate the economy hit by the effects of COVID-19.

Recognizing the importance of environmental determinants for both physical and mental health, a new WHO policy brief on mental health and climate change was launched on the occasion of the side event, highlighting the importance and opportunities for action to protect mental health from the impacts of climate change.



A hybrid event was also hosted by Church of Sweden, Stockholm diocese, with speakers and participants participating online from around the world. Exploring the theme “*Climate Action and Water for Life towards Creation Justice!*” the event reflected on the current scenario of the climate emergency and global water crisis which are interconnected and impact each other as well as the sustainability of the earth.

### Highlights

**Rev. Henrik Grape**, World Council of Churches senior advisor on Care for Creation, Sustainability and Climate Justice emphasised on the justice element of climate change. He spoke on behalf of the vulnerable communities that have a negligible carbon footprint. He further went on to speak for the rights of nature and that of the indigenous people, who have shown us the way to protect nature in a sustainable way. He ended his input by underlining the Season of Creation and the role played by WCC, the Roman Catholic Church, and others.

**Meera Karunanathan** of Carlton University, Canada and the Blue Planet

Project that promotes Blue Communities, highlighted the nexus of water with climate change. She criticized the increased trend of privatization of water around the world and highlighted the resistance offered by the water justice movement reclaiming their right to water. She informed participants that over 200 cities and municipalities around the world have “municipalized” their water services. She lauded faith-based organisations for their role in this process in many instances.

**Rev. Rachel Mash**, environmental coordinator of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa spoke about water justice in the context of her church. She highlighted the “zero-day” encounter of Cape Town in South Africa a few years ago and how that was a wakeup call to the city and to the whole world to manage water responsibly.

**Juliane Stork and Joan Okitoi-Heisig**, co-leads of the PaRD workstream on Water, Environment and Climate Action (WeCare), introduced the work of WeCare. They outlined the recent project of a mapping exercise by PaRD WeCare of faith-based organisations and their engagement in





*Rev Canon Gideon Byamugisha Delivering Opening Remarks of the Pre-Conference Session to the International Aids Conference on 27 July 2022 in Montreal, Canada*

ecological issues. The mapping provided data from 200 faith-based organisations from around the world.

#### **INERELA+ Acting Executive Director**

– **Munya Mandipaza** alluded that climate change is threatening our planet's sustainability with devastating social, cultural, economic, health and human rights impacts. It is widely recognized as a phenomenon which affects women and girls disproportionately, especially the most marginalized, and it is also a serious aggravator of violence against women and girls. In the aftermath of climate-induced disasters, women and girls face a heightened risk of the whole spectrum of gender-based violence including rape, sexual assault and harassment, intimate partner violence, child marriage, trafficking, and sexual exploitation. Adaptation and mitigation are essential elements of the INERELA+ risk reduction strategy. The conviction that these two approaches reinforce each other is the heart of the strategy. The INERELA+ action on climate change supports inclusive social development, which takes into account gender inequality issues. She considered climate change not only as a major threat but also as an opportunity.

At the conclusion of the webinar, participants read the Interfaith Statement that was to be submitted to the Stockholm+50.

#### **No climate justice without gender equality!**

“INERELA+ action on climate change supports inclusive social development, which considers gender inequality issues”

#### **International AIDS Conference 27 July to 2 August 2022**

The pre-conference, a thought-leadership symposium sought to present, discuss, and interrogate the state-of-the-field evidence base for HIV-related stigma. It was a platform to discuss global financial, strategic, and programmatic efforts to contextualize, implement and scale up effective stigma reduction and mitigation interventions. The latest results from a global systematic review were presented, alongside nuanced national case studies and examples of good practice, to situate the evidence base considering day-to-day realities for different communities in specific socio-cultural and policy contexts. The symposium also featured discussions based on current policy guidelines, original global and country-level research, and political documents to guide progress on stigma reduction and mitigation around the world.

In his opening remarks, Rev Canon Gideon Byamugisha made it clear that embracing GODS GRACE & GOD'S LOVE are sufficient spiritual values to End Stigma & Discrimination. The INERELA+ Acting Executive Director in her presentation on the topic "The Role of Faith Based Organisations in Promoting Change and Advancing Human Rights Based" was emphatic on the need to promote evidence-based policies and practices that guarantee equality and access to services and to remove stigma and discrimination. She lamented that there is need to articulate models of justice and inclusion through religious structures by creating safe spaces for vulnerable populations.

The AIDS 2022 conference made it clear once again that progress happens when we come together and unleash the power of our movement. There is a need to double down on our efforts to unite the voices of activists, policymakers, and scientists. The insights and data shared by community-based organizations showed concretely how we can stop AIDS from snatching a life every minute and ways to tackle the inequalities driving the AIDS pandemic. New research showed that injectable PrEP is among the most effective tools for preventing HIV available and that it works well in multiple populations. The World Health Organization released new guidelines. Drugmaker ViiV also announced licenses for generic manufacturing of the drug in 90 countries which could be a game changer if ViiV can provide an affordable price for low- and middle-income countries.

