

HDI NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022

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“We have been dealing with our communities based on what the law and the constitution stipulate but we must admit that we were not doing it very well. The most important thing that I have learnt from this training is the value of remembering that my community doesn't need my pity, but instead, it is my duty to provide them with services that are inclusive and **non-discriminatory.**”

Jacinta Uwingabire,
Executive Secretary Nyarurama Cell,
Gatenga Sector



TRAINING ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAWS WITH
SECURITY PERSONNEL AND LOCAL LEADERS

HDI ENGAGES LAW ENFORCEMENT, LOCAL LEADERS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

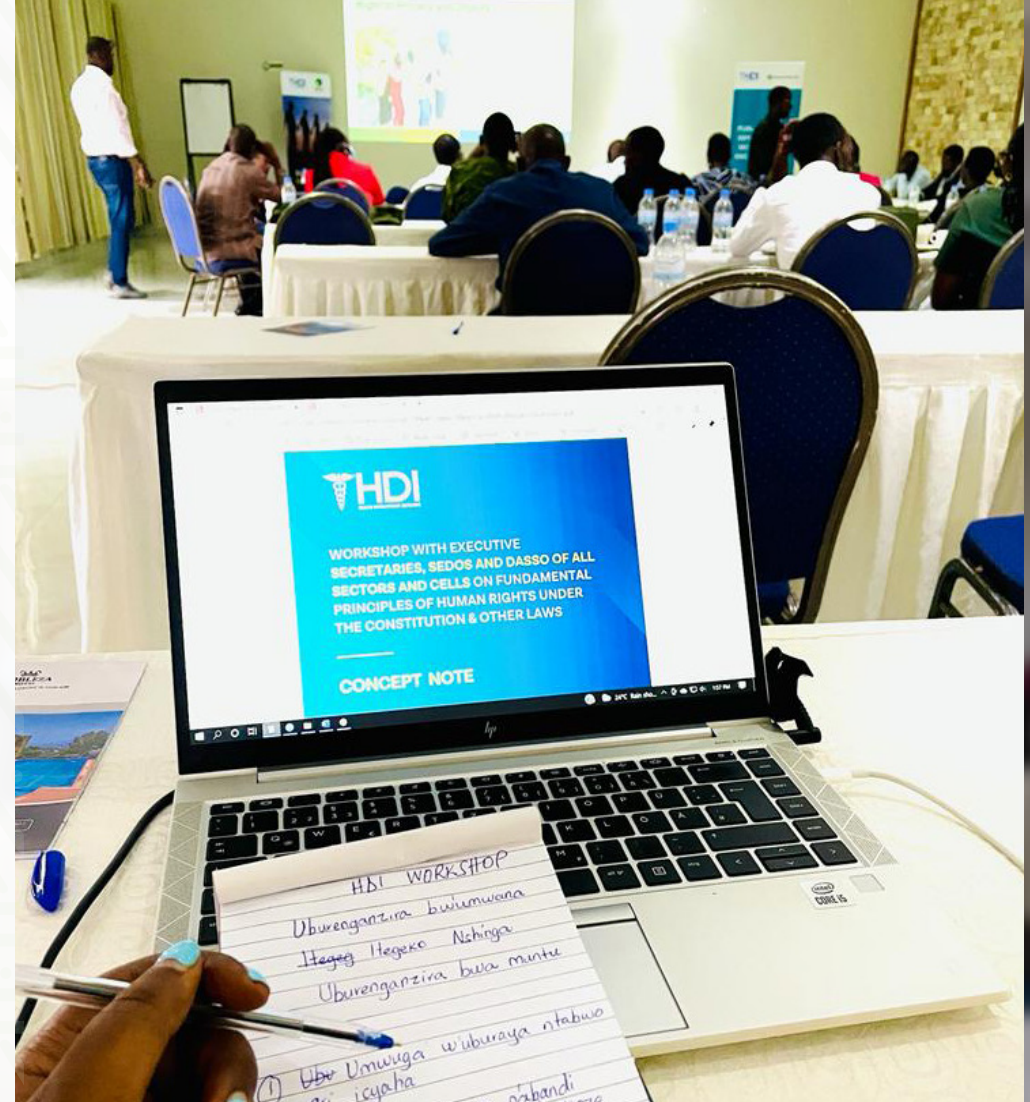
In the month of April, we conducted two workshops where we engaged District Administration Security Support Organ (DASSO) officers, Social Economic Development Officers (SEDO) and Sector and Cell level Executive Secretaries from Kicukiro District in an open dialogue on fundamental human rights and laws as enshrined in the Constitution.

