



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

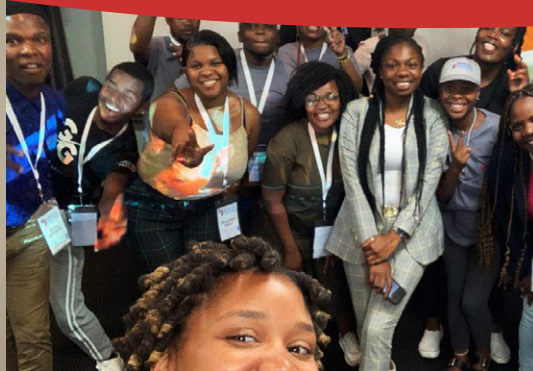


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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is with a heart full of gratitude that I extend my deepest appreciation to each of you for your unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in our collective vision of a world free of HIV driven by a comprehensive faith-based response. As we move forward, let us take a moment to deeply acknowledge the efforts of everyone and partners that make up the INERELA+ network. Your courage in challenging harmful social norms, your compassion in supporting survivors of violence and your vision in striving for a world free of violence and HIV are sources of inspiration to us all. We will continue to confront HIV and health disparities across the globe. The progress we have witnessed in the year 2023, amidst an array of challenges that we had to navigate is a testament to your resilience, commitment, and the power of collaborative action. Your innovative approaches and persistent advocacy have not only raised awareness but also brought tangible changes in the lives of the vulnerable people that we serve. From grassroots initiatives to policy-level interventions, our work has been instrumental in pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve in a bid to SAVE millions of lives, contribute to greater equity, stronger societies and produce substantial health, social and economic gains. Your courage and commitment is extraordinary and I salute you!!!

However, we are acutely aware that our journey is far from over. COVID 19 set us back in many frontiers. Many people are faced with mental health challenges and a significant number is suffering from long term effects of COVID related illnesses. Funding for the global HIV response is under threat, forcing organizations to do more with fewer resources. Conflict is pushing health systems and societies to the edge and a global migration crisis is making our communities more vulnerable to violence and discrimination. The effect of climate change on already vulnerable and marginalized people, especially women, children and adolescents signals the need to prioritize their needs in order to ensure climate justice.

The continued prevalence of violence against women, girls and key populations

in various forms, exacerbated by ongoing global crises and backlash on their rights, signals the challenges that still lie ahead.



INERELA+ Executive Director - Munya Mandipaza

As difficult as 2023 was for so many, there is cause for optimism in our shared resolve to bring about a more sustainable future for humans and the natural world. December 2023 UN climate talks closed with an agreement that “signals the beginning of the end” of the fossil fuel era; this built on a prior commitment to protect at least 30 percent of the planet’s land and water by 2030. I’m about to complete my first year as the INERELA+ Executive Director! The year 2023 has been one of transformations for the organization.

Below are some highlights:

Resource Mobilisation:

INERELA+ scooped a multi-year and multi country regional SRHR SIDA Civil Society Strengthening Grant 2023 – 2026. The Project is currently being implemented in Eastern and Southern Africa in partnership with Childline, Sonke Gender Justice, Africa Disability Forum, Eastern Africa Child Rights Network, Child Rights Network of Southern Africa, African Child Policy Forum, Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust, Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network, REPPSSI, Defend Defenders, MIET Africa, Pan

African Climate Justice Alliance and INERELA with funding from SIDA via Save the Children International. This has led to maximizing of resources and learning through sharing, empowering organizations, and building synergies that have greater impact and can serve beneficiaries more effectively and holistically across countries. We will rely on the power of Partnerships in this consortium to foster changes in policies. INERELA+ is committed to accelerate action and investments in favour of the most vulnerable and marginalized women, children and adolescents thereby leaving no one behind.

Learning Forum and Leveraging on Partnerships Strengths: From the 23rd to the 24th of October 2023, a Learning Forum was conducted virtually for all the 15 INERELA+ Country Networks. In a bid to strengthen the organisation INERELA+ partnered with experts to deliver sessions in different key areas of our programming. Among them was governance. Partners like the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Sonke Gender Justice, and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) participated by facilitating sessions in their area of expertise namely Climate Change, Gender Equality, Mental health, Peace, Security, and Human rights issues that are inextricably linked to INERELA+ work.

A Leading Voice for Our Community: INERELA+ SAVE Approach - A Proven Methodology to Fight Stigma and Discrimination: INERELA+ staff advocated for our communities at regional events, during sixteen days of activism against gender-based violence, World AIDS Day and ICASA. The ICASA 2023 event came a year after UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022 Report, [In Danger](#), which revealed the

potentially catastrophic impacts of COVID-19 on health systems worldwide and the urgent need to reinforce HIV health systems. Much as the event offered a unique platform for leaders, activists, scientists and communities to take stock of the multiple and overlapping crises and find avenues for mitigating the devastating impact on people living with and affected by HIV INERELA+ through its founder, now Patron Canon Gideon Byamugisha used ICASA 2023 to showcase its approach to fight stigma and discrimination through the [SAVE approach](#).

These are just a few of the countless examples of how we are fighting for our communities every day.

To our Country Networks and the board, you are among those who know what is possible—that a new year only brings more opportunity to strategize, collaborate, persist, and make progress in this struggle that will likely transcend many new year's. The kind of change we seek takes time. In times both stimulating and challenging worldwide let our unwavering passion drive us forward. May our belief in the cause guide the way as we join hands to **Unite, Rise and Lead** for the health and well-being of every woman, children, and adolescents everywhere.

To our funders we are grateful for your generous donations, your continued support and solidarity. We are inspired by your shared passion for building a world that values the lives of vulnerable people.

In solidarity and wishing you a bright, happy, and healthy 2024 to all!

Munya Mandipaza
Executive Director

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.

In a world facing multiple crises that are putting immense pressure on communities, achieving gender equality is more vital than ever. Ensuring women's and girls' rights across all aspects of life is the only way to secure prosperous and just economies, and a healthy planet for future generations.

INERELA+ is at the forefront of global efforts to help communities cut their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, which are at the core of SDG13 on climate action.

INERELA+ contributes significantly to eight SDGs through an integrated approach, drawing on all its areas of specialized expertise and in close partnership with UN entities and partners from the public and private sector.

CLIMATE ACTION



INERELA+ OVERVIEW

ABOUT INERELA+

The International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+) is an international, interfaith network of Religious Leaders (RLs) – both lay and ordained, women and men – who are living with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS. RLs are influential within their communities and congregations and play a central role in influencing the decisions and buy-in of their followers or communities on issues, ideas, innovations, interventions, and programmes”

MISSION STATEMENT

INERELA+ empowers its members to use their positions within their faith communities to influence social change in ways that break the silence, challenge stigma, and provide delivery of evidence-based HIV prevention, care, and treatment services amongst others.

2023 COUNTRY NETWORKS MEMBERSHIP FIGURES

Over the years, the networks have grown; there are now more than 45 310 members across the globe who mobilise their respective faith communities to provide resources and referrals to over 3 million people world-wide, 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 16 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, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Membership numbers per country are as presented in Table 1.

No.	Country	Male	Female	Total
1	Botswana	35	21	56
2	Burundi	149	90	239
3	Congo	119	41	160
4	Ghana	22	18	40
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	Uganda	285	174	459
15	Zambia	565	681	1246
16	Zimbabwe	594	469	1063
TOTAL		23802	21508	45310

30

INERELA+ trained 30 Religious Leaders on SAVE Toolkit, 15, Madagascar and 15 in Malawi

INERELA+ Trained 31 young people on Life Skills including gender responsive climate adaptation and mitigation interventions in six different countries (Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) under the Save the Children project.

