



HDI
HEALTH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Striving for a healthy society

Quarterly Newsletter

HIGHLIGHTS FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019



CSOs engagement in ECD interventions and GFF implementation

July-August

The Government of Rwanda has initiated a number of programs to fight malnutrition and stunting in infants. The programs include treatment of malnourished children in health centers and provision of fortified flour to vulnerable parents with children under five years of age among others. The objective of the Global Financing Facility (GFF) meeting was to discuss on the contribution of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Early Child Development and the process of fighting malnutrition in Rwanda. Civil society has the ability to make malnutrition problems visible and improve the scope and quality of services through research and advocacy. The collective action of the general population, political players and policy makers can ensure every child, adolescent and mother have access to food and nutrition leading to a family welfare.

On 13th September, HDI held a validation meeting of the rapid assessment report on the readiness of stakeholders in the implementation of GFF. The meeting emphasized the need and urgency of the effective protection of child's mental and physical health, and the role of CSOs in ensuring accountability in national response to quality services related to nutrition among vulnerable people.



July 24th-25th

In Rwanda, adolescents continue to face barriers including restrictive laws and cultural norms which prevent them from accessing information and services regarding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). In collaboration with RRP+, HDI organized an inter-generational dialogue between teenage mothers and their parents in Kicukiro and Gatsibo districts. The main purpose of these dialogues was to provide a platform for adolescents & their parents to discuss on root causes of teenage pregnancy and find strategies to fight against it. The dialogues also aimed at finding ways to continue supporting teen mothers through reintegration in their families, society and school. Teenage mothers and parents were equipped with information on long-acting reversible contraception, such as the implant or intrauterine device (IUD), hormonal contraceptives, condoms and emergency pills.

Inter-generation dialogue on adolescents' access to contraceptives



Caravan campaign on prevention of teenage pregnancy

July 18th, 25th

HDI in collaboration with RRP+ organized outreach campaigns in Kicukiro and Gatsibo districts using caravan trucks to reach out to a large crowd of people. The caravan served as a space to sensitize adolescents/youth and adults to use contraceptives methods and raise awareness prevention of gender based violence. In addition, we provided the audience with stigma free information and services on family planning. The caravan attracted over **4,000** people from Gatsibo and in Kicukiro districts. HDI was able to create a large and extensive platform to educate people of different age groups, gender and social class about prevention measures against teenage pregnancies. HDI distributed over **2000** condoms to the audience.



National CSOs Exhibition on Legal and Human Rights services to Rwandan citizens

July 30th-31st



Rwanda NGO Forum in collaboration with HDI, GLIHD and IMRO, organized a 2-day national CSOs exhibition on legal and human rights services, supported by JRLOS Secretariat hosted in the Ministry of Justice. In this exhibition, CSO showcased the work and services they provide to the community in regard to justice and legal aid. The aim was to ensure sufficient and accurate information on the contribution of CSOs in the justice and human rights sector, as well as raise awareness to the general public on their rights and how to access justice services. HDI informed the participants about patient's rights and the linkage between HIV and human rights. During the 2 days of the exhibition, HDI provided voluntary HIV testing services to over **70** participants.

Empower, Include, and Respect: Training of CBOs Leaders

August 16th

HDI conducted a 2-day training of CBO leaders on human rights monitoring, policy review processes, advocacy, public speaking, constituency engagement and consultations. The purpose of the training was to reflect and address existing gaps in project proposal writing among LGBTI and Sex Workers. This enhanced their capacity to implement projects and apply to different call for proposals. Additionally, a total of 20 CBOs of LGBTI and Sex workers conducted 51 Self-help group meetings. The topic discussed were Gender –based violence, Discrimination and Patient’s Rights.



Visit of Scora Exchange 2019 students

August 07th

HDI hosted a group of 10 students from Canada, Poland, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, England and Rwanda all part of ScoraExchange2019. The visit provided a platform for students to learn information about the social and health care impact of the host country. Dr Aflodis Kagaba presented on HDI's advocacy work. He also highlighted strategies that have helped HDI grow and improve the wellbeing of people in the areas of HDI intervention. These included initiation of stigma-free services through HDI's center for health and rights, collaboration with strategic organizations, applying a human rights based approach and creating a safe space for adolescents and young people seeking services. The students got an opportunity to learn about services provided at the center, that are hotline and family planning counseling, HIV and blood group testing. As medical students, they were eager to learn and understand the process, navigate and interact with the system in which they committed to integrate.



