

HDI NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023



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Dear Partners,

Welcome to our May Newsletter.

In this edition, we bring you details about celebrating midwives in recognition of the vital role they play in providing care and support to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. What were the highlights of the 2-day Scientific conference that was held to highlight the invaluable work of the midwives? All the details about this and more are included in this newsletter.

We also bring you a summary of the Training of Trainers aimed at empowering Interfaith Mentors to Champion SRHR through using Sermon Guides to effectively communicate their message to their congregations. In this edition, we also take you through a five-day workshop that we had in Musanze District where we were joined by different stakeholder to work on the implementation roadmap aimed at raising awareness about family planning in the community.

Our spotlight story for this edition, we look at our recent participation in a 3-day training focused on equipping the HDI team with enhanced skills to navigate the evolving world of communication as a pathway to improved advocacy and community behaviour.

Also in this edition, we look at how we joined the LGBTI community to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) to promote acceptance and diversity, raise awareness, address challenges, and advocate for the rights of the LGBTI community in Rwanda.

These and more stories and feedback from the people that we serve can be found in this edition of our newsletter. We welcome your feedback and invite you to follow us on our social media for daily updates on the work that we do to serve our communities.

Best Regards,

Communication Team.



HIGHLIGHTING THE VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIDWIVES TO MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

This May, HDI in partnership with UNFPA joined the Rwanda Association of Midwives (RAM) to convene a 2-day Scientific conference as part of the activities to observe the International Day of the Midwife (IDM). The conference, attended by different stakeholders, was celebrated under the theme, “Together Again: From Evidence to Reality” and characterised by different activities including research findings, presentations, panel discussions and skills demonstration by midwives.



The participants were taken through RAM's 5-year strategic plan and a presentation on the latest developments in midwifery education and training in Rwanda.

Participants were also taken through different skills demonstration exercises where seasoned midwives were joined by junior midwives for explanations and demonstration of skills on different matters.

The demonstration of skills included topics like pregnancy wheel/Rwanda version, breech delivery, manual removal of placenta, helping babies to breathe, vacuum extraction, manual vacuum aspiration for post abortion care, postpartum family

planning intrauterine device insertion (PPFP/IUD), hormonal IUD insertion and cervical tear diagnosis among others. A separate stand was providing non-communicable disease information and screening.

At the end of each skills demonstration, each registered participant was evaluated and granted a certificate with credits equivalent to the number of demonstrations attended. The certificate will contribute to the credits required for the renewal of their licenses.

The speeches focused on improvement of skills development and evidence-based service delivery.

Midwives from different institutions of education, in- service, mentorship and leadership, presented different research topics and presentations of midwifery interest including:

- ✓ Respectful maternity care received during childbirth at facilities in Eastern province
- ✓ Facilitators and barriers to breastfeeding late preterm infants among mothers at four district hospitals in Kigali
- ✓ Exploring senior nurse and midwifery leadership roles and experiences in Rwanda,
- ✓ The role of midwives in promoting reproductive rights and gender equity,
- ✓ Challenges that adolescent schoolgirls and women are facing on menstrual hygiene management, and their perceptions about menstrual caps in Rwanda
- ✓ Reduction of birth asphyxia at Kabaya district hospital
- ✓ Quality improvement project and reduction of neonatal hypothermia at Rwamagana level 2 teaching hospital



There were two panel discussions on the role of midwives in achieving universal health coverage and was discussed by RAM president, the division manager of Rwanda biomedical center maternal newborn child, the president of Rwanda society of Gynaecologists Obstetricians, UNFPA- Rwanda's in-charge of midwifery, the registrar of the national council of nurses and midwives and the president of Rwanda nurses and midwives' union.

The second panel discussed the future of midwifery and its potential to transform health care and was discussed by RAM, UNFPA and RBC/MCCH.



The midwives also looked at the challenges within the scope of their profession including shortage of Midwives, lack of investment in midwifery education, high cost of midwifery education, unemployment, low pay, poor recognition within the health sector and lack of seat at the leadership and decision-making table at the Ministerial level.

The conference was also an opportunity to award different midwives for their inspirational work in midwifery. They included the most inspiring midwifery leader, Midwifery educator, midwifery advocate and activist and the most impactful midwife mentor (a mentee was selected) as well as the best role model midwife in respectful maternity.

They concluded the conference with a call for an investment in midwifery education and provision of career guidance to young generations (secondary school students), and to strengthen collaboration and networking in creation of plans and strategies in-service [at work] and pre-service [at schools]. They appealed for recognition of Midwifery levels and experiences and called for a consideration of vertical and horizontal promotions.

