

HDI NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023



WHAT'S INSIDE

Linking Policy to Practice Through Intergenerational Gender Dialogue

Page 3 - 6

Strengthening the Capacity of Healthcare Professionals to Improve Supply Chain Management

page 7 - 9

Enhancing the knowledge of Teachers to Improve CSE Delivery

page 10 - 12

Engaging Communities to Raise Awareness of Sexual Minorities

page 13 - 15

Dear Partners,

Welcome to our October Newsletter.

This month, we're thrilled to share insights from our Intergenerational Gender Dialogue on GenderJustice. This dialogue aimed to bridge generational gaps and facilitate discussions aimed at fostering greater understanding and collaboration.

We also highlight our workshops focused on enhancing the capacity of healthcare professionals in supply chain management. These initiatives aim to create a more efficient and responsive healthcare system, directly impacting the quality-of-care individuals receive.

We also share key takeaways from a workshop with teachers aimed at empowering them to navigate sensitive topics, ensuring students receive accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education.

Additionally, we share our engagement to raise awareness of gender inclusion highlighting the significance of community involvement in advocacy initiatives as a catalyst for understanding, and societal transformation.

Let's persist in these conversations, taking concrete actions to steer us toward a more equitable and enlightened future.



BRIDGING GENDER EQUALITY GAPS THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

This October, we partnered with AFRIYAN-Rwanda and the Rwanda Men's Resource Center (RWAMREC) to host our third Intergenerational Dialogue on Gender Justice.

Over 30 advocates for gender equality, representing various sectors such as government, civil society, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, and faith-based entities, came together to bridge generational gaps and facilitate discussions aimed at fostering greater understanding and collaboration. The dialogue, delivered under the Generation Gender Program,

sought to amplify the voices of the younger generation, with a special focus on women and girls, tackle the pressing challenges and devise solutions related to gender equality, justice, and inclusion.

The participants assessed ways to address and combat Gender-Based Violence by learning from actionable strategies that address and reduce instances of GBV in the community and to identify gaps in gender and GBV policies which represent opportunities for future advocacy.

During the dialogue, there were frequently asked questions including: How do women networks work with or engage men and youth in their activities?

Do women networks have a special emphasis on people with disabilities? How can young people, especially young women, be engaged in shaping and influencing policy decisions related to gender and youth issues?

LESSON LEARNED

Among the lessons learned, the participants pointed out:

The elders' willingness to share their achievements with the younger generation highlights the importance of passing down knowledge and experiences. This can foster a sense of responsibility among younger individuals to continue the progress made.

Engaging men and youth is increasingly recognized as crucial

in promoting gender equality. Youth voices, especially young women's perspectives, are vital in shaping gender policies. Strategies to bridge the gap between policy and practice are essential for promoting gender justice and equality. The dialogue led to participants leaving with a commitment to apply their new knowledge within their organizations and communities.

Collaboration between organizations, awareness campaigns, and inclusive programs are necessary to address gender-related challenges.

Engaging marginalized groups, such as LGBTQI communities and people with disabilities, is essential in the pursuit of gender justice.

Reflecting on the dialogue, Bonne Esperance Iradukunda who represented the youth through Rwanda Scout Association, appreciated the advice shared by older gender activists who she commended for showing them that even in the face of adversity, the journey to fight for gender equality must continue.

They persevered and did not give up. They were not selfish with their achievements; they are sharing them with us, the younger generations. To this day, they still have the motivation that will keep the younger generation moving, ready to step in their shoes.

- Bonne Esperance Iradukunda

Irادukunda's takeaway from the dialogue was that there are many potential partners and supporters of the work that scouts, who are now 50,000 in total, do around gender equality.

For the representative of the Rwanda Union of Little People, Honorine Tuyishime, the highlight of the dialogue was the discussion around the challenges related to gaps in gender inclusion. Particularly, she appreciated the interest the participants had in understanding challenges people like her face and the eagerness to learn so that all human beings, in all their diversities, are included in their programs.



“As the Rwanda Union of Little People, our main takeaways from this dialogue, also include collaborating with CSOs, UN agencies and the government to raise awareness around inclusion of people with disabilities in their programs to ensure that no one is left behind,” she said.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations point to opportunities for learning and partnership. They also highlight the importance of collective support indicating the potential for future programs and improvements:

For instance, one of the present women-led organizations, SEVOTA, expressed their willingness to learn and understand more about the LGBTQI community, their needs and challenges they face, and foster partnerships. In that instance, they requested organizations working with them to support them on this matter.

During the dialogue, organizations stressed the need for a collective effort to support teen mothers, a

proposal initially raised by the AfriYAN representative and backed by the legal representative of Réseau des Femmes. Participants requested HDI to organize workshops on gender equality and proposed a collective advocacy effort for LGBTQI community in the local governance.