Regional Communications and Media Training

August 30th-31st

Catholics for Choice in partnership with Health Development Initiative-Rwanda organized a Media and Communications Training. This interactive 2-day training took place at Kigali Convention Centre and was attended by African activists, pharmacists, healthcare providers working on Sexual and Reproductive rights from Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, DRC and Mozambique. This communication training was aimed at equipping participants with the necessary skills to effectively communicate on reproductive health and rights through advocacy, healthcare provision and policy making, to specifically address sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. Some of the lessons learned from the training include the commandments of good communication which comprised of tips for dealing with reporters like respecting deadlines, being concise and to the point answers and listening closely to what is being asked.



Sharing lessons learned on "strengthening HIV clinical services" project



September 25th

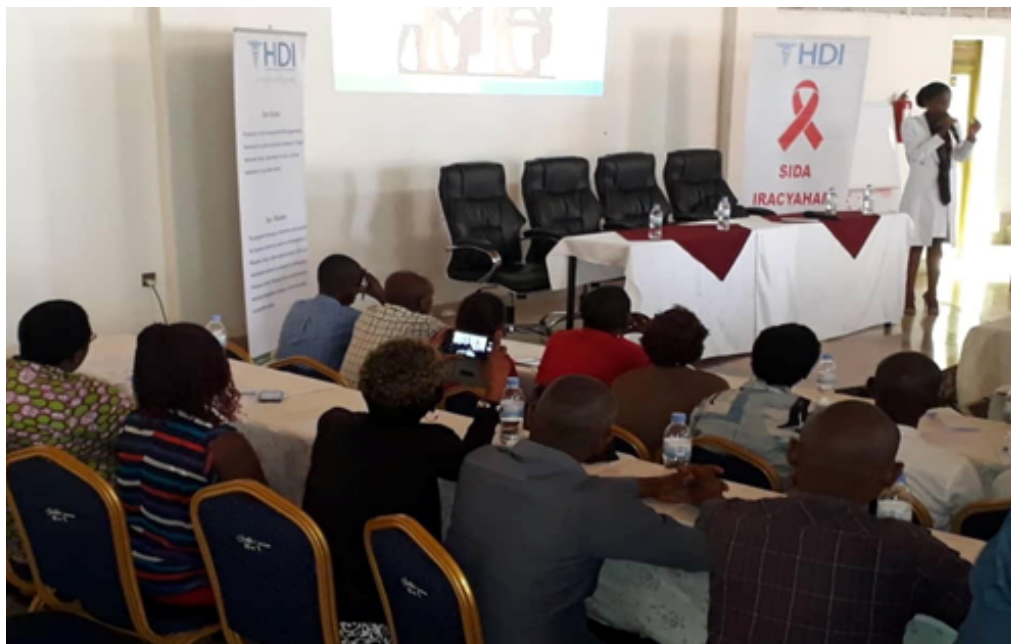
HDI is currently implementing a project in **12** districts in Rwanda that seeks to track and test key populations and their partners for HIV infections and refer them to the nearest health centers for treatment so as to reduce HIV incidence among key population. HDI conducted a coordination meeting with **46** Heads of Health centers and HIV care providers from **23** health centers across the 12 districts. The aim of this meeting for the last quarter of the project was to share HDI's experience and strategies to identify key populations, and challenges encountered in the linkage to services of cases found positive during outreaches. Among the strategies elaborated to successfully identify key populations, were conducting moonlight testing, involvement of peer educators to identify and refer key populations to services, collaboration of health centers and peer educators in the sites identification, and index partner notification . A total of **11,531** people were tested, and among them **549** people were newly diagnosed HIV positive with a prevalence of 4.7%. Among people newly tested HIV positive, **379** had been initiated on the ART program (75%) as of September 30, 2019. HDI recommended the health centers to encourage healthcare providers and key populations peer educators to follow up on the testing of all the key populations and ensure that those found positive start treatment as soon as possible.

