

JONEHA

NEWSLETTER



2024 JONEHA AGM REPORTS PROGRAMMATIC PROGRESS

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The achievement of these projects were noteworthy...

••• Editorial

Welcome to the 4th Quarter edition of JONEHA Newsletter in 2024. Seasonal greetings.

As we reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025; we take a moment to thank you our valued readers for being with us throughout the year. We continue banking on your supportive readership for continued production of the Newsletter.

Indeed; we echo the JONEHA Board report to the Annual General Meeting which reflected institutional progress, challenges and recommendations moving forward. As an institution we value celebrating our gains without taking our eyes off the challenges that hold us back. It is in this spirit that we count 2024 as a year of success given our ability to accomplish what we had set out to do.

Our entry point is always the commitment we make to communities that inform what we do and stakeholders that support the cause. It's from here that we take social accountability seriously to ensure improved quality of health service delivery. Evidence based advocacy through Community Led Monitoring and application of media products remain the bedrock of our work. Advocacy is about numbers and it is noteworthy for our organization to report a 79% member increase across all member categories. We celebrate this as an impact of effective implementation of the drug stock out campaign, rapid assessment of the Master Supply Chain Transformation Plan which is a ministry of Health blue print for managing the chain supply. The impact has been achieved with support from the COMPASS Africa Initiative, Citizen Science Community Led Monitoring and the United for Prevention agenda to promote domestic resource mobilization.

While celebrating progress; we are mindful of the challenges like resource constraint, delayed disbursement of funds by some donors and delayed feedback from key national stakeholders. We draw strength from