



*Striving for a healthy society*

# Quarterly Newsletter

HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2019



# Strengthening Rwandan Civil Society Organizations' Capacity to Effectively Contribute to Laws and Policies

## April-June

HDI is currently leading a consortium of 4 CSOs (GLIHD, IMRO and Rwanda NGO Forum) in the implementation of a 3 year project aimed at Strengthening Rwandan Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) capacity to effectively contribute to laws and policies. In order to work hand in hand with the government and stakeholders to continue addressing the challenges they face in the justice sector, the consortium is creating spaces for dialogue with Justice, Reconciliation, Law, Order, Sector (JRLOS); Maison d'Access a la Justice (MAJ) and Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) committee members on the role of CSOs in the justice sector at the district level. CSOs are also being empowered on how to leverage the courts and conduct evidence-based advocacy to effectively contribute to policies as well as strengthening their participation in the technical working group and other decision making spaces. Additionally, the project is also working on creating a better understanding of the CSO role by engaging duty bearers and other relevant stakeholders and allowing the CSOs the opportunity to showcase their work.



# Training on Drug Addiction and Harm Reduction Programming

## April 15th-19th

HDI, with delegates from Kenya, Ministry of Health and Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO), held a 5-day training on drug addiction and harm reduction programming at the HDI office. The overall objective of the training was to build the capacity of nurses/counselors and other HDI CSO partners to provide the highest quality services to people who use drugs. Activities included action planning for the organization's integration of harm reduction practices into current services. Injecting drug users (IDUs) are at high risk of contracting HIV and Hepatitis C as many share the same needles/syringes to inject. Hence, reaching them with harm reduction interventions such as medically assisted therapy and needles & syringe exchange programming will help in reducing the risk of getting viruses that are common among IDUs. Participants learned that effective treatment for any drug user need to go beyond treating the substance abuse issue and should extend to social inclusion. The average of participants' knowledge about harm reduction services for drug users before the training were 53% (Pre test) conversely, after the training it increased to 71.6% (Post test).



# Engaging youth leaders to create better understanding and contribute to prevention of unsafe abortion related deaths

## April 26th

Youth peer educators are a source of information for other youth as they create space to discuss sensitive issues that are relevant for their peers. It is in this regard that HDI organized a training for 20 youth peer educators with the aim of raising their awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), family planning methods and legal provisions on abortion. Throughout the discussion, HDI focused on helping the participants understand the Ministerial Order determining conditions to be satisfied for a medical doctor to perform abortion and the medical professional liability insurance law. Through discussions and presentations, the participants were taught about their rights in relation to their SRHR, this includes the right to decide on FP, the right to not be subjected to any act likely to be harmful to their reproductive health, the right to self-protection and the protection of others against sexually transmitted infections, as well as the obligations of the government to promote human reproductive health.



# Building the capacity of young adolescents on advocacy skills

April 29th



HDI organized a 3-day training on SRHR advocacy with the aim of developing the capacity of **30** youth/adolescent leaders to effectively raise awareness, provide support and carry out advocacy on SRHR issues with young people in their schools and community. At the end of the training, participants understood key SRHR issues and relevant laws and policies. Through presentations about advocacy, participants gained a greater understanding of the advocacy process, learned ways to undertake social mobilization and advocacy initiatives, and practiced conducting an advocacy plan. In this process, they were able to identify potential entry points and specific areas for advocacy regarding issues at their schools. Adolescents were more confident after the training and recommended HDI to reach a larger audience of young people. Finally, an advocacy strategy was developed to help guide young people's future activities and issues requiring advocacy within their schools.

# Family Planning & HIV testing outreach for the Community of

May 22th

## Potters



On 22nd May, HDI convened an educational session and community outreach at Cyaruzinge Village/Ndera Sector for the vulnerable group of indigenous population (Community of Potters) for around 250 people. The educational sessions emphasized how effective family planning programmes can make a powerful contribution to poverty reduction and improve the health of community members.

The aim of the outreach was to avail the Voluntary Counseling and Testing and Family Planning services. Shortly after the sessions, **123** participants in total requested to receive family planning methods, counseling and services, and **107** requested to get tested and were linked to the services. HDI has been working with this community for the past 11 years and is pleased to contribute to such progress in service provision.