Concerned by the stalling of progress for children, and the widening gap between children and adults, UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO and partners brought together a global alliance to ensure that no child living with HIV is denied treatment by the end of the decade and to prevent new infant HIV infections.

Consultations by the alliance have identified four pillars for collective action:

- Closing the treatment gap for pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and women living with HIV and optimizing continuity of treatment.
- Preventing and detecting new HIV infections among pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and women.
- Accessible testing, optimized treatment, and comprehensive care for infants, children, and adolescents exposed to and living with HIV.
- Addressing rights, gender equality, and the social and structural barriers that hinder access to services.
- On a positive note, at AIDS 2022, Botswana was celebrated for surpassing the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets, virtually eliminating HIV in a country once listed as the heart of the epidemic.

On a positive note, at the AIDS 2022, Botswana was celebrated for surpassing the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets, virtually eliminating HIV in a country once listed as the heart of the epidemic. ■





*INERELA+ Religious Leaders – (from right - Sheik Haneef Ngundende Malawi, Rev Nokhuthula Dhladhla South Africa, Bishop David Nhlapo South Africa – Saydoon Nisa Sayed (far left) Co-Chair of the African Women of Faith Network (AWFN) and Secretary of Religions for Peace, Southern Africa Regional Representative to the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU IFDF) and Co-Ordinator of Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) Work with all the Faith Groups in South Africa (Mbabane Swaziland 19 August 2022)*

## **Regional Advocacy Roundtable for Strengthening the Role of Religious Leaders in advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and HIV for Vulnerable Populations 17 – 20 August 2022**

INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza, Rev Nokhuthula Dhladhla, Bishop David Nhlapo (both from INERELA+ South Africa) and Sheik Haneef Ngundende of INERELA+ Malawi attended the *Regional Advocacy Roundtable for Strengthening the Role of Religious Leaders in advocating for the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and HIV for Vulnerable Populations* which was organized by IOM regional office Pretoria and SAVE The Children Regional Office South Africa from 17 to 20 August 2022 in Eswatini. The program is a critical platform to advocate for increased access to services and an enabling environment for the realization of the SRH and HIV rights targeting hard-to-reach populations (migrants, adolescents, and young people) in the SADC region.

- **This program aims to create demand for SRHR-HIV services by**
  - » Promoting access to sexual and reproductive health services such as family planning, HIV/STI prevention, and treatment for migrants, adolescents, and young people
  - » b) Address harmful traditional and cultural practices, SGBV, sexuality, and SRH Rights.
- **Creating an enabling local, national & regional environment by**
  - » addressing physical, economic & social barriers to health
  - » establishing a cadre of SRHR-HIV and Migration advocates by building the capacity of policymakers, influencers, and academics on SRHR needs and rights of migrants adolescents, and young people. Government officials, Religious Leaders, and the Representatives of Religious Leader Institutions (Regional and National) from Malawi, South Africa, Lesotho, Zambia, Swaziland, and Mozambique participated in this dialogue. Fruitfully this engagement was able to gain a number of commitments from highly influential and recognised religious leaders, with one of the more poignant ones being, *“No Child Marriages under the watch of Religious Leaders*



*Sheik Haneef Ngundende INERELA+ Malawi emphasising that “No Child Marriages under the watch of Religious leaders in their time.” - Mbabane Swaziland 19 August 2022*

*in our time.”* In her presentation, the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza emphasised that there is a need to articulate models of justice and inclusion through religious structures by creating safe spaces for vulnerable populations. Additionally, she made it clear that faith leaders have a role in unpacking myths associated with comprehensive sexuality education and the conviction of their hearts and change of their mindsets is what she called for. ■

## **Communities of Faith United with Health Leaders to Reach all Children Affected and Infected by HIV As Well As Women and Girls Survivors and Victims of Gender-Based Violence**

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) finally got back together in person, after three years of leaders speaking by video due to the global pandemic. This year’s session which took place in person for the first time since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March 2020 brought together

world leaders, advocates, and influencers to find solutions to shared problems.

The gathering happened “at a time of great peril”, with the world “blighted by war, battered by climate chaos, scarred by hate, and shamed by poverty, hunger, and inequality. The theme for the forum was, “*A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges.*” The theme stems from the recognition that the world is at a critical moment in the history of the United Nations due to complex and interconnected crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, worsening global poverty, assaults to human rights, a tipping point in climate change as well as growing concerns about threats to the global economy. Food security was another major topic for the global forum, with the world economy hard-hit by the pandemic, inflation, and struggling supply chains.

For the past two years, heads of state were allowed to submit video statements due to pandemic restrictions. The INERELA+ Acting Executive Director – Munya Mandipaza participated in person.

The UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous lamented that the world needs women and girls’ leadership, their partnership, and their activism as 1 in 3 women experience violence in their lifetime. This number has remained unchanged for at





*77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at U.N. headquarters on September 20th in New York City.*

least the past decade even though violence is preventable.