The workshops were aimed at **improving human rights approach to development, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusion.**



Additionally, the workshops were an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and build more collaboration between local government and civil society organisations. Speaking at the opening of the workshops, the Executive Director of HDI, Dr. Aflodis Kagaba said that besides maintaining public order and managing public safety, law enforcement personnel have the duty to be transparent and accountable to their communities.

Speaking at the workshop, the Deputy District Executive Administrator of Kicukiro District Adalbert Rukebanuka said that the lessons learnt in the workshop will offer the participants an opportunity to serve their communities better and to use laws to defend themselves and others. "Our country made a commitment to apply a human rights approach to everything that we do. I am glad that these workshops are using this approach to train local leaders and other stakeholders like yourselves who deal with rights issues in your line of duty daily," Rukebanuka said.



*...Local leaders and security organs have a duty to make decisions and deliver services that are stigma and discrimination free. **Your jobs are not easy, but the law must come at the forefront of everything that you do.** Any member of the community that meets you should walk away feeling that they were treated in a fair and objective manner...*

- Dr. Aflodis Kagaba, Executive Director of HDI

On Child Rights

The Legal Affairs Specialist at City of Kigali, Ernest Nsengimana Ngoga told the participants that their actions must always be guided by fair judgment and the law to avoid violating human rights of those that they have a duty to protect.

Ngoga, who discussed the 'Child Rights' topic reminded the participants of their duty to respect, promote and protect systems that safeguard and fulfil child rights. Citing the example of street children,

Ngoga reminded that the Law relating to the Protection of the Child requires both administrative and judicial proceedings to primarily take into consideration the best interests of the child.

He particularly pointed out Article 24 which states that a child cannot be in detention during the investigation process unless the charges against him or her are punishable with a term of imprisonment of more than 5 years.

...The period of a child's detention cannot exceed 15 days and it cannot be extended. Where the Judge estimates that it is necessary to continue to maintain detention, strict monitoring measures are required as replacement...

**- Ernest Nsengimana Ngoga,
The Legal Affairs Specialist at
City of Kigali**





Leaving No one Behind

The Program Officer of Key Populations at HDI, Sulemani Muhirwa touched on Article 21 of the Constitution which affirms the 'State's commitment to upholding the equality of all Rwandans before the law, and the eradication of discrimination and divisionism based on ethnicity, region, or on any other ground'.

Citing the example of documented cases of local authorities' stigma, harassment and discrimination towards sex workers and members of the LGBT community, Muhirwa

referred to Article 26 of the Rwandan Constitution on freedom of movement and residence which states that every Rwandan has the right to move freely and to reside anywhere in Rwanda.

He pointed out that sex work or homosexuality are not crimes in Rwanda and reminded them that including key populations in their development strategy advances the 'leave no one behind' principle under the National Strategy for Transformation.

...Instead of chasing sex workers and LGBTs from your areas, protect them from discrimination and stigma and assist them to access the right information and services that will protect them from HIV infection. This will not only reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities, but it will improve your communities' potentia...

- Sulemani Muhirwa, The Program Officer of Key Populations

GENERATION G RETREAT: REFLECTING ON ONGOING ACTIVITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO GENDER JUSTICE



In the month of April, members of GenerationG Rwanda Coalition went for a 3-day Retreat to reflect on the program implementation, and optimize coalition members' experience sharing and learning. They also revitalized collaborations and partnerships among the coalition members to enhance the success of the Program. The overall objective of this 5-year program is to meaningfully engage youth for a gender-just and violence-free society that bolster Gender and GBV policies in Rwanda.

Discussions centered around explaining the GenG program to new GenG Rwanda team members, reflecting on Y1 GenG implementation, and ensuring the coalition is still on track. This was also an opportunity to revise the baseline targets and monitor the coalition's progress towards achieving them.

Suggestions and ideas were floated on how GenG technicians can seek feedback

from the coalition before implementing any activities to ensure that they are all still on the right track.

The team encouraged the coalition to unpack all the social norms that they need to address by the end of the program and pledged to come up with a report that highlights all those harmful social norms and prioritize those that the coalition can focus on in 2022.

The retreat included presentations of activities implemented in the first year of all three organizations [Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), Health Development Initiative (HDI), and African Youth and Adolescent Network on Population and Development Rwanda Chapter (AfriYAN Rwanda)].