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In Zimbabwe 30 young people were trained on the life skills and schools projects. A total of 1550 school learners were reached with information on SRHR and Climate Change. A number of the children were reached through WhatsApp groups and through other social media platforms where the life skills participants formed public groups for young people which allow them to share information

INERELA+ Country Networks trained 50 Religious Leaders to become agents of change on key issues affecting sex workers and SRHR using the Hands-Off training manual

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INERELA+ Malawi and INERELA+ Zambia trained 25 participants on On Child Rights, Child, Early, Forced marriages & Ununis (CEFMU) And Gender Based Violence (GBV). The participants included, 17 religious leaders, six young people and two duty bareares

INERELA+ South Africa conducted training of ten (10) Religious Leaders from different communities in and around Kimberly in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The trained Religious Leaders used their influential positions in their community to conduct workshops on GBV in their respective communities and churches. The workshops reached between 500 to 800 people

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INERELA+ Malawi and INERELA+ Zambia trained 10 participants on On Child Rights, Advocacy, and Citizen rights Monitoeing. The participants included, 6 religious leaders and two young people

INERELA+ Ghana and INERELA+ Burundi trained 100 Religious leaders on GBV, Adolescents using the SAVE Toolkit. The trained religious leaders reached out to over 17 000 secondary beneficiaries under EVAWG project funded by UN_Women

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INERELA+ Ghana and INERELA+ Burundi trained 40 young people on Life Skills including gender handwork like sewing and knitting under the UN_Women project

INERELA+ Ghana and INERELA+ Burundi trained 10 peer educators and 10 paralegals on rights of women/ girls; GBV and the trained Peer Educators reached out to further 650 young people under the UN_Women project

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CAPACITY BUILDING





INERELA+ team members attending the 202 Annual Planning Meeting. Back row from left: Sabelo Myeni, Bobo Chazireni, and Munya Mandipaza. Front row, from left: Calvin Mashate, Madu Setlogelo, and Thabo Sibiya, 14 February 2024

INERELA+ Secretariat Conducts Annual Planning Meeting

INERELA+ Secretariat Annual Planning Meeting was held from the 13th – 15th of February 2024 at Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre. As part of the INERELA+ strategy, the organization used the meeting to review the year 2023, plan for the year 2024, and engage in team-building exercises. The Executive Director (ED), Munya Mandipaza, opened the meeting with devotion and prayer. In line with the 2024 organization theme “**The Year of Flourishing Through Cohesion,**” the ED based her devotion on the book of Mathews 25 verses 14 – 16, 26 – 27, the parable of bags of gold. Through this parable, the ED likened all the INERELA+ team members to the servants who were given bags of gold. She remarked that each person within the team has different talents, skill sets, and different capabilities and must use them to multiply and grow the organization. The main aim of the talent is to contribute to the organization’s growth.

The highlights of the year 2024 were the improvements in the Country Networks’ performance, positive reviews and feedback from the donors, and the ED facilitating a session at the UN Women Regional Learning Exchange Meeting. To Plan for the year 2024 the team discussed the organization’s budget, operational plan, and action plan for the year 2024. The team concluded the meeting with the team had team-building exercises. The main aim of these exercises

was to create a team that cohesively works together through forming bonds and connections.

INERELA+ South Africa Train Religious Leaders to Fight the surge of Gender-based Violence (GBV)

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 on experiences of safety (or violence) and women’s well-being overall. Many women and girls have been victims of abuse or witnessed femicide in their homes, often at the hands of men who are alcoholics.

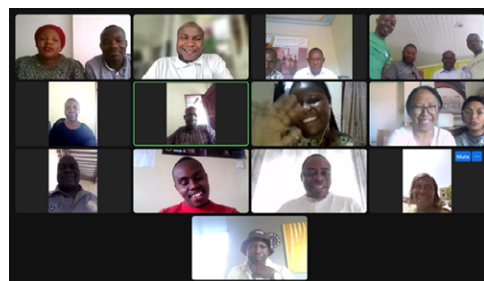
INERELA+ South Africa monitors cases of sexual and gender-based violence. As part of the UN Women project, INERELA+



INERELA+ South Africa, Northern Cape Provincial Coordinator, Rev Shaine Griqua, with Trained Female Religious Leaders. 14 February 2023

South Africa conducted training of ten (10) Religious Leaders from different communities in and around Kimberly in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The trained Religious Leaders used their influential positions in their community to conduct workshops on GBV in their respective communities and churches. The workshops reached between 500 to 800 people.

INERELA+ Holds a Virtual Capacity Building Workshop for Country Networks



INERELA+ Country Networks Attending A Virtual Capacity Building Workshop 24 - 25 April 2023

As part of Country Networks strengthening, INERELA+ Secretariat held a virtual capacity-building workshop from the 24th to the 25th of April 2023. The training was attended by all the 15 country Networks. The training was conducted by the secretariat programmes

team, led by the Projects Coordinator, Thabo Sibiya, and MEL Advisor Bobo Chazireni. The training included activities that assisted with the tracking of the learning progress of the participants. This assisted the Country Networks to engage and be interactive throughout each day of training. The content of the training was informed by the gaps that the Secretariat team observed in the past 12 months and by the needs assessment survey sent to the Country Networks in February 2023. The training strengthened the participants' abilities to implement projects as per funders' requirements, impact project reporting as per the given templates, develop success stories, case studies, and effectively use the Hub and the INERELA+ Outlook emails address.

The training did not only build and strengthen the capacity of the participants, but it promoted knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas on project implementation between Country Networks through assigned group work. The groups played a huge role in giving everyone an equal opportunity to voice their opinions. Since the training was attended by almost all the INERELA+ Country Networks, creating groups made the facilitation process effective. Participants were given different topics around the issues of GBV, HIV, SRHR, and Human dignity to work on and present back to all attendees. The method assisted the facilitators and the participants in successfully measuring the outcome of the training.



Some of the participants at the INERELA+ Madagascar SAVE Training held at Isoavina Ambanitsene, Madagascar, 7-9 August 2023

INERELA+ Madagascar Save Training

Capacity building and training activities form an integral part of providing and developing competencies and skills of the INERELA+ Country Networks members. To push this mandate forward, INERELA+ Madagascar conducted a three (3) days SAVE training workshop from the 7th to the 9th of August 2023 at Isoavina Ambanistene in Madagascar. The Training was attended by 15 Religious Leaders, 7 males, and 8 females from all the regions of Madagascar's capital city, Antananarivo. The training was facilitated by INERELA+ Madagascar Country Coordinator, Pastor Vololona Randriamanantena, and Pastor Randrialiva Seheny.

The training focused on the Stigma, Shame, Denial, Discrimination, Inaction, and Misaction (SSDDIM) and was followed by more in-depth modules on some aspects of SSDDIM. Pastor Vololona Randriamanantena stated that SSDDIM remains a massive challenge in some parts of the country and it affects the uptake of services associated with HIV and gets in the way of PLHIV living a healthy productive life. The aim of the workshop was to empower Religious Leaders with accurate information about HIV to enable them to challenge the stigma and discrimination that can make the lives of people with HIV so difficult. All 15 participants at the workshop committed themselves to training women and men in their respective communities and also

committed to include SSDDIM in their sermons and in their discussions and outreach activities within faith communities.