Determined that reaching children affected by HIV be made a top global priority, faith communities, and health leaders came together at a high-profile event held on the side-lines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York to mobilize action and find effective ways forward. The event highlighted innovative models developed by faith-based organisations that have substantially improved outcomes for children, showing that more can be done.

Father Richard Bauer of the National Association of Catholics Chaplains emphasised that we need people of faith working together with the same meaning, the same purpose and with connectedness, and most important of all things is “to treat the whole person”, the biomedical and the psychosocial aspects.

Loyce Maturu of Global Fund Advocates Network has grown up to be a champion for better care for children affected by HIV. Her sentiments when she addressed leaders at the event were that we need more than medicines if children are to take their treatment, survive and thrive. Additionally, there is a need for better health and psychosocial support to help clients to understand their condition and treatment

and for them to learn how to grow with HIV to feel confident, valued, and loved and to be able to achieve their hopes and dreams.

Chip Lyons, President, and CEO of the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation highlighted that leaders who speak about children have great power and we should never miss an opportunity to speak about children. He went on to emphasise that Faith-based organizations have provided a significant proportion of HIV-related health care since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, particularly in resource-limited settings. They have strong links with communities and are vital partners in working to shift opinions, reduce stigma, provide data-led evidence and reach the most marginalized in society who are often the most in need of lifesaving health services.

Ambassador John Nkengasong US Global Aids Coordinator and Special Representative for Health Diplomacy lamented that communities of faith are the megaphone of trust within their communities. It is through this trust we see increased uptake of paediatric treatment by more than 20% in rural settings. He assured his commitment to working with faith communities to address the gaps and barriers that are creating the alarming numbers seen in children. Over 70% of the 1.7 million children living with HIV are in just 10 African countries which makes



ending HIV in children an achievable goal. If those ten countries act, almost three-quarters of the challenge could be overcome.

The UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima pointed out that stigma, discrimination, punitive laws and policies, violence, and entrenched societal and gender inequalities are hindering access to care for women, adolescents, and children. Faith communities can be extremely effective at breaking down stigma and calling for changes in laws and policies to ensure all people, including children, are safe and protected as they access HIV services. It is caring and compassion that changes lives and mindsets. In every community, in every country, faith communities are trusted, respected and listened to in ways others are not. The ability of faith communities to influence how people understand and react to HIV is unparalleled which makes them crucial and central to this work.

Byanyima indicated that one of the biggest challenges is finding children living with HIV who were not diagnosed at birth or during breastfeeding and linking them to treatment. It is concerning that only 63% of HIV-exposed infants in 2021 were tested by two months of age. Without treatment, 50% of infants with HIV will die by two years of age. In closing, Byanyima pointed out that new ambitious targets for diagnosing children and linking them to care have been set for 2023 and 2025, and a new Global Alliance to End AIDS Among Children has just been launched, which aims to end AIDS in children by 2030. In all of these efforts, faith communities play an invaluable role in helping governments, international organizations, communities of people living with HIV, service providers, and many others to achieve the new targets and end AIDS by 2030. ■

# 9. AUDITED INCOME & EXPENDITURE



## Inerela+ NPC

(Registration number 2004/007199/08)

Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2023

### Detailed Income Statement

Figures in Rand	Notes	2023	2022
<b>Other operating income</b>			
Other sundry income		52 736	31 480
Income from funders, donors, etc.		14 354 497	10 790 673
	7	<b>14 407 233</b>	<b>10 822 153</b>
<b>Other operating gains (losses)</b>			
Losses on disposal of assets or settlement of liabilities		(69 633)	-
Foreign exchange gains (losses)		454 999	(115 412)
	8	<b>385 366</b>	<b>(115 412)</b>
<b>Other operating expenses</b>			
Adolescents - SRHR		53 397	-
Auditor's remuneration - external audit		180 205	155 743
Bank charges		48 945	39 883
Capacity building		450 646	369 489
Cleaning		44 609	56 838
Communication Campaign Costs		154 090	705 232
Consulting and professional fees		542 892	86 109
Country Network Support		395 230	332 927
Covid prevention & monitoring costs		2 226 695	864 829
Depreciation		53 061	81 798
Employee costs		2 937 275	3 296 859
Fines and penalties		-	704
Gender & Stigma Awareness		4 921 681	4 190 218
Insurance		44 065	30 878
Leases of low value assets		5 467	3 670
Medical expenses		17 488	78 775
Program Support Costs		255 672	283 704
SAVE Toolkit Costs		1 274 604	783 730
Short-term leases		253 360	233 480
Telephone and fax		205 387	183 582
Training		176 473	473 680
Travel - local		5 672	7 202
Travel - overseas		105 813	12 713
		<b>14 352 727</b>	<b>12 272 043</b>
<b>Operating profit (loss)</b>		<b>439 872</b>	<b>(1 565 302)</b>
Investment income	9	11 674	35 113
<b>Profit (loss) for the year</b>		<b>451 546</b>	<b>(1 530 189)</b>





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