They agreed to strengthen QUAD (Ministry of Health, Nursing and Midwifery Council, Education, and Nurses and midwives' union) and make efforts to formalise it.

Over 160 participants were present on the first day of the conference (May 4) while the second day (May 5) was attended by 200 participants.

The celebrations were preceded by a five-day midwifery outreach program where midwives and nurses collaborated with local leaders and community health workers to offer antenatal care, Family Planning and breast and non-communicable diseases services to people in remote districts of Karongi district.

The outreach program was conducted in 75 sites all over Karongi district and within one week, it attracted the participation of 8,770 people collectively.

Of these, 1,914 were provided family planning services, 6,409 NCD screening while 447 were provided ANC information and services.

THE OUTREACH PROGRAM



8,770 participants



75 sites



1,914 received family planning services



6,409 were provided NCD screening



447 were provided ANC information and services.



EMPOWERING INTERFAITH MENTORS TO CHAMPION SRHR THROUGH SERMON GUIDE

In partnership with UNFPA Rwanda, HDI joined the Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health (RICH) to co-host a 5-day training of trainers of interfaith mentors on the sermon guide to promote Maternal, Infant, and Adolescent Health. A sermon guide is a tool or resource that provides structure and guidance for religious leaders, such as Imams, Pastors, Priests, or Ministers in organising their thoughts and effectively communicating their message to different congregations.



“ One of the most significant strides we have made in engaging religious leaders on SRHR and other health related matters is that we are seeing more women participation. This week, we have 16 female participants out of 41 high level RICH participants and it speaks volumes on how committed we all are in ensuring that we seek solutions without leaving anyone behind.

- **Annonciata Mukayitete**, Senior Program Officer in Charge of Gender and Inclusion at HDI,

The 64-page booklet breaks down ten topics including the value of well being, family, child and maternal health, postnatal care, family planning, nutrition, environment, malaria prevention, HIV and STIs, health insurance as well as drugs and alcohol addiction.

The guide helps the religious leader to determine the main theme or topic of the sermon, which serves as the central focus of the message with support from specific and relevant corresponding Bible or Quran verses or passages. The guide also helps the religious leader to incorporate their personal

insights, and experiences, to prompt reflection on how the teachings can be applied to daily life, making the sermon more meaningful and relevant to their specific congregation.

The participants recognized the sermon guide as a powerful tool for promoting maternal, infant, and adolescent health within religious communities. They put forth important recommendations, including ensuring the accessibility of the guide to all religious leaders, women and marginalized communities.

United by the common goal of improving health outcomes in Rwanda, the workshop brought together 41 trainees from different religious denominations who were equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively train others.

The trainers used different training resources and tools including training manuals and handouts, multimedia, and visual aids to encourage active participation and engagement and provoke participants' constructive feedback.

The participants were taken into trainer development processes including group work, presentation skills, group discussions on how to deliver their message, manage challenging situations and foster a positive learning environment for their congregations.

Besides doing mock preaching sessions, the participants were later assessed and evaluated by their peers who provided feedback and suggestions for improvement where necessary.

They also called for follow-up to ensure effective use of the guide and the need of a simplified version for better understanding and utilization by the community.

The Secretary of RICH Board of Directors, Bishop Dr. Bunini Gahungu, called the workshop a big step towards empowering religious leaders to address major issues in Maternal and Infant Health.

He highlighted the importance of the partnership with UNFPA and HDI, urging religious leaders to actively disseminate the knowledge gained within their networks and contribute to the promotion of maternal, child, and adolescent health across Rwanda.

The Senior Program Officer in Charge of Gender and Inclusion at HDI, Annonciata Mukayitete, acknowledged the influence of religious and cultural beliefs in the lives of the population, with over 96% affiliated with a religious group, making religious leaders valuable advocates for health issues.



FOSTERING COLLABORATION TOWARDS FULFILLING FP2030 COMMITMENTS

With financial support from UNFPA, we partnered with RBC to organize a five-day workshop in Musanze District to work on the implementation roadmap and finalization of documents aimed at raising awareness about family planning in the community. The workshop took place from May 8 to 12, 2023, and brought together various stakeholders, including representatives from the government, civil society organizations, development partners, and youth-led organizations.

Rwanda is fully committed to achieving the Family Planning 2030 (FP2030) goals, which include increasing access to modern contraception for women and girls, reducing unintended pregnancies, and decreasing maternal and infant mortality rates.

To attain these goals, Rwanda has set ambitious targets, aiming for a contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) of 65% and an increase in the total demand for family planning to 82% by 2030.