Training Of Trainer's (TOT) Workshop On Life Skills And Climate Change



Trainning Of Trainer's (TOT) Workshop Participants, 7 - 9 August 2023

INERELA+ Secretariat hosted three (3) days of virtual Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on Life Skills and Climate Change for six country networks under the save children project and church f Sweden project. The training took place from the 7th to the 9th of August 2023. The main aim of the training was to equip a core group of "trainers or champions" with skills and abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The participants

are expected to use the information gained from this training to facilitate sessions, guide, and coach their peers, and advocate for children's rights in their respective communities. The training was offered to six (6) Country Networks namely, Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The facilitators covered several topics which included; Unpacking Life Skills and teenage Pregnancies. **Gender-Based Violence, Child Protection, safeguarding; Mental Health and Disability, Values, Climate Change, SRHR, Prevention and Living with HIV, Substance Use and Advocacy.** The facilitators used the participatory approach during the training with the intention of empowering the participants to take control of their own learning through activities and exercises. The adolescent-friendly participatory approach used active learning methods including, role plays, brainstorming, group learning, case studies and poster making.

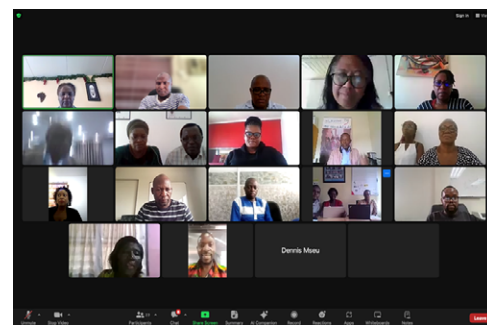
INERELA+ Zambia Trained Religious Leaders, Youth Champions And Duty Bearers On Child Rights, CEFMU And GBV

Millions of girls are at risk of child, early, and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU), which are abuses of human rights and forms of gender-based violence. INERELA+ has a **history of investing in gender equality efforts and preventing gender-based violence** through its Country Networks, as well as supporting women's and girls' human rights. On the 14th of October 2023, INERELA Zambia trained two religious leaders, two young people, and one duty barrier on Child rights, CEFMU and GBV. The main aim of the training was to strengthen the capacity of religious leaders and young to respond to CEFMU, and GBV against children as it relates to their human rights. While focusing on religious leaders as key catalysts for social change, INERELA+ also included young people of faith communities to equip them with tools to deepen their awareness and understanding of GBV, CEFMU, and Children's rights.

The training was facilitated by Gershom Kapalaula, INERELA+ Zambia, Country

Coordinator, an experienced facilitator with a deeper understanding and knowledge of children's rights, GBV, and CEFMU. The training made use of the INERELA+ SHRH handbook and SAVE toolkit. The training participants were already engaged in some type of GBV and/or human rights effort but had not attended training on the issues that specifically deal with children's rights and CEFMU. The participants—have reported increased knowledge of the issues and an improved capacity and desire to take action to address the issues with their communities, schools, and congregations. At the end of the training, Sheik Alex Masamba, a Muslim religious leader who works closely with children in the Mtendere community in the Madalasa- a school for children found at the Mosque said: "over 200 children and the parents will benefit from the knowledge that I gained from this training". Abigail Mumba, a youth champion, indicated that she will use the knowledge gained from the training to increase engagements and raise awareness on CEFMU, addressing children's rights, and GBV at school. Schools like churches are seen as important institutions that provide a critical platform for gender socialization, where attitudes towards oneself and others are formed and reinforced.

2023 INERELA+ Learning Forum



INERELA+ Virtual Learning Forum Participants

As part of INERELA+ mandate to promote knowledge sharin and dialogues between country networks, the secretariat convened a learning forum. This brought together country teams .From the 23rd to the 24th of October 2023, a Learning Forum was conducted virtually for all the 15 INERELA+ Country Networks. The main aim of the workshop was to provide a platform

for dialogue, reflection, and action to strengthen INERELA+ and Country Networks to present workshop participants with ideas, experiences, lessons learned, and potential solutions to challenges. In line with the changed context, the 2023 Learning Forum INERELA+ partnered with experts to deliver training in Climate Change, Mental Health, Gender Equality, and Children's rights. Governance was also given special attention as it remains the key factor that affects the effectiveness of the Country Networks.

The 2023 learning forum was structured to it incorporate some sessions on Climate Change, Gender Equality, mental health, peace, security, and human rights issues which are inextricably linked. Climate change risks increasing social issues, including gender, inequalities. Given the dynamic changes in the world, Country Networks quickly need to adapt and analyse their contexts. The first day of the learning forum covered training on; Gender and climate change which was facilitated by the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA). A topic on Gender Transformation Approaches, and Children's Rights was facilitated by Sonke Gender Justice gender expert and the INERELA+ Secretariat. The Second day of the training focused on the review of the governance checklist – status of Country action plans, board roles and

responsibilities, country Network action plans – supporting role clarification, and meeting the challenge of the Financial Action Task Force by Glen Farred.

INERELA+ Uganda top up training of Religious leaders on SAVE Toolkit.

In 2023, UNERELA+ Uganda conducted training for an additional number of religious leaders in Kagadi and Hoima as well as some members of the LGBTIQ leaders in Hoima. The training was conducted as a means of creating a core team for each of the cohorts ahead of the end of the Phase 1 of the project "SAVE Dialogue Project" which started in 2021. The training was specifically meant to build additional knowledge, skills and re-enforce positive attitudes that had been built since the project begun to be role models to their communities. The training which took place between the 12th and 14th of November 2023 was attended by a total of 88 Religious leaders from Church of Uganda, Pentecostal Churches, Catholic Church, Moslem, Seventh Day Adventist Church. Each of the cohorts were tasked to organize community outreaches within their congregational coverages. It is estimated that each congregation reached a total of about 800 while the 15 LGBTIQ people that participated in the training managed to reach out to a further 60 of their members.



Religious leaders attending training on the SAVE Toolkit dialogue project in Kagadi, Uganda 2023

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS



PAN African Alliance To End Child Marriages Launched -They Are Girls Not Brides

The Pan African Alliance took a step to launch a campaign to end Child marriages on 2 March 2023. Speaking at this function, the INERELA+ Executive Director, Munya Mandipaza echoed that girls in our communities are seen and are not heard. We must listen to our children, respond, and support them. The issue of child marriage has taken a perspective where culture accepts child marriages which is a crime. Culture is being abused for justice an unacceptable social practice within families. We need to have a dynamic culture that affirms human rights and the position of children because child marriage is sexual exploitation. Child marriage can lead to life-threatening health consequences. These young girls are neither physically mature enough nor psychologically ready to become wives and mothers. They are girls, not brides.

Eastern and Southern Africa is amongst the regions with the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world, with over 30 percent of women aged 20-24 years who were first married or in a union under the age of 18, whilst the global average stands at around 19 percent. The girls at greatest risk of child marriage are often those hardest to reach. They come from poor families, marginalized groups, or rural areas. They are also more likely to be out of school than their unmarried peers, robbed of the opportunity to thrive and fulfil their potential.

There is need to eliminate child marriages if Africa is to prosper. There is no tomorrow until we invest in today. To end child marriages, we must act now. Children need age-appropriate sexuality education. The issue of child marriages is violence against girls, it is a justice issue, and it is a developmental issue. It's doable for us to end child marriages. Marriages need consent, what is taking place is not marriage but rape. Language should not sanitise evil, this is not marriage, it is rape.

INERELA+ puts a lot of effort to capacitate Religious and traditional leaders to address the issue of child marriage through working

with parents, teachers, and young girls to prevent child marriages, raise awareness about the issue. Our Programme supports parents and families in demonstrating positive attitudes, empowers girls to direct their own future, and strengthens the services that allow them to do so, including sexual and reproductive health and social protection programmes. It also addresses the underlying conditions that sustain child marriage, advocating for laws and policies that protect girls' rights while highlighting the importance of using robust data to inform such policies. Through youth clubs' girls are empowered to break the silence and get informed about their reproductive health and rights.