Women-led organizations recommended collective efforts for further advocacy on gender inclusivity in programming, as well as gender budgeting and mainstreaming, emphasizing a holistic approach to address gender equality challenges and promote inclusive solutions and a strong monitoring and evaluation framework. The intergenerational dialogue on gender justice and equality showcased the nation’s deep commitment to promoting gender equality.

Despite remarkable progress and a strong policy framework, gender-related challenges persist, hindering women’s full participation in various sectors. The dialogue emphasized the significance of collective efforts, the inclusion of marginalized and youth communities, and a comprehensive approach to gender inclusivity and budgeting.



STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS TO IMPROVE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

In partnership with RBC and UNFPA, we conducted a 5-day intensive capacity building program for over 120 healthcare professionals, including hospital pharmacists, community health worker supervisors, and medical supply branch staff, aimed at

refining the expertise and utilization of the electronic Logistics Management Information System(e-LMIS), and mastering the art of commodities supply chain management.

The training aimed to ensure accurate data entry into the e-LMIS and its continued integration into all supply chain operations.

The program also aimed to refine e-LMIS skills, improve supportive supervision capabilities, and ensure its effective application in healthcare settings.

Conducted by experts from RBC and Rwanda Medical Supply (RMS), the training focused on establishing a proficient team of e-LMIS trainers and to strengthen the capacities of hospital pharmacists, community health worker supervisors and pharmacy staff in identifying and addressing system utilization challenges.

The training offered hospital pharmacists an opportunity to improve their skills in efficiently managing commodity inventories through e-LMIS. This ensures the prompt and accurate delivery of medications, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of healthcare delivery.

Community health worker supervisors, responsible for coordinating grassroots healthcare efforts, were

equipped with the skills and tools to seamlessly integrate e-LMIS into their workflow. This integration streamlined their outreach programs, making them more effective and responsive to the communities they serve.

For the medical supply branch staff, the training aimed to refine their abilities in optimizing the procurement, storage, and distribution of medical resources.

The targeted training provided participants with a healthcare infrastructure that is not only efficient but also adaptable, ensuring a seamless flow of essential supplies to where they are needed the most.

During the interactive training sessions, participants, particularly community health workers, shared challenges in using the e-LMIS system for order placement.

Group discussions led by hospital pharmacists addressed these challenges, guiding community health workers on operating the e-LMIS system and implementing effective processes for order placement.



As the intensive training program concluded, participants acknowledged that the knowledge and skills acquired would bridge gaps in medical supply chain management and healthcare service delivery.

They expressed recommendations, including strengthening collaboration between community health worker supervisors and health facility store managers, as well as training store managers on the supply chain module and e-LMIS system utilization.

These recommendations are being actively considered, with RBC and the Ministry of Health committed to implementing measures to ensure their realization.

Besides contributing to safe dispensing of essential medicines, proper patient education, and adherence promotion, these training programs significantly contribute to strengthening the healthcare ecosystem, shaping a highly proficient workforce that links healthcare providers and patients.



STRENGTHENING EDUCATOR COMPETENCE TO ENHANCE CSE IMPLEMENTATION

In collaboration with VSO Rwanda through the Make Way program, we organised a Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) dialogue for over 30 duty bearers including secondary school teachers, representatives from Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs), and District Education Officers to foster a deeper understanding of the CSE program under the Competence-Based Curriculum.



The training aimed to establish a network of empowered educators capable of sharing their newfound knowledge with peers and becoming advocates for change within their schools. The goal was to champion the effective implementation of CSE.

The training sessions focused on building an understanding of the fundamentals of CSE, outlining its guiding principles, and dispelling common misconceptions. Facilitated by HDI's SRHR advisor, Mwizerwa Annet, the session emphasized that CSE is not a spontaneous activity but a well-established one

with scientifically proven, culturally relevant, and increasingly evolving guiding principles. During the workshop for teachers, our session commenced with a pre-test designed to assess the participants' existing knowledge of CSE. This initial evaluation served as a valuable benchmark to tailor the subsequent discussions and presentations to the specific needs of the group.

Following the pre-test, the participants were taken through a comprehensive presentation on CSE, exploring its historical context within Rwanda.

In the subsequent segments of our workshop, we engaged in discussions regarding the distinction between sexuality education and sex education.

The participants learnt that while sex education primarily focuses on the biological aspects of human reproduction and contraception, sexuality education is broader, addressing not only the physical but also the emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of human sexuality.

The conversation extended to the number of lessons teachers could effectively deliver, emphasizing quality over quantity.

We explored the methodologies employed in the implementation of CSE and discussed the role of specific educators involved in this critical aspect of a student's holistic development.

An integral component of our workshop involved disseminating the findings from the HDI CSE Policy Brief. This step allowed participants to gain insights

into the broader context and implications of CSE, fostering a deeper understanding of its role within the educational landscape.