Coalition members pointed out the urgent need for a joint planning document of all the coalition's activities in order to prioritize and participate in every organization's activities as there is the interconnectivity of all their activities.



HIV PREVENTION: TRAINING KEY POPULATIONS AND DUTY BEARERS IN EASTERN PROVINCE



In April, HDI kicked off the implementation of a 3-year-project that will focus on providing key populations and duty bearers a comprehensive package on HIV prevention programs that is aimed at the reduction of new HIV infections. The Director of Outreach at HDI, Jocelyne Emery Ingabire explained that the project, spread over Bugesera, Kayonza and Kirehe Districts in Eastern Province (chosen based on their high HIV risk burden) aims to support prevention of morbidity and mortality related to HIV and TB.

She explained that to achieve this, HDI is conducting training programs for peer educators of key populations and facilitating consultative meetings with duty bearers including local leaders, healthcare providers and law enforcement to facilitate easier access to stigma-free HIV prevention information and services.

On key populations, Ingabire explained that the training programs are peer education model based where representatives of key populations who include sex workers, Men who have Sex with

other Men(MSM) and transgender are trained and supported to effect change in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of their peers in relation to Sexual Reproductive and Rights, particularly HIV related programs and services.

“The peer education model is effective when it comes to HIV prevention within key populations as it aids easier reaching, testing, linking, and retaining service beneficiaries of the HIV prevention and control services,” she said.



Dialogue with local leaders

As part of the project activities, HDI also facilitated a consultative meeting with local leaders and law enforcement on the rights of key populations and the value of facilitating them to access stigma free HIV prevention and management information and services.

Under this project, HDI also trains healthcare providers on the law on Medical Liability Insurance which elaborates health service users' rights and the responsibilities of health service providers. Particularly, the healthcare providers are enlightened on Article 3 of this law which reminds the health professional to execute their duties with

due respect for the human person's life, privacy and dignity. The trainers also touch on Article 4 on the right of access

to medical procedures which prohibits anyone from being subjected to any form of discrimination while accessing consultation, healthcare services or other paramedical procedures.

This article also calls on health professionals, health facilities, health insurance organizations or any other healthcare setting to contribute to the establishment of mechanisms that facilitate equal access to health care and the highest health safety possible for all.

This means that healthcare providers are obliged to facilitate fast, easy and stigma free access to condoms, voluntary counseling, HIV testing and healthcare, and STI management to all Rwandans regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.



Men who have sex with men (MSM), and sex workers fit into the category of those deemed to be at higher risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV. In these training sessions, we engage local leaders and law enforcement organs on the rights of key populations and how removing any barriers that limit or block them from accessing HIV prevention and management services not only limit their rights, but also amplifies the risk and vulnerability to HIV in key and general populations,

**- Jocelyne Emery Ingabire,
The Director of Outreach at HDI**

The Vice-Mayor in charge of Economic Development in Kirehe District Modeste Nzirabatinya appreciated the initiative to train more health workers which he said will significantly reduce the burden that key populations have been taking to seek these services. He pointed out that it is Kirehe District's mission to provide services for all and more specifically, to adhere to the 'leave no one behind' principle. "We were not aware that we had Men who have Sex with other Men in Kirehe district but now that we do, we hope that they are more comfortable to seek services and we pledge to assist them in

any way possible," he said. The Insurance Quality Improvement Officer and also LGBT Focal Point at Mukarange Health Center in Kayonza District, Nestor Imanirahari said that his prior training from HDI and RBC under the same project three years ago provided him with the skills that he needed to provide assistance to over 470 members of the LGBT community in Eastern Province.

He explained that the training programs were eye-opening for many sex workers and MSM since many did not know that what they were doing is not a criminal offense. Additionally, others visited

health centers after learning that the STIs they had contracted can be treated by healthcare workers instead of herbalists.

The project is in line with the National Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2024 which emphasizes the need to strengthen the 'test and treat all' strategy as well as focusing on the reduction of new HIV infections targeting key populations and hotspot areas. Additionally, the strategy also focuses on the reduction of stigma and discrimination towards HIV/AIDS patients among others.



"Since the training, we have seen quite a number of them coming to us seeking tests for HIV and other STIs. This is a result of the confidence and information that they gained from knowing that they are not committing any crime and that it is their right to seek professional medical help,"
he said.