For INERELA+ Religious Leaders the message is very clear.

Everyone is born in the image of GOD and the image of GOD does not include abuse

INERELA+ Attends The Gender Transformative Approaches Training Workshop

From the 3rd to the 7th of August 2023, INERELA+ Secretariat among other partners implementing the SAVE the Children project was invited to attend a Gender Transformative Approach and Integration training workshop in Pretoria. The five-day workshop was facilitated by experienced social worker Deliwé Menyuko from Sonke gender justice based in South Africa.

The aim of the workshop was to educate, and capacitate implementing partners on Introduction to Gender Transformative Approach, unpacking gender concepts, components & continuum; gender transformative approaches and integration focusing mainly on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) and the father's legacy. The participants were taken through several reflective activities where every member was expected to participate by acting, providing feedback, or discussing. Some of the activities addressed concepts such as the needs and rights of children;



Among the Representatives of at Least 15 Partners Who Participated, INERELA+ was Represented by the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Advisor (Bobo Chazirent).

power, gender & status; patriarchy and legacy; gender values clarification; How we learn violence; gender based games, and violence clotheslines among others. In the last two days of the training workshop, participants made presentations as part of “Teach Back” on what they learned, understood, or conceptualised over the first three days. Each representative participant was awarded a certificate of participation and is expected to capacitate staff and other personnel who work directly with the SAVE the Children project at their respective organisation.

INERELA+ Rwanda Drives Advocacy Efforts Through A High-Level Consultative Meeting On The Ratification Of The Protocol To The African Charter On Human And Peoples' Rights On The Rights Of Citizens To Social Protection And Social Security

INERELA+ Rwanda participated in the one-day high-level meeting held on the 4th of October 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Meeting was organized by the Africa Platform for Social Protection (APSP) in collaboration with the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP). The meeting brought together key stakeholders from the Social Protection sector, members of the RCSP, the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Local Government, the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), and the Local Human Rights Organization.

The meeting aimed at creating awareness of the AU Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security. The protocols were formally adopted by the 54 African Union (AU) members. They were developed because of the realization that the vast majority





Participants at the High-level Consultative Meeting, Kigali, Rwanda, 04 October 2023

of people in Africa are not appropriately covered by formal social protection provisions. This will help AU member states in shaping their Social Protection policies.

It emerged in the meeting that the Protocol now needs the following:-

- Signed by Member States
- Ratified by at least 15 Member States
- Instruments deposited at the AU
- The protocol comes into force

At the present moment, only Niger and Sao Tome and Principe have signed and no Country has ratified. **There's still a long way to go.**

During the consultative meeting, the participants emphasized the importance of ratifying the AU Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security by the

government of Rwanda. The meeting pinpointed several specific actions that needed to be taken, which were to popularise the protocol, mobilize for public support, form /expand the Committee for the advocacy and the ratification of the protocol, and develop different awareness-raising materials on the protocol. It was also agreed that accomplishing this objective necessitates the cooperation of the government, civil society, and other stakeholders.

As participants, INERELA+ Rwanda through the Country Coordinator, Celestin Bigirimana committed to raising awareness and capacitating religious leaders and the public about the importance of ratifying the protocols. This will help Religious leaders to actively participate in the promotion of the signing of these protocols.

PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW





Priscilla Konzani (19)



Parts Of the Crops Grown by INERELA+ Youth Club In Traditional Authority Nsomba in Blantyre District May 2023

INERELA+ Malawi Youths Bail A Rejected HIV-Positive Girl: The Story Of Priscilla Konzani

Priscilla Konzani (19) who hails from the Traditional Authority Nsomba in Blantyre tested HIV Positive after both parents passed on in 2018. Priscilla said *“After the death of my Parents, I used to be sick every single day and I decided to go for an HIV test at Mpemba Health Centre on 12th May 2020 where I tested HIV Positive. It was very hard for me to accept the results.”* When she disclosed her status to both her uncle and aunt they began to mistreat her. She stopped going to school because they refused to pay her school fees. Through INERELA+ Malawi, Priscilla is back at Mthuthu Private Secondary School (after dropping out of school for 2 years). At one point, she said, indeed, *“God can transform a disaster into a blessing, I was rejected but now am found with peace of mind. Thanks, INERELA+ Malawi for sending the Youths who are the pillar of my life”*.

Adolescents and young people represent a growing share of people living with HIV worldwide. In 2020 about 1.75 million adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 were living with HIV worldwide and if Youths remain silent about HIV/AIDS more than 2.72 million adolescents aged between 10-19 by 2030 will be positive worldwide. As a trained team/youth, there is no need to keep silent until one is served.

INERELA+ Ghana Rescues Joyce Osei and her Children from Gender Based Violence (GBV)

INERELA+ Ghana has been at the forefront in fighting against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and offering immense support to GBV victims in Ghana. Joyce Afia Nyarkoa Osei (38), a mother of five and a victim of GBV was rescued from the railway station in Accra and reunited with her family in the Eastern Region of Ghana after being assumed dead for nine years.

Before the intervention of INERELA+ Ghana, Joyce suffered serious cases of GBV from two separate men she was married to within a space of 9 years. During her first marriage to Atta Kakraa Joyce was blessed with two children, when her first marriage collapsed due to GBV, Atta Kakraa vanished with the two children. It took the support and family re- unification service of INERELA+ to bring back the children. Joyce later met a man called Kwabena Amponsah, at Bagra, the two stayed at an informal settlement in Weja, and they were blessed with three minor children, a boy, and two girls. In her second marriage, Joyce also suffered severe physical and emotional abuse and was later forced to leave her home with her children to seek refuge at the CNP Railway Station in Accra, Ghana.



INERELA+ Country Coordinator Mercy Aqua Hayford & Afia Nyarkoa Osei and Her Children, April 2023

The INERELA+ Ghana team rescued her from the railway station after learning of her ordeal and reunited her with her family. “She was reunited with her family after being assumed dead for nine years. Her 91-year-old grandfather was ecstatic to see her alive. For nine years, her family wept, they thought she had died,” said Mercy Hayford, the INERELA+ Ghana Country Coordinator. Joyce’s village is known for growing tomatoes.

INERELA+ Zimbabwe Equips Hopley Sex Workers with Professional and Entrepreneurial Skills

INERELA+ Zimbabwe is affirming sex work in Harare South, bringing hope to the marginalised. The church is meant to be a safe space for everyone, no one is superior, we are all made in the image of God. A step into professionalism has been championed as work with a group of sex workers is taking off the ground. The success story of the psycho-social Sex Workers Support Group is a testament to the reality of setting change for the better for these affected and stigmatised communities. Mark 9:50 says “Let peace be with you. There is a lot of peace in knowing your work. It’s even more thrilling if you are affirmed. I am

happy to know that when I am doing sex, I am working. At my workplace safety comes first...” This is Natasha Matarara’s story. Self-Care Sisters Psycho-Social Sex Workers Support Group in Harare South is a group of sex workers who have come to realise their value. These amazing women have taken a step forward in promoting professionalism in sex work.

They are now aware that what they do is work and have systems in place to secure their progress. What is more interesting is their willingness to have sex as a sustaining business. There will be challenges. Obstacles in sex work are rife as the provider and receiver relationship is built on trust. In most instances, the receiver reneges on the contractual agreement and flees. At times, the receiver becomes aggressive and abusive, placing the sex worker at risk. Globally, sex workers have been harmed or even killed in their line of duty. Street workers are more likely to be at risk of HIV, most sex workers in Zimbabwe operate from the streets. It is with this in mind that sex workers invest more in their health and education so that they raise awareness among their folks to ensure that like any work, they operate in an enabling environment. Violence is the order of the day for most sex workers, and many have nothing to show for their toiling.



