



VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS; COUNTY MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE FORUM

Kwale County: 26 January 2017

Concept note

1.0 Introduction and background

HIV & AIDS continues to have devastating effects on peoples' lives. At the end of 2013 for instance, there were 35 million people living with HIV globally. This number is rising as more people are living longer because of antiretroviral therapy (ART), alongside the number of new HIV infections. The Kwale HIV and AIDS epidemic further exhibits both characteristics of generalized and concentrated epidemic trend, with Key Populations (KPs) leading in acquisition and transmission of HIV along the coastal strip. Unfortunately, the general contextual analysis of the HIV response in Kenya reveals that rapid progress to prevent spread of new HIV infections continues to be impeded by social conservatism, a lack of support for evidence-based programming, and mostly violence against key and affected population.

Most damaging is that laws that are not grounded on human rights principles create social inequalities and exacerbate human rights violations against vulnerable groups. For example, laws that criminalize the actions or behaviors of key populations have fueled stigma, discrimination and violence against MSMs, sex workers, transgender and persons who inject drugs (PWIDs). Violence is both a cause and effect of HIV transmission. In particular, sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) meted on key population expose these populations to increased risk of contracting HIV due to the fear of accessing health services or HIV prevention services. These consequently constrain sex worker's ability to negotiate condom use and prevent the roll-out and rigorous assessment of HIV interventions. Further, legal prohibitions on the provision of sterile needles and syringes directly impede HIV prevention efforts amongst PWIDs. Also, the punitive use of certain laws such as the Public Health Act of the year 2012 and

municipal environmental edicts exposes these vulnerable populations to further human rights violations.

2.0 Justification

From the above, it is clear that there is need for the review of punitive laws and sensitization of service providers, law makers and enforcers to ensure that key populations have access to health services and are protected from human rights violations. Enforcement of negating laws increases the populations' vulnerability to HIV. Further, key populations avoid accessing HIV care and treatment services when healthcare workers treat them with contempt, most cases out of ignorance. Conversely, a reduction in violence against key population will greatly reduce the rate of new infections amongst them. The incorporation of right based approaches to health service delivery by health care workers will also ensure timely and quality services to key populations.

In the light of this, Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV/AIDS (KELIN) in partnership with PITCH (Partnership to Inspire, Transform and Connect the HIV response) seek to conduct a one day county multi-stakeholder dialogue forum on violence prevention, HIV and Human rights for law enforcement officers, religious leaders, legislators, health care workers, public prosecutors and the judiciary as key stakeholders in Kwale County. The forum will be premised on the crucial role that the key stakeholders play to support prevention of violence and access to healthcare services for the Key population.

3.0 Objectives

The key objectives of this meeting include:

- To enhance understanding of the linkages between violence prevention, HIV and human rights.
- To increase support for key populations' access to justice in the context of HIV.
- To foster collaboration among key stakeholders and key populations in promoting violence prevention and access to health for the key population.

4.0 Expected output

- Collaboration among key stakeholders in promoting violence prevention and access to health for key populations.

- Development of an action plan by the participants to follow up on the recommendations made at the forum.

5.0 Methodology

The forum will involve oral presentations from experts, panel discussions, group discussions and question and answer session among the participants.

6.0 Participants

A total of 40 participants are expected to take part in this forum. They will include: law enforcement officers, legislators, religious leaders, the judiciary and civil society organizations.

7.0 Date and Venue

The one day forum will be held on **26 January, 2016** at the **Kaskazi beach hotel**, Kwale county