Through these collective efforts, the workshop aimed not only to enhance the participants' knowledge of CSE but also to empower them with the tools and insights needed to effectively incorporate this vital component into their teaching.

The intersection of scientific validity, cultural sensitivity, and educational strategy formed the cornerstone of our discussions, contributing to a more comprehensive approach to sexuality education in Rwanda. The anticipated outcome of this dialogue was an increase in knowledge and understanding of the CSE national program and its implementation among the trained teachers and other stakeholders.

Additionally, the trained teachers are expected to serve as ambassadors of change in their respective schools, promoting the effective implementation of CSE.



FOSTERING INCLUSION: CHALLENGING COMMUNITY STIGMA TOWARD DIVERSE GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES.

In October, we partnered with the African Population Health Research Centre (APHRC) to organise a three-day dialogue aimed at involving parents and relatives of LGBTQ+ community members in discussions on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

The primary objectives of the dialogue were to evaluate the community's comprehension and perspectives on LGBTQ+

rights, promote acceptance, raise awareness, and mitigate the stigma and discrimination faced by people from the diverse gender and sexual identity communities .

The discussions on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression also served as a platform for open and honest conversations, fostering supportive environments crucial for the mental and emotional well-being of sexual minorities.



The workshop also provided an opportunity to showcase a collaborative study by HDI and APHRC, offering insights into the lived experiences of sexual minorities in Rwanda.

This included the nature and types of exclusion faced, factors contributing to social exclusion, and perceived well-being.

For instance, about two-thirds of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination, notably during religious (44.9%) and cultural (41.7%) events, as well as in housing searches (30%).

Some participants noted improvements in the treatment of LGBT individuals and acknowledged government efforts to provide better opportunities for accessing basic needs.

Despite these positive strides, the study revealed challenges faced by the LGBT community in accessing basic services.

Participants self-reported discrimination, with 47% facing discrimination in health services, 54% in social services, and 64% in accessing food services.

Nkurunziza Cadette, a transgender woman, shared her struggles growing up stigmatized and discriminated against, underscoring the importance of dialogues in creating a future free from stigma.

Safari Fredrick echoed a similar journey, asserting that one's sexual orientation should never be a basis for discrimination or bullying. She emphasized the significance

of using her voice to advocate against discrimination and bullying within the LGBTQ+ community. Interactive sessions allowed participants to share insights, with some admitting a lack of understanding before the dialogue, particularly regarding the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation.

The newfound comprehension of gender versatility was highlighted, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and acceptance for everyone.

As the dialogue concluded, reflections on shared stories illuminated the challenges of convincing society to embrace gender inclusivity, given deeply ingrained cultural beliefs.

Nevertheless, these dialogues contribute to cultivating a culture that values and includes everyone, fostering a stronger and more harmonious society.

STAKEHOLDERS SPEAK:



“ This Intergenerational Dialogue on Gender Justice has opened my eyes to the fact that gender equality and equity in development processes goes beyond men and women. It must include others like sex workers, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQI+ community among others. Like everybody else, these communities must enjoy their rights without being subjected to discrimination or judgement. They must be included and heard, so that they are empowered enough to start programs on their own or even with support from gender experts. We must do this based on their humanity, their ideas, and abilities not than their sexual orientation. Going forward, this is something I'm going to give serious consideration in the different dialogues that I'll be organizing. I will do this to ensure that they have a platform where their voices can be amplified.

- Godlive Mukasarasi, SEVOTA

HDI WISHES TO THANK OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

- AMPLIFYCHANGE
- BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH IMPERATIVE
- CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE
- CRICKET BUILDS HOPE
- DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO RWANDA
- EAHP
- EQUIMUNDO
- FEMNET
- FOSI/OSIEA
- GIZ
- GLIHD
- GLOBAL HEALTH CORPS
- IMBUTO FOUNDATION
- IMRO
- IPPF-Asociación Profamilia
- JHPIEGO/MCGL
- MINISTRY OF GENDER AND FAMILY PROMOTION
- MINISTRY OF HEALTH
- MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
- MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID
- PARLIAMENT OF RWANDA
- PLAN INTERNATIONAL RWANDA
- PSA
- RNGOF
- RWANDA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM
- RWANDA SOCIETY OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS
- RWANDA BIOMEDICAL CENTER
- RWANDA EDUCATION BOARD
- RWANDA GOVERNANCE BOARD
- RWAMREC
- SFH
- SISTERLOVE INC.
- SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH
- STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION
- STOP TB PARTNERSHIP
- THE CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
- THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION
- THE EMBASSY OF SWEDEN
- THE EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF NETHERLANDS
- THE GLOBAL FUND
- THE NEWTIMES
- UHAI-EASHRI
- UNAIDS
- UNFPA
- UNICEF
- VSO
- WELLSPRING PHILANTHROPIC FUND
- WEMOS
- WHO
- WOMEN'S LINK WORLDWIDE