INERELA+ Zimbabwe Team With a Group of Sex Workers in Hopley, Harare South, 25 February 2023

INERELA+ Burundi Addresses the needs of Migrants, , and internally displaced populations

Burundi is experiencing recurrent humanitarian crises, including high incidences of malaria, cholera, measles, and population movements. In 2020, Burundi's fragile health system confronted multiple health emergencies, including malaria, cholera, and measles. In 2021 and 2022, various shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic,

disease outbreaks, and the war in Ukraine, exacerbated the existing humanitarian needs thereby affecting vulnerable populations such as and internally displaced persons. In recent years, the country has also confronted the potential spillover of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Burundi is also particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and drought that cause significant material damage and human displacement. Over 114,000 people – 83 percent of the internally



INERELA+ has remained a vital lifeline as a first responder to survivors and those at high risk of violence in the context of complex, overlapping and protracted crises in the region

displaced population in Burundi – are displaced due to disasters. Years of socio-political and economic crisis have had a serious impact on the population's access to basic services, and the resilience of systems and communities to cope with recurring crises. Women are often the first responders in a crisis, and whether en route or in camps, in home countries, or destination countries, they play a crucial role in caring for, sustaining, and rebuilding their communities. In Burundi 84,791 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 19,407 households which is 91% of the displacement are mainly due to natural hazards such as flooding and landslides and 9% are asylum seekers and from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Kenya. A majority of these people are hosted in five camps located in the eastern and northeastern regions of the country.

INERELA+ Burundi together with its partners (Burundi Red Cross, Department of Social Development, IOM, and Department of Health) have adopted a holistic and multi-sectoral lifesaving approach to improve the lives of the affected and at-risk populations. They are all united by a common cause: to save lives and leave no one behind. Their focus is on linking humanitarian action, development programming, and strengthening the resilience of communities and systems through providing critical

assistance to cover their basic needs, such as food, health, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter, and education. Nutritional support is given to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, children under 5 years of age, and chronically ill people. They also offer protection for vulnerable people (children, women, girls, single parents, survivors of sexual violence, the elderly, and disabled people, including , as well as enhancing their self-sufficiency and supporting their attainment of durable solutions. In addition to supporting victims, protection actions also include measures to prevent and control disease as well as reducing the risks of violence and abuse at the camps.

INERELA+ Burundi has also taken steps to increase the integration of gender-based violence risk mitigation in sectors like the Department of Social Development, National Aids Council, and Ministry of Gender in a bid to scale up gender-based violence prevention and response programming. Adequate resources remain a challenge.

INERELA+ Zambia Held A Dialogue Meeting Between Religious Leaders, Sex Workers And The Media



Pastor Stanley Mwanza (White T - Shirt) a Trained Hands-Off Champion During the INERELA+ Zambia Dialogues Meeting Between Religious Leaders, Sex workers, and the Media, 2 September 2023

On the 2nd of September 2023, ZANARELA+ organised a dialogue between Sex Workers, interfaith Religious leaders, and the Media with the aim of discussing challenges that are being faced by sex workers and how best to safeguard their human rights. There was a general consensus amongst the participants that Sex Workers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and that more still needs to be done to end any form of abuse from physical, sexual, verbal, name-calling, and stigma from the church, mosque, or other places of worship. Speaking at the event, Zambian Developmental Media Alliance (ZADEMA) executive member Derrick Sinjela retaliated on the importance of treating sex workers with dignity, he further stated that “sex workers are citizens too and deserve the right to access the Zambian Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Citizen Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC)”. Speaking on behalf of sex workers, a sex worker and trained Hand-off Project Champion, Mbuya Diva appealed to the dialogue participants who made it from their busy schedules to embrace her breadwinning peers. Diva and others say they are ready to form cooperatives and be empowered like any other citizen. On behalf of Religious Leaders Rev Paul Mvula Shimunza has urged the church to stop the stigma against sex workers and he reminded the participants that it is the obligation of the church and Religious Leaders “to love, lead and embrace all without being judgemental, only the word of God will change person from their ways”. The dialogue participants observed and learned that society

does not understand what pushes or pulls people to become sex workers

INERELA+ Burundi Gender Advocate Honoured With A Prestigious Presidential Award For Exemplary Action On Gender Equality

Charlotte Ndayishimiye was named awardee of a prestigious Burundi Prestigious Presidential Award which recognize outstanding champions, initiatives, and practices that promote gender equality. This is a testament to the incredible amount of work being done by INERELA+ Burundi to advance gender equality through change agents. It sends an unmistakable signal that communities and survivors of gender-based violence must be leaders in shaping a gender-inclusive future. One of the ways in which INERELA+ Burundi has contributed to ending violence against women and girls is by mobilizing women and girls both at the community and national level to make them self-advocates of the change they want to see in society. Charlotte expressed her gratitude for being selected to receive the prize which she called “an award for all of us who are working tirelessly to fight gender-based violence. The chance to make a real difference is not an opportunity that everyone



GBV Survivor Charlotte Ndayishimiye – Now Feminist Activist Honoured With A Presidential Award

is given and is one I have no intention of taking lightly – she said” Having survived gender-based violence women’s rights are something so inextricably linked with who she is. As a fearless and outspoken advocate for gender equality and community engagement. Charlotte dedicates her efforts towards the empowerment of survivors of gender-based violence and campaigning to promote gender equality under INERELA+ Burundi.

South Africa Western Cape – Thousands Left Stranded Due to Floods

In a grim turn of events in Western Cape was plunged into turmoil as torrential rains wreaked havoc resulting in widespread flooding and untold destruction. Countless homes were inundated leaving families displaced and their belongings swept away. The intensity of the torrential rains took many residents by surprise as the volume of water that cascaded into the informal settlements and formal housing was beyond anyone’s anticipation. Local residents were left with no choice but to evacuate their homes in search of safety. The floods did not only impact homes but have also destroyed critical infrastructure. Roads and bridges in the area have been washed away or severely damaged thereby making access to the village challenging for emergency services and relief efforts. Three people went missing after the heavy downpours.



Infrastructure Destroyed Due to Heavy Downpours In Western Cape, South Africa □ 24th September, 2023

The Red Cross, local churches, and volunteers set up makeshift shelters and distributed essential supplies to aid stranded residents. Religious Leaders provided comfort to those who lost everything. Hope emerges amidst the devastation reaffirming the power of human compassion and solidarity in times of crisis. The flooding in Western Cape serves as a reminder of the growing impact of climate change. highlight the urgent need for mitigation and adaptation measures to address these challenges.



Floods In Western Cape, South Africa, 24th September 2023



Mrs Irakoze Jean d'Arc, the Coordinator at Gumba refugee camp Burundi

These events highlight the urgent need for mitigation and adaptation measures to address challenges. INERELA+ trained peer educators on climate change issues and it is through these climate activists that we are calling for increased efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to develop more resilient infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change. We emphasise on the importance of preparedness in the face of natural disasters.

