



MANERELA+

The CQUIN Learning Network

The Science & Practice of Scale Up

Mobilizing the Faith Community to Build Demand for DSD and HIV Testing Services in Malawi

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MANERELA+ Background

- Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV/ AIDS (MANERELA+) is a faith-based NGO established in 2004 and registered with the Malawi Government in 2010.
- The organization was established to advocate for HIV/AIDS policy and systems; to increase prevention, counseling and testing, care, treatment and support; to end stigma and discrimination based on HIV status; and to address other related issues.
- The faith community in Malawi comprises over 90% of the total population. MANERELA+ mobilizes the faith community through direct engagement of individual faith leaders from both Christian and Muslim communities.
- MANERELA+ believes that interventions that actively involve individual faith leaders are far reaching, sustainable, and impactful since faith leaders influence public opinion.
- The organization has over 6000 members across the country.



MANERELA Strategic Focus and Projects

Strategic Focus

- HIV, TB and Malaria
- Gender and Human Rights
- Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex

Projects

- Our Bodies Our Lives campaign (Comic Relief)
- Demand creation for DSD and RVLT (ITPC)
- SRHR-HIV Knows no Border (Save the Children, Swedish Government)
- Creation of LGBTI tolerant faith communities (OSISA and Arcus)
- Investing for the impact of HIV and TB (Global Fund through Action Aid)
- Mobilizing faith leaders as champions of PMTCT in Dedza district (IMA Worldhealth)
- Addressing effects of faith healing (ARASA)



Example #1: Demand Creation for DSD

- MANERELA+ received a grant from ITPC to implement demand creation for DSD and RVLT in Kasungu district
- The guidelines then did not include other DSD models; the organization joined other stakeholders to work on policy brief and revision of the guidelines
- The revised guidelines have just been adopted by MoH and this provides an opportunity for DSD demand creation



2018 Clinical Management of HIV in Children and Adults Guidelines

The goals of HTC program include:

- Identify as many HIV-infected people as possible
- Identifying HIV-infected people as early as possible
- Enrolling HIV-infected people into pre-ART care as soon as possible



DSD Models in the Guidelines

Facility-based DSD ART models

- 3-monthly refills (multi-month scripting)
- Facility-based fast track system for ART refills
- Male friendly services
- Teen clubs

Community-based DSD models

- Community ART groups
- Nurse-led community ART program



Demand Creation for DSD

- The project has been introduced to the District Executive Committee
- Health workers in the district have been oriented on DSD and RVLT
- The project has started mobilizing Faith leaders and PLHIV for DSD and RVLT demand creation



Example #2: Championing PMTCT in Dedza District

- Focused on four health facilities: Mua, Mtakataka, Mtendere, Lobi
- Goal was to increase HIV testing in ANC and maternity, EID and linkage to ART
- Community-based activities included:
 - ✓ Awareness campaigns
 - ✓ Couples counseling and symposiums
 - ✓ Youth forums
 - ✓ Mothers group meetings
 - ✓ Male champion meetings
 - ✓ Church sermons
- Reached more than 11,300 people between June – November 2017



Engaging Faith Leaders as PMTCT Champions

Activities:

- Training workshops with faith leaders
- Development and distribution of IEC materials
- Apart from disseminating PMTCT messages during sermons, faith leaders conducted couple counseling and referred couples to service providers
- The increased awareness led to increased demand for PMTCT services



Lessons Learned

- Religious leaders can be agents of change
- Outreach testing in places of worship should be encouraged as an opportunity of reaching out to men and adolescents



General challenges faced by faith community

- The long distances to health facilities negatively affect access to HIV and AIDS related services
- Delayed RVLT results
- Faith healing
- Un regulated print and electronic media on HIV and AIDS advertisement