To reach these targets, the sub-technical working group focused on developing a comprehensive implementation plan that outlines strategies, interventions, and activities necessary to fulfill the FP2030 commitments. This plan includes specific targets and indicators that will measure progress over the next five years.

Beyond developing the implementation plan, the workshop aimed to validate several pending Family Planning Program documents that encompass the Family Planning Educational and Counseling Booklet

for local authorities and religious leaders, the integration of the FP counseling flipchart, and the FP Reference Manual.

Regarding the goal of ending preventable maternal deaths, the current commitments aim to increase the family planning demand from 78% to 82% by focusing on enhancing access to and availability of modern contraception for women and girls. This approach has been proven to be a key contributor to reducing maternal mortality and morbidity. By increasing access to contraception, unintended pregnancies can be reduced, leading to a decline in maternal deaths and improved maternal health outcomes.

In addition to preventing maternal deaths, the implementation plan developed during the workshop will also address the unmet need for family planning in Rwanda. The plan aims to improve access to modern contraception, ensuring that women and girls have the necessary information, services, and products to plan their families and prevent unintended pregnancies. This will not only improve their health outcomes but also contribute to the country's overall development.

Furthermore, the Family Planning Educational and Counseling Booklet for local authorities and religious leaders will play a crucial role in increasing access to information from various sources, including local leaders and church representatives.

This will generate greater demand for family planning services and contribute to raising the country's contraceptive prevalence rate.

Closing the workshop, Dr. Regis Francois Cyiza from RBC thanked the participants for the hard work they poured into developing valuable educational resources for the family planning program.

“Family planning is not about child spacing or the method of choice. Family planning is about maternal, newborn, and child health and sustainable development.”

By increasing access to modern contraception, addressing unmet needs, and raising awareness through various channels, Rwanda aims to reduce maternal mortality, improve reproductive health outcomes, and combat gender-based violence and harmful practices.

The concerted efforts of all stakeholders will be instrumental in realizing these goals and ensuring a brighter future for Rwandan communities.



Everyone has the right to access family planning information and services. No one should be excluded, and we all must participate and be part of the movement because family planning is one of the pillars that will lead to progress.

**- Marie Claire Iryanyawera,
UNFPA Rwanda**

A graphic of a spotlight shining from the top left corner onto the text.

SPOTLIGHT STORY

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR BETTER ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

We are delighted to share the exciting news of Health Development Initiative's (HDI) recent participation in a 3-day workshop focused on communication under the MCGL program.

The workshop, held from May 22nd to May 24th, aimed at revising HDI's communication strategy and digital communication approach, ultimately equipping the organization with enhanced skills to navigate the evolving world of communication.

Recognizing the pivotal role that effective communication plays in advocacy and social behavior change, the workshop was meticulously designed to support us to learn strategies through

which we can stay at the forefront of advancing our work in the digital era.

Through harnessing the power of communication, HDI strives to foster a healthy and inclusive society in Rwanda.

The workshop brought together 30 HDI staff members and was facilitated by the Jhpiego communication and branding team of specialists Joan Nduta, Astha Jain, and David Ssekyanzi invited from Jhpiego India, Kenya, and Rwanda.

Throughout the training sessions, the HDI team delved into various aspects of communication, focusing on HDI's mission, objectives, and the needs of program interventions.



They looked at the value of understanding the perspectives, attitudes, and requirements of engaging and serving primary HDI partners. The training provided valuable insights into key aspects of digitalization in communication and how digital tools, channels, and platforms can be leveraged to maximize the reach and impact of HDI activities.

Additionally, the workshop facilitated a comprehensive evaluation of HDI's existing communication and digitalization strategies, with the aim to identify areas for improvement and refinement. Clear and consistent branding guidelines were developed, outlining the visual elements, messaging tone,

and overall brand identity that should be employed in all communication materials and platforms.

This workshop marks a significant milestone for HDI, propelling the organization towards its goal of advancing access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services in Rwanda. HDI extends its gratitude to all participants for their active engagement and enthusiasm throughout the training sessions and acknowledges the unwavering support of the Jhpiego India, Kenya, and Rwanda team in making this workshop a success.



IDAHOBIT 2023

TOGETHER ALWAYS; UNITED IN DIVERSITY



IDAHOBIT CELEBRATION: COLLABORATING TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND ACCEPTANCE

On May 17th, we joined Amahoro Human Respect and the LGBTI community to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). The collaborative effort aimed to raise awareness, address challenges, and advocate for the rights of the LGBTI community in Rwanda, while promoting acceptance and diversity within Rwandan society.