INERELA+ Botswana Engaged Lawmakers On The Rights Of Sex Workers

In Botswana, like in most countries in the region, sex work remains criminalized. Studies have shown that the continued criminalization of sex work means that sex workers — of whom the majority are women are left in extremely vulnerable conditions, and they face human rights violations on a daily basis. In an attempt to influence government policy on sex work, on the 15th of September 2023, INERELA+ Botswana led by the Country Coordinator, Edna Nurse Maine met with the Assistant Minister in the Ministry for State President in Botswana, Dumezweni Mthimkhulu to discuss sex workers human rights and issues around decriminalization of sex work. Edna Maine took the opportunity to officially introduce the INERELA+ Hands-Off project, the main work of the project, its



Assistant Minister in the Ministry for State President in Botswana, Dumezweni Mthimkhulu, 15 September 2023

success, and its challenges to the Assistant Minister. INERELA+ believes that sex workers deserve equal protection of their human rights under the law and the continued criminalization of sex work makes it difficult to protect sex workers' rights. Decriminalization is a necessary intervention because it will enable us to make a distinction between voluntary sex work, where a sex worker chooses to be a sex worker, as opposed to involuntary sex work, that is forced sex work or sexual exploitation, and human trafficking thus make it easy for the government to fight these crimes which have devastating impact in our society. The Assistance Minister acknowledged the concerns around sex workers' human rights violations and pledged his personal support on the work of INERELA+ Botswana around this issue.



Ellita Musanzika and Trained Religious Leader Lubasi Kachele at Mfulikwa Church on the 19th of September 2023

INERELA+ Zambia: Elita Aka Ambuya Diva – Sex Worker Turned To Champion, Counsellor And Care Giver

One of the success stories in Zambia is that of Elita known as Ambuya Diva among other sex workers. Elita started sex work at the age of 15 after experiencing difficulties at home, a drop out from school, a lack of food, and extreme poverty in the family. She tried marriage during that same period of difficulties, but the relationship broke down after the husband became abusive. She engaged full-time into sex work to sustain her (2 biological and 2 grandchildren) and also provide for her parents who at first were in denial of Elita's indulgences in sex work. She fought through abuse by men who sometimes refused to pay for her services, stigma, and discrimination in the community, hospitals, and the police to become a Champion and Counsellor under INERELA+ Zambia. She is currently the leader of the Banana sex worker support group. Through the leadership of INERELA+ Zambia who consistently encouraged her, Elita realised that to efficiently lead the group she needed to be empowered and informed on ways to deal with the challenges that her colleagues were facing in the sex work industry. Elita attended and acquired skills in counselling and is providing counselling services to support group members and all other sex workers who need the services. Part of the services besides

counselling Elita refers other sex workers to Hands off trained Clinicians to receive HIV tests, ART, and PREP services. In addition to her efforts in standing for the rights of Sex workers, Elita is also a full-time Caregiver and Counsellor at the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia where she provides similar services like the ones in the sex worker support group. She is earning a salary and at the same time sustaining the income she gets from sex work. Elita managed to bridge the gap between two professions which demand different approaches but still speak to the need to uphold human rights and restore dignity to humankind.

INERELA+ Uganda conducting dialogue between Religious leaders and Key populations following up on SAVE Toolkit training

INERELA+ Uganda, following up on top up trainings on SAVE Toolkit held 14 dialogues four in 2021, six in 2022 and lastly four in 2023. These meetings were initiated after realising that there was a need to have a dialogue between Religious leaders and key populations because of the known cultural conflict arising in their communities towards stigma and discrimination. Therefore, the meetings brought together these diverging narratives from Religious communities and the key populations in Hoima. Each subsequent



Religious leaders attending dialogue after top up training on SAVE Toolkit in Hoima 2023

dialogue in 2023 saw more and more contact established between the two groups and the project witnessed a significant reduction in stigma and resistance as they continued to interact, dialogue around key subjects in the SAVE Toolkit and work together on the project. A sense of awareness among the Religious leaders towards the key population and the key population now view Religious leaders with less apprehension has begun. Though it may take a long time to mature because of the sensitivity of some of the matters.

The transformation of religious places of worship into centers of healing and inclusion is the ultimate goal for the entire project. Aspects of it have begun in isolated places of worship in Hoima and Kagadi. It is hoped that following the outreach activities more and more centers of worship will be turned into places of healing and inclusion.

LINKING AND LEARNING



The Power of Resilience for Civil Society Organisations Working to End Violence Against Women and Girls



INERELA+ Executive Director Munya Mandipaza

On 14 March 2023 on the occasion of the 67th Commission on the Status of Women, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) held a webinar titled **“Supporting civil society and women’s rights organizations working to end violence against women and girls in protracted, complex and overlapping crises”**. 70% of women experience gender-based violence in crisis settings, compared with 35% of women worldwide. Despite being at the forefront of such crises civil society organizations are underfunded and under-represented in crisis settings.

During the webinar which was attended by the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza, a panel of UN Trust Fund grantees and experts provided insight on the diverse challenges faced by women and girls worldwide. They also highlighted key role of women’s rights organizations, civil society organisations, activists and grassroots women’s committees in empowering women to exercise their rights amid crises and conflicts.

Hala Al Karib, the **Regional Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Horn of Africa (SIHA)** shared how the solidarity, agency and network building among women’s organizations enabled women’s activism for change in Somalia and South Sudan. SIHA led a school-based project to prevent violence against women and girls

in the large camps for internally displaced people through the support of women activists.

Kevin Schumacher the Deputy Executive Director of **Women for Afghan Women Afghanistan** highlighted the crucial role of international solidarity in challenging times. He highlighted that empowering local activists is the most important way to invest in social transformation.

As a grantee of UNTF, the INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza provided insight on how INERELA+ achieved transformational change by focusing on institutional strengthening and building the organizational resilience in response to the challenges created by COVID-19 to reach women and girls. INERELA+ trained 200 religious leaders, 106 traditional leaders and 40 government officials on addressing violence against women and girls through a Project being implemented in Burundi, Ghana and South Africa. A total of 9,476 women and girls increased their knowledge regarding violence against women and girls and the referral mechanisms available, and 2,398 women and girls reported cases of violence. INERELA+ collaborates with groups and stakeholders such as host communities, men and boys, and civil society to reach primary target beneficiaries and partners.

By investing in the organizational resilience and preparedness of civil society and women’s rights organisations, the UN Trust Fund has enabled grantees to continue operating in crisis settings.

Defend Defenders Convenes A Civic Space Workshop To Strengthen The Capacity Of Civil Society To Engage With Stakeholders And State Actors –

As part of Goal 16 of Sustainable Development Goals, governments commit to building “responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels” and promise to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and



Participants At the Regional Civic Space Workshop Held At Double Tree By Hilton Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya 20 – 23 August 2023

international agreements. Fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly, expression and information provide an **enabling environment for civil society** to play a key role in contributing to the development agenda and fulfilling the commitment to **“leave no one behind”**. A vibrant civil society require an open, secure, and safe environment that is free from all acts of intimidation, harassment, and reprisals, whether online or offline. States shape the legal and policy space within which people express views, assemble, associate, and engage in dialogue with one another and with authorities about issues that affect their lives, from the quality of basic services to better institutions and respect for fundamental freedoms. Civil society actors – including human rights defenders, women advocate, children, young people, members of minorities and indigenous people, trade unionists and journalists – should be able to express themselves freely in full security and effect change peacefully and effectively.

Additionally, under Goal 17, the target is to **“encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships.”** The closure of civic space therefore puts the progress toward these goals at risk by preventing a meaningful participation of civil society in decision-making. Civic space is the environment that enables people and groups – or “civic space actors” – to participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of their societies. Civic space relies on formal and informal channels through which individuals and groups can play a role in policymaking and contribute to

decision-making, political, and peacebuilding processes. These require mechanisms that allow effective access to information, dialogue, and the expression of dissenting and unpopular views.

