



CONCEPT NOTE

FOR THE

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH JOURNALISM AWARDS

"TOGETHER WE CAN RAISE AWARENESS"

ORGANIZED BY HEALTH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (HDI-RWANDA)

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16th/FEBRUARY/2017

Introduction

Health Development Initiative-Rwanda (HDI) is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organization based in Kigali. HDI strives to improve both the quality and accessibility of healthcare for all Rwandans through advocacy, education, and training. HDI brings together a diverse group of health professionals united by a shared commitment to improve the health of disadvantaged communities within and outside of the healthcare system. HDI empowers communities to lead healthier lives by providing access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services. Our focus areas include family planning, maternal health, and comprehensive sex education for youth and key populations.

Discussions about sexuality between adults or between adults and children remain taboo in Rwanda (Ministry of Health 2012), which makes it difficult for women and especially young women to negotiate safer sexual behaviors. While couples will often say that sexual behavior, contraception and family size are discussed between husband and wife, decision-making is still culturally a male preserve. Both adults and children learn about sex from the radio (e.g., the URUNAMA drama), and some children learn about sex at school. Unprotected sex is the norm among single young people with legal restrictions and abstinence messages making it difficult for them to get advice and products. Adolescent girls and young women are further deterred from using contraception for fear of being labeled as prostitutes. Men feel they cannot use condoms with their wives; condom use suggests promiscuity or at least the intent to be unfaithful. (*Institute of policy analysis and research-Rwanda, Lifestyle and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Rwanda: Findings from a Purposive Qualitative Study*)

It is with these challenges in mind that HDI wishes to reward and acknowledge journalists who candidly write about issues surrounding reproductive and sexual health. The media is an invaluable tool for spreading messages to thousands of people at a time. A radio program can

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engage more people at once than a single teacher ever could. When sexual health issues are normalized and openly discussed in the media, then they become normalized and openly discussed in the community as well. People become educated about topics that they might not have learned about otherwise.

In order to honor and encourage these journalists, HDI will launch Rwanda's Annual Reproductive Health Journalism Awards on February 22nd, 2017 to encourage reporting on reproductive health and create a platform where people can be able to talk about freely.

Main Objective of the Awards

Our objective is to recognize exceptional media coverage on reproductive health in a bid to raise awareness about reproductive health and rights in Rwanda, to attract journalists to cover issues of reproductive health, and to collectively review national policies on reproductive health.

HDI envisions a country of people with clear knowledge of their reproductive health and rights. HDI believes that media is one of the key actors that can help raise more awareness about reproductive health.

Participation

The awards will attract the participation of:

- Reproductive health sector players
- Central government officials (Ministry of Health)
- Journalists/Media practitioners (Health coverage)

Participation will be limited to 80 attendees. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences.

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Structure of the event

The meeting will be held as a 2 hour event on February 22nd, 2017 at the Umubano Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda.

Draft agenda

Time	Activity
8:30am	Arrival of guests/journalists
9.00am – 9.30am	Breakfast
9:30am – 9:40am	Introductory note
9:40am – 10:00am	Remarks Speaker: Doctor Kayumba Christopher
10:00am – 10:40am	Awarding Ceremony
10:40am – 10:50am	Closing remarks – HDI / Guest of Honor
10:50am – 11:00am	Group photo & media interviews

For more details:

Twitter: @HDIRwanda

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