# Advocacy Meeting on leveraging Human Rights-Based Approach and Technology to support HIV Prevention among Key Populations in the City of Kigali

May 22nd-24th



Key populations face rejection, discrimination, and do not enjoy their human rights – including the right to health in general and to HIV services in particular. It is with this in mind that, HDI conducted a high-level meeting with **60** people from civil society organizations, community based organizations, representatives from various sectors, and other United Nations Agencies such as; UNICEF, United Nations Rwanda, WHO, WFP and many others. The objective of this meeting was to provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion and information sharing among stakeholders involved in human rights and the fight against HIV in Rwanda. In conclusion, those present agreed that policy and programs implemented by the government and other stakeholders should aim to address issues faced by these key populations. Furthermore, an awareness raising campaign would be highly beneficial to sensitize communities to issues and make them aware of the rights that these key populations have.

# #ItsTimeForAction

## Menstrual Hygiene Day 2019

**May 28th**

On 28th May 2019, HDI organized and celebrated the Menstrual Hygiene Day at G.S. Gicaca 1. This event was attended by more than **700** people, representatives from **15** schools, youth peer educators, teachers and local leaders. The purpose of this visit was to celebrate the Menstrual Hygiene Day by primarily informing students, especially girls, about menstruation as a biological process that should not be stigmatized. Students learned about different ways in which they should practice hygiene during their menstrual periods. In addition to that, HDI SRHR Center coordinator, Ms. Marie Ange, emphasized that girls should be proud of themselves. Finally, women at G.S Gicaca were given pads and other sanitary materials that will be accessible to the young ladies that usually struggle to afford such products during their periods.





# Values Clarification Workshop with Medical Doctors on Safe Abortion & SRHR

## June 25th

On the 25th June 2019, HDI organized and conducted a training to educate medical doctors about values clarification on safe abortion and SRHR & the Ministerial Order n°002/MoH/2019 of 08/04/2019 determining conditions to be satisfied for a medical doctor to perform an abortion. The training was attended by **27** Medical doctors (general practitioners) from different hospitals, such as King Faisal, Butaro, Kibogora, Rwamagana provincial, Masaka, Muhima, Kabwayi, Busheri provincial hospitals and Medical Student for Choice. Participants learnt that the role of the doctor is not to interrogate the patient instead it is to provide the services as smooth and confidential as possible. Some of the medical practitioners suggested that such training should be given at the national level so that all doctors may be informed about it. HDI is happy to scale up their knowledge as they are less informed when it comes to abortion yet concerned about providing such services.



# Sensitization Meeting with Nurses and Midwives on the Provisions of the Law and Ministerial Order on Abortion

**June 26th**

On the 26th June 2019, HDI organized a sensitization training about the provisions of the law and ministerial order on abortion to 25 nurses and midwives from 5 different districts in Rwanda. Participants were keen to learn about the new ministerial order on abortion. From this training, healthcare providers gained knowledge on the provision of the law and ministerial order on abortion and further their understanding of their roles in providing friendly SRHR services. During the training, the participants were given sessions that encouraged them to provide non discrimination and high-quality reproductive health services. Based on the feedback provided by the participants, they recommended The Ministry of Health to develop an operational plan that guides healthcare providers on the provisions of safe abortion services.



# Raising awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights through Debate competitions

## "Inter- Secondary Schools Debates"

May-June

It has been proven that use of debate encourages active involvement and applying content in meaningful ways compared to passively absorbing information. From May to June 2019, HDI in collaboration with Aspire Debate has conducted inter-secondary schools debates in **10** high schools and was able to reach to approximately **3500** students with information on SRHR. The debates were aimed at equipping students with more skills in public speaking and knowledge on reproductive health that will help them to prevent teenage pregnancies among their peers. This created an open space for young people to debate on the existing reproductive health issues and making informed arguments and opinions. The final debate competitions are scheduled in July.



# "Inter-Universities debates"

## May-June

During the same period of time, the debates were conducted in **10** public and private universities throughout the country and over **1200** students participated in these events. These debates aimed at engaging students, especially young women leaders in breaking taboos and enable them to express their opinion on sexual and reproductive health and rights focusing on the issue of teenage pregnancy and the possible means of preventing it. It was observed that the students both in high schools and universities need a deep understanding of human reproductive health law and associated rights. It was also noted that there is a need to amplify the voice of young people in order to advance women's reproductive health by enabling them to make informed decisions. The final debate competitions are scheduled in September.



# HDI wishes to thank our partners and supporters:

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- Peace Corps
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- PSA
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- PYXERA
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- UNICEF
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- WHO
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
- Ministry of Justice
- Rwanda Bio-Medical Center
- Rwanda Education Board
- Rwanda Governance Board
- Imbuto Foundation
- GLIHD
- IMRO
- RNGOF
- RSOG
- RBP partners
- Women's Link WorldWide



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