



# SPOTLIGHTING MALAWI *October 2023*

## 1. LIFE CONCERN ORGANISATION



### GOVERNANCE FOR HEALTH INVESTMENT PROJECT

#### **Social Dialogue among Young People to Foster a Supportive Environment for AGYW**

Life Concern Organisation conducted a dialogue session among young people at Bumba active youth club. The dialogue was in form of a debate which was aired on Rumphu FM under the topic: **“Can HIV negative person get married to an HIV positive person?”** The choice of the topic came about to address the myths, misconceptions and stigma that some young people have towards people living with HIV (PLWH). Oftentimes, a person living with HIV is associated with prostitution or sex work, forgetting that others were born with the virus and others got infected through defilement, rape and sometimes incest. As such, it becomes difficult for young PLWH to settle down with a partner having HIV seronegative status. The debate therefore brought to light the key myths, misconceptions and fears young people have in getting married to a person living with HIV. Their most fear is contracting HIV. The adolescent girls and young women (AGYWS), being fully capacitated, cleared the myths, misconceptions and fears by focusing on the use of condoms, adherence to Antiretroviral therapy, use of pre exposure prophylaxis and post exposure prophylaxis and prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) interventions to prevent HIV transmission.



#### **Production and distribution of information education and communication materials**

The organisation also procured 45 t-shirts which have been distributed to AGYWS champions, stakeholders and project staff. The key message on the ticket is “Advocating for his error each rates of AGYWs”. These T-shirts will go a long way in amplifying the visibility of HER voice fund project in the impact area.



## 2. TOFWIRANE

With supporting from the HVF, Towwirane supported one AGYW to attend the national commemoration of the international youth day held on 17th and 18th of August 2023 in at Mzuzu stadium. The event was organized by Mzuzu district youth network supported by the Youth Technical Working Group and the National Youth Council of Malawi. This was the first time for Towwirane to support an AGYW attend such an event and it was also the first time for the AGYW to attend such an event which was presided over by the Vice president of Malawi. On the 17th of August, the AGYW was part of the young people who learnt several skills including charcoal and yoghurt making using locally available resources.

*AGYW quote “I am so inspired, I have learnt a lot of new things today which I will share with my fellow AGYW. These are locally available resources hence it will be easy for us. We will use the products in our homes and am sure some who are not going to school will be selling and making money out of it.”*

### YOUTH PROJECT EXCELLENCE BULLETIN

YPE supported 12 AGYW to mentor their peers in T/A Chitukula in Lilongwe district, Malawi. Before carrying out their mentorship session with fellow peers, YPE conducted mentorship sessions with 12 AGYW champions on Family Planning and Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in which the sessions were facilitated by two health practitioners: District YFHS Coordinator, Area 25 Health clinic Nursing officer and 1 District Youth Officer (DYO). AGYW were equipped with information about family planning services, SGBV, PEP, PreP, rolling out of injectable PreP among others. One facilitator highlighted that “there is need to start involving male champions in advocating for SRHR and HIV services for positive and sustainable change for AGYW to address challenges they face in their communities”. The 12 AGYW mentored other 40 AGYW in the area on issues related to SRH and HIV which they acquired from the sessions.

## 3. COWLHA

**Objective:** To address cultural barriers and economic factors that drive Gender equalities among AGYW by February 2024

COWLHA in partnership with Just Associates (JASS) trained a total number of 20 AGYW in “FEMINIST MOVEMENT BUILDING” (FMB). This training empowered AGYW to recognize their own leadership potential, capacity to make change in their communities and they understood how power operates in their lives. Issues concerning knowing and owning one’s body, gender and sexuality were discussed opening the eyes of AGYW that they lack power over their own bodies.

The 20 AGYW appreciated the power that the patriarchal system has over women and girls thus giving them less liberty in all the spheres of life and making them subject to culture and traditional beliefs that have been worsened

by education, religion, health, family and media systems. AGYW understood how gender roles and their biological make up makes them vulnerable to HIV infection. From this understanding, lessons were provided on benefits of having an understanding of treatment by examining how the body works in order to reduce the risk of HIV infection, the importance of neutralizing the patriarchal system so to reduce gender-based violence.

#### **Best practices**

- Interface meetings with stakeholder and caregivers strengthened the project and allowed the project to identify gaps which are to be responded to.
- The meeting also brought together different stakeholders who signed the Memorandum of Understanding(MOU)

## **4. YWCA**

The Mtenje Youth Network Community Based Distribution Agents (CBDAs) which were capacitated by HVF in July received a refresher training session focused on peer counselling and referrals.

Furthermore, venturing on the current election processes of Village Development Committees (VDCs) in the country, YWCA has supported the network to identify 5 eligible youth candidates to participate in the VDC elections. The candidates are being supported to gain the necessary visibility amongst opinion leaders within their communities, and the network will ensure that youth members are adequately mobilised to provide the relevant support for the election of their peers into the community based decision-making structures