INERELA + Executive Director Munya Mandipaza was in attendance at the Civic Space work workshop together with participants from Childline, MIET Africa, PACJA, SAPST, Sonke Gender Justice, REPPSSI, Eastern Africa Child Rights Network, Child Rights Network of Southern Africa, Africa Disability Policy Forum and SAVE The Children International. The workshop was hosted by African Defenders/ DefendDefenders. The host believes that increasing the levels of trust and cooperation between civil society, state actors, and other relevant stakeholders; or strengthening the capacity of civil society and/or state actors to engage in multistakeholder dialogue related to civic space is important and the shrinking space phenomenon cannot be addressed effectively, in isolation.

The overall objective of the workshop was to understand how to build voices to engage at multiple levels with key officials, strengthen networks and peer connections, building on existing Civil Society Organisation networks as well as mutual learning and defining synergy of action.

The aim of this workshop was to bring together representatives of Save the

Children Regional Programme Unit and their partners under the SIDA Civil Society Strengthening Project to cross-pollinate experiences and practically share a common understanding of how to effectively monitor and document issues related to civic space as well as taking action.

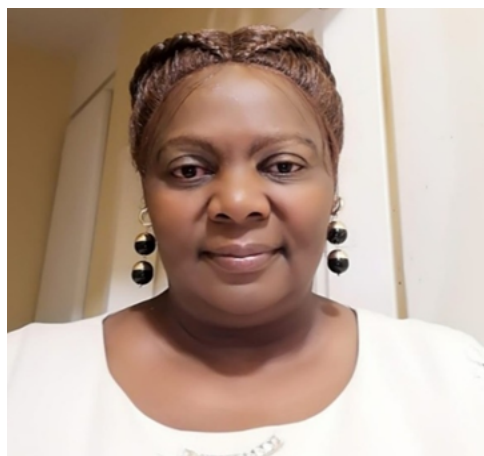
Conversation during this workshop focused on:

- How to build effective and powerful alliances in the context of civic space
- How to document shrinking civic space to provide evidence of shrinking civic space to inform evidenced based advocacy.
- Monitoring and tracking the legal enabling environment and challenges arising from measurement of civic space.
- Meaning of shrinking space to Civil Society.
- Lessons learnt from successful and unsuccessful initiatives.

Participants learnt from each other on how best to defend citizens’ rights to participate in shaping their societies as well as on how to build a mechanism of solidarity in specific situations of local or national oppression in the context of civic space.

INERELA+ Attends Global Forum For Adolescents – 11 – 12 October 2023

The Global Forum for Adolescents, 11-12 October 2023, was organized by the Partnership for Maternal New Born and Child Health (PMNCH) – the world’s largest alliance for women’s, children’s, and adolescents’ health to galvanize attention



Munya Mandipaza | INERELA+ Executive Director

to the needs and priorities of adolescents and young people around the world. PMNCH has been working with young people for several years, exploring what they want and need for their well-being and putting their top concerns in front of decision-makers with the power to ignite change. The world’s largest online meeting of adolescents and young people brought together a global community of adolescents, advocates and leaders for two impactful days of debate, dialogue and action. The two days engaged a diverse mix of thought leaders, change-makers and passionate individuals in crucial conversations and commitments towards adolescent health and wellbeing.

Participants, including policymakers and young people, shared evidence, lived experiences, and proven examples of effective policy and programming solutions. Forum sessions covered the full spectrum of challenges and opportunities experienced by young people growing up in today’s world including the need for greater attention to adolescent well-being in schools, combating violence to foster safe spaces, and creating safety for digital natives. The Forum also saw the launch of advocacy tools, research products, innovation materials, and key data to support advocacy for greater investment and commitment. The INERELA+ Executive Director – Munya Mandipaza was in attendance.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.5 million adolescents and youth died in 2021, averaging 4,500 deaths every day from preventable causes. Leading causes include road traffic accidents and interpersonal violence, while mental health disorders represent a rising concern for well-being. Many young people struggle to access sexual health and family planning services thereby risking unplanned pregnancies. Substance use, child marriage, nutritional status (under and over-nutrition), and injuries are other major concerns.

Adolescents and young people have specific health and well-being challenges often overlooked in policy and investment. Less than 1.6% of development assistance for health was dedicated to adolescent health between 2003 and 2015 even though there are 1.8 billion people between 10 and 24 in the world today.

During the Global Forum, 17 governments

and two regional bodies highlighted their responses, announcing specific policy and financial commitments. The majority of commitments came from African governments, with nine countries **(Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, and South Africa)** setting out plans and investments focusing on young people, including specific new financial commitments from Malawi and Liberia.

Other governments and regional bodies that pledged to improve adolescent health and well-being include Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Portugal, Serbia, Sint Maarten, and the United States, as well as the African Union and the European Commission.

The Global Forum also served as a launching pad for a new health and education strategy developed by the African Union, recognizing the key role that young people play in shaping the economic and social future of the continent. More than 1 billion people live in Africa, half (735 million) of whom are under the age of 20 years.

More than half of these commitments address the call for more vocational training and secondary/third-level education, mirroring the main priority identified by 1.2m adolescents and youth worldwide through the **What Young People Want** effort launched by PMNCH earlier this year. Other pledges focus on providing affordable, high-quality adolescent health and well-being services and strengthening the agency of adolescents and youth. The Forum closed with the exciting launch of the Agenda for Action for Adolescents responding to the demands of over 1.2 million young people from 80 countries, and the announcement of commitments from a wide range of stakeholders including 17 Member States, 2 Regional Committees, 13 philanthropic and funding organizations, 2 NGOs, and other organizations.

REPSSI: Psychosocial Support Forum, Mental Health In Context

NERELA+ was part of the partners under SAVE the Children Civil Society Strengthening Programme who were invited to participate in a Psychosocial Support Forum hosted by REPSSI. The Forum takes place every two years with a number of civic organizations, academics, activists, and researchers taking part to either present research papers on Mental health or provide updates and progress on Mental health programmes in their respective countries. The 2023 forum themed Mental Health in Context was opened by the REPSSI CEO Mr Patrick Onyango Mangen who introduced distinguished guests in the area of mental health. The REPSSI patron Dr Connie Kganakga shared the history, foundation, vision, and mission of REPSSI from its roots of formation in Zimbabwe. The forum welcomed speakers from Frontline AIDS, TDH Germany, UNICEF ESARO, NMCF, EAC Gender Department, Lead, Government of South Africa representative, and child representatives presenting context issues on Mental Health. Various researchers grouped in key major categories namely Climate Change and Humanitarian Emergency; Child Protection; HIV; Disability Inclusion; Forced Displacement; and Responsive School Environment were also given the opportunity to present their research work all linked to Mental health. Some of the key presentations linked to mental health to note read: Addressing the Interdependence and bidirectional relationship between Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Mental Health in Eastern and Southern Africa; Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Children and Adolescents' Mental Health through Humanitarian Response and Peacebuilding Efforts in Africa; Capacity building of parents and caregivers on early disclosure of HIV status to improve mental wellbeing of Children living with HIV; Advancing Psychosocial Support and Mental Health services in unearthing and addressing the hidden and complex sexual exploitation against adolescent and young women living with HIV in Epworth Harare Zimbabwe. In closure, the Vice Chairperson of REPSSI International Board of Directors gave closing remarks and further encouraged all the participants to keep up the good work towards mental health programming in their respective countries and organizations.