**- Nestor Imanirahari,
The Insurance Quality Improvement
Officer**



"Sex workers and Men who have Sex with other Men were required to move from Kirehe District to Kayonza District to seek HIV prevention and management services but with these trainings, this means that they will now be served by healthcare providers closer to them,

**- Modeste Nzirabatinya, The Vice-Mayor in charge of Economic Development
in Kirehe District**

Partnership & Learning Experiences



HDI joined Rwanda and the rest of the world in the launching of the country's #FP2030Commitments.

Commitments discussed during the meeting are:

- ✓ Expand strategies for FP awareness-raising to address gaps in knowledge

- ✓ Improve access to quality FP services by increasing the number of service delivery points providing quality FP and contraception services

- ✓ Expand the available contraceptive method mix at all levels of FP service delivery points

- ✓ Link evidence-based programming for high impact interventions with policy development and strategy formulation

- ✓ Increase domestic resources to finance FP interventions from 2.7% in 2017 to 5% by 2030.



HDI received a team of Gender champions that conducted gender audits at the organizational level. The Gender Audit is one of the prioritized assessments planned to take place during this current Public Policy Information Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) phase IV, and focuses on ensuring the gender agenda is brought to the forefront of all the work that we are doing. The findings of the Gender Audit will be communicated back to the HDI team in the following month so that the organization can improve on its Gender Action Plan.

In an appreciation and recognition for the support, HDI provided to Rwanda Pharmaceutical Students' Association during the 11th RPSA International pharmaceutical Symposium themed: "Towards Good pharmacy practice: Moving from basic competencies to modern practices". Alain Shingiro, president of the association submitted a certificate of recognition to the HDI's ED Dr. Kagaba Aflodis.



STAKEHOLDERS SPEAK



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HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO DEV'T

“We appreciate the step that you took to train DASSO staff. Security organs deal with all kinds of people including the **vulnerable**. Equipping them with this kind of training on laws and basic human rights is instrumental in building trust and easing the flow of information and service delivery between leaders and their communities.”



Rebecca Karungi,
Director of Health and Social Affairs,
Kicukiro District

f @hdirwanda



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HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO DEV'T

“I agree that key populations need our protection because they are dealing with overwhelming problems. This training has been instrumental and it has given me some understanding about drug abuse. This training is our opportunity to request for advocacy from Civil Society Organisations like @HDIRwanda to push for **lasting solutions** regarding those who inject drugs. As leaders and parents, we are very concerned.”



Judith Mukankusi,
Executive Secretary
Rwimbogo Cell,
Nyarugunga Sector.

f @hdirwanda



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HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO DEV'T

“One of our challenges as we execute our day to day duties is our limited knowledge of laws. This training will definitely bridge the gaps that were blocking us from providing the quality of services that our communities deserve, which must be guided by international **human rights instruments**, the national laws and ofcourse our **Constitution.**”



Aime Patrick Dusabe,
Cordinator, DASSO
Nyarugunga Sector

f @hdirwanda



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COMBATING DISCRIMINATION & PROMOTING INCLUSION

“According to the 2018 law on the protection of children, a child cannot be in detention during the judicial inquiries unless the charges against him/her are punishable with a term of imprisonment of more than 5 years. It's important to treat children delicately and put their interests and rights at the forefront of everything that you do during your social affairs or security duties.”



Ernest Nsengiyumva Ngoga,
Legal Specialist, City of Kigali

f @hdirwanda

HDI wishes to thank our partners and supporters

- AMPLIFYCHANGE
- BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH IMPERATIVE
- CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE
- CDC
- DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO RWANDA
- DFID
- EAHP
- FEMNET
- FOSI/OSIEA
- GIZ
- GLIHD
- GLOBAL HEALTH CORPS
- IMBUTO FOUNDATION
- IMRO
- MINISTRY OF GENDER AND FAMILY PROMOTION
- MINISTRY OF HEALTH
- MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
- MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID
- PLAN INTERNATIONAL RWANDA
- PROMUNDO
- PSA
- PSF/EMORY UNIVERSITY
- PYXERA
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- SISTERLOVE INC.
- SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH
- STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION
- STOP TB PARTNERSHIP
- TEARFUND
- THE CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
- THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION
- THE EMBASSY OF GERMANY
- THE EMBASSY OF SWEDEN
- THE EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF NETHERLANDS
- THE GLOBAL FUND
- UHAI-EASHRI
- UNAIDS
- UNFPA
- UNICEF
- WELLSPRING FOUNDATION
- WHO
- WOMEN'S LINK WORLDWIDE
- IPPF-Asociación Profamilia
- IRH
- JHPIEGO/MCGL
- RWAMREC
- THE NEWTIMES