Under the theme “Together Always: United in Diversity,” the event shed light on the ongoing challenges faced by the LGBTI community, while highlighting the progress made in training healthcare providers to offer stigma-free services.

Prior to the IDAHOBIT celebration, Dr. Aflodis Kagaba, Executive Director of HDI appeared on a podcast titled “The Long Form” with Sanny Ntayombya, to discuss the impact of public perception on the well-being of the LGBTI community and the value of transforming societal attitudes.

The Podcast episode offered a valuable platform for listeners to engage in a meaningful conversation and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the LGBTI community in Rwanda.

(To access the episode, interested individuals can tune in via Apple Podcasts at: <https://apple.co/3NvfY4y> or listen on Spotify at: <https://spoti.fi/3Vkje4C>).



By commemorating IDAHOBIT and participating in these crucial discussions, HDI reaffirms its commitment to promoting equality, combating discrimination, and creating a more inclusive society for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Through continued efforts and advocacy, Rwanda can continue to progress towards a future where diversity is celebrated and the rights of every individual are protected.

STAKEHOLDERS SPEAK:

INSANGANYAMATSIKO:
ESE INKWANO YABA ARI IMBARUTSO Y'IBOHOTERWA
RISHINGIYE KU GITSIANA MU NGO?

HOST
Ago Aisha Umata

CO-HOST
Juliette Karfanyi

AGATUNZWE
Amwamiye Mubumba
Edward Karamba
Ludo Mutesi Mwandishi
Viviani Ntagari

25 GICURASI 2023 | 7PM

HDI Rwanda

17 10 30 12.9K

Havuga
@Havuga14

Ubundi umuntu wakuyeho indongoranyo agasigaho inkwano mbona haricyuho byahaye uruhande rumwe. Ikindi kibazo gikomeye kwigisha umugore wavuye iwabo igiyekubabaka ko aruburenganzira bwe gufunga no gufungura nabyo mbona bitarigishijwe neza.

Umugore mukuru w'inararibonye
@MusabyimanaY

iyk topic izihe igihe, nibyo koko abagore barahohoterwa kubera bakowe, bafatwa nkigikoresheho kigomba kubazwa abana kigacunga neza urugo. hari cases nyinshi aho umugabo abwira umugore ari icara murugo ubyare urere abana ibyuko wize ngo urajya mukazi ubyibagirwe.

HDI Rwanda @HDIRwanda · 25/05/2023
twitter.com/i/spaces/1kvJp...

1 Retweet 3 Likes

DJ Hendrix Moses uwamamaye
@DJHendrixMoses1

Ese kuko inkwano ari ishimwe ry'ababyeyi b'umukobwa, abahungu bo ntibakwiye gushimwa?

7:29 PM · 25/05/2023 from Earth · 201 Views

1 Retweet 3 Likes

Rwanda Rwejo Mayibobo
@camiloslovos

Reka mbabwire ukuri.... U Rwanda Rwejo nurwubu ntiruhura umugore wejo siwe wuyumunsi... uko bashakwa bikwiye gutandukana... inshingano yumugore niyumugabo hambere mu Rwanda zitandukanye cyane nizanone... bityo haribyinshi bikwiye gutandukana birimo ni inkwano... nibindi byinshi

8:42 PM · 25/05/2023 from Earth · 183 Views

ISHAMI Journal
@ishamijournal

This is very crucial in tackling challenges young people face around sexual and reproductive health. We are here for accurate&age appropriate **#SRH** info. Making the approach engaging will make the impact faster and sustainable.
[@aflodiskagaba](#) [@IngabireJoce](#) [@harerimana_tito](#)

HDI Rwanda @HDIRwanda · 20/05/2023
In partnership with **@UNFPARwanda** We are holding orientation meetings with teachers **@KarongiDistr** on CSE for them to:
-Transfer accurate&age appropriate SRH info
-Promote healthy attitudes&behavior towards SRH
-Raise awareness on SRH in school communities in a fun&engaging way

1:36 PM · 24/05/2023 from Earth · 202 Views

Jean de Dieu Harerimana, PhDc
@HareraJd

Jya nibaza nti Ese ikintu society idafitiye igisobanuro kuki gihuzwa n' umuco? Ese ugena inkwano ninde? Kuki? Tubajije abagabo bubatse babaye barakoye cg abujije imyaka y'u bukure bateganya kubaka family ukabaha interview (off). Ese bakishimira kuyitanga cg?

1:36 PM · 24/05/2023 from Earth · 202 Views

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
- EAFP
- 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