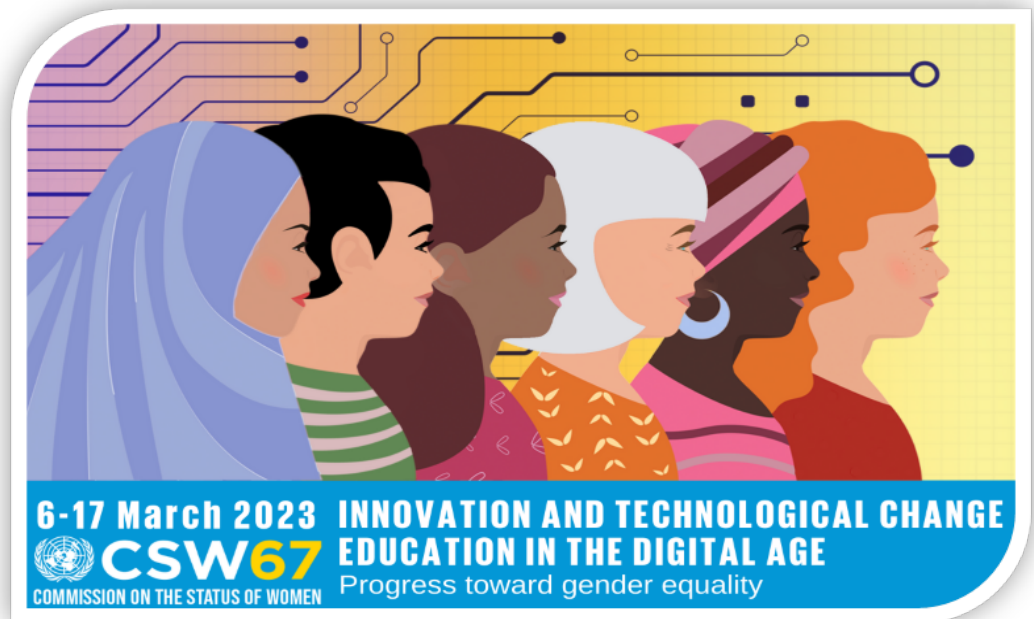
Participants At The ICASA 2023 Second International Steering Committee Meeting Held In Harare From 30 - 31 March

ICASA 2023 Preparations A Gear Up With INERELA+ Serving In The International Steering Committee

Preparations for the International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa (ICASA) scheduled for December 4 – 9 2023 have gone a gear up. ICASA is organised by Society for AIDS in Africa and Zimbabwe got the nod to host the high-level event where upwards of 12 00 people are expected to attend both virtually and in person. The conference will run under the theme **AIDS is not over: Address inequalities, accelerate innovation and inclusion**. Africa is a continent greatly affected by diseases and Southern Africa has the burden of HIV/AIDS while cancers, infectious diseases, and pandemics like COVID – 19 has affected the whole continent.

ICASA is a great milestone for the continent and for Zimbabwe. It is Africa's opportunity to come up with homegrown solutions to its health problems and to seek to end AIDS by 2030 a goal that aims at zero infection – nothing for Africans without Africans. The scientific, leadership, and community programmes need to come up with solutions to some of the problems.

An international steering committee specifically selected to plan for the conference with experts from (SAA), UN agencies, national aids councils from different countries, researchers, health professionals, communities and non-governmental organisations met **from 29th March to 1 April 2023** to map the way forward. In the spirit of leaving no one behind in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), organiser of the International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) nominated the **International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected By HIV/AIDS (INERELA+)** Country Coordinator Rev Jane Nganga as a member of the international steering committee for the 22nd edition of ICASA. The objective of the steering committee is to provide planning and policy for the success of ICASA 2023 in the quest to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS, TB, hepatitis, malaria, and emerging diseases on the African continent. It's excellent news for INERELA+ and we believe Reverend Jane will play a significant role in this important committee. INERELA+ works to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS, co-infections, and STIs globally.



COMMISSION OF STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW67) – 6th-17th March 2023

The sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place from 6 to 17 March 2023 under the priority theme: **innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.**

The INERELA+ Acting Executive Director Munya Mandipaza joined hands with representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world to reframe technology and innovation as a powerful accelerator for development, human rights, and women’s rights.

INERELA+ is implementing a project in South Africa, Burundi, and Ghana with the support of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) where faith leaders leverage their influence to end violence against women and girls and increase access to services for survivors through a proven faith-based methodology.

We have experienced that in the digital age, violence against women and girls is exacerbated by information and

communication technologies and it has taken new forms (from revenge porn to zoom bombing, doxing to cyber harassment, etc.). Online and technology-facilitated violence can lead to real threats and physical attacks that have disastrous short and long-term consequences on the lives of women and girls.

INERELA+ just like civil society and women’s rights organizations have adapted and equipped themselves to be able to prevent and respond to this emerging phenomenon. In addition to our advocacy work, we have developed services for survivors of online violence and have raised awareness through campaigns and sensitization activities about the risks of using the internet and technology-based interventions. As much as we understand that technology can facilitate threats of violence, we believe that technology is a crucial tool for prevention, monitoring, and response to violence against women and girls. INERELA+ has updated its website and utilised various media, online tools, and apps to advocate for women and girls’ right to live a life free from violence and to create new safe spaces for women to connect, share and learn or receive support services. We have used technologies to collect crucial data and to report all forms of violence against women and girls. Additionally, we have used digital activism and online advocacy campaigns to achieve our goals and amplify

women's voices. Throughout the CSW67 the presence, interventions, and evidence brought together by civil society and women's rights organizations shed light on the key role that they play in the work to prevent and end conventional and emerging forms of violence against women. Civil society and women's rights organizations need to have a seat at the decision-making table and must be part of the solution for women and girls to feel safe.

The Commission recognized that despite the opportunities, there is a need to address challenges associated with the misuse of new and emerging digital technologies which can be designed and/or used to incite violence, hatred, discrimination, and hostility, inter alia, racism, xenophobia, negative stereotyping and stigmatization against women and girls. CSW67 came to an end with the acknowledgment of the critical role of innovation and technology in the digital age in achieving gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. To officiligni aut eaquam nesti dictus dolum fugitio. Rum fuga. Arcipsam quis id quidesti core eosae dis sus, id quias ate minctibeaqui offic te voluptu resent.

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AUDITED INCOME & EXPENDITURE



Inerela+ NPC

(Registration number 2004/007199/08)

Financial Statements for the year ended 29 February 2024

Detailed Income Statement

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023
Other operating income			
Other sundry income		-	52 736
Income from funders, donors, etc		5 618 202	14 354 497
	7	5 618 202	14 407 233
Other operating gains (losses)			
Losses on disposal of assets or settlement of liabilities		-	(69 633)
Foreign exchange gains		60 958	454 999
Fair value gains		187	-
	8	61 145	385 366
Other operating expenses			
Administration and management fees		900	-
Adolescents - SRHR		789 440	53 397
Auditor's remuneration - external audit		126 022	180 205
Bank charges		52 343	48 945
Capacity building		59 922	450 646
Communication Campaign Costs		62 541	154 090
Consulting and professional fees		305 727	542 892
Country Network Support		-	395 230
Covid prevention & monitoring costs		2 020 767	2 226 695
Depreciation		118 773	53 061
Employee costs		3 118 329	2 937 275
Gender & Stigma Awareness		679 479	4 921 681
Insurance		65 651	44 065
Leases of low value assets		-	5 467
Medical expenses		10 585	17 488
Printing and stationery		17 635	44 609
Program Support Costs		381 152	255 672
SAVE Toolkit Costs		101 683	1 274 604
Short-term leases		332 758	253 360
Technical service fees		53 158	-
Telephone and fax		164 367	205 387
Training		116 489	176 473
Travel - local		2 463	5 672
Travel - overseas		116 659	105 813
		8 696 843	14 352 727
Operating (loss) profit		(3 017 496)	439 872
Investment income	9	38 354	11 674
(Loss) profit for the year		(2 979 142)	451 546

CONTACT

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

Tel: +27 11 792 7029 / +27 10 065 0026

Email: info@inerela.org

Website: www.inerela.org



INERELA+
POSITIVE FAITH IN ACTION