Reflection on Strategic litigation and planning for advocacy opportunities

September 12th-13th



In collaboration with Women's Link Worldwide, HDI held a workshop bringing together HDI key staff, Women's Link members and senior lawyers from the Rwanda Bar Association. The aim of the workshop was to define strategic methodology for identifying opportunities, and design strategies to seek and achieve social change through the courts. The workshop participants discussed the Rwandan context for strategic litigation in advancement of the right to health, including needs identified in HDI interventions, the judicial landscape, and potential legal avenues. Emphasis was directed at the importance of a filing of an interpretation case of article 19 of the Constitution of Rwanda of 2003 as revised in 2015; in relation to the rights of the protection of the child, looking at essential strategies to ensure this litigation promotes social change. It concluded with formulation of the next steps, roles and responsibilities of each of parties for filing the authentic interpretation case and paving the way for future legal advocacy.



Advocacy Meeting with Stakeholders in Southern Province

July-September

HDI held advocacy meetings with 120 local authorities, women leaders and healthcare providers from each of the 3 Districts of the Southern Province that are Nyaruguru; Huye and Nyanza, to raise awareness on Child's Rights particularly children of vulnerable women such as sex workers and single mothers to ensure that they have access to basic services such as health, education and social security. The meeting also emphasized on addressing barriers that limit access to HIV services among key populations. HDI conducted follow up of key populations in different hotspots and networks with the collaboration of key informants including peer educators and other sex workers.

Adolescent Champions in School Outreach Events

July-September

As part of the implementation of the beneficiary voices project, a group of **12** adolescents were selected among 60 young people as adolescent champions in advocacy on SRHR to advocate for SRHR issues affecting youth and adolescents. Overall these champions have already organized 18 outreach events in **15** schools and **3** communities under the theme “The Role of Adolescents in Eliminating Teenage Pregnancies”. During these outreach events, the adolescents were able to reach **10,000** adolescents and young people, and **220** parents and teenage mothers with information on family planning, child's rights, causes & prevention of teenage pregnancy, and gender-based violence.



Adolescent Champions in Outreach Events

July-September

In one of the outreach events, Mary, 18, one of the adolescent champions highlighted among other challenges still faced in curbing teenage pregnancy, there is lack of access to contraception by teenagers. "Even informed teenagers like myself and my peers may have trouble accessing contraceptives. The myth around it is that informing and giving access to young people for contraceptives will encourage their sexual behavior. When one is sexually active, it creates a need for accurate, up-to-date information and access to effective contraception" She said. Mary went ahead to demonstrate how to use cycle beads to track your menstrual cycle.



"I request parents to take the first initiative in teaching young girls and boys about sexual, reproductive health. I was personally uncomfortable talking about sex with my parents and I turned to my peers for information about SRHR, which they did not have." Mbabazi, 19

"Growing up, I always thought it was only the girl's responsibility in a relationship to prevent teenage pregnancy". Now that I have information on sexual education, it helped me to understand that both boys and girls in a relationship should have an equal part in making decisions about contraception. I encourage my male peers to play a central role in speaking up about these issues and help each other to make informed choices about reproductive health." Said Christian, 17.



Review on the Progress of HDI's Projects



This quarter HDI was delighted to host partners including delegates from Packard Foundation, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in follow up visits to discuss on the progress of the projects being implemented. HDI is glad to continue the commendable partnership with incredible supporters that contribute to the success of the organization.

HDI wishes to thank our partners and supporters:

- **AmplifyChange**
- **Catholics for Choice**
- **CDC**
- **The Center for Reproductive Rights**
- **The David and Lucile Packard Foundation**
- **Delegation of the European Union to Rwanda**
- **DFID**
- **EAHP**
- **The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**
- **The Embassy of Sweden**
- **FEMNET**
- **FOSI/OSIEA**
- **GIZ**
- **Global Health Corps**
- **The Global Fund**
- **Norwegian People's Aid**
- **Peace Corps**
- **PROMUNDO**
- **PSA**
- **PSF/Emory University**
- **PYXERA**
- **SAAF/IPPF**
- **Stephen Lewis Foundation**
- **Stop TB Partnership**
- **UHAI-EASHRI**
- **UNAIDS**
- **UNFPA**
- **UNICEF**
- **ViiV Healthcare**
- **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**
- **Imbutu Foundation**
- **GLIHD**
- **IMRO**
- **RNGOF**
- **RSOG**
- **RBP prtners**
- **Women's Link WorldWide**
- **Global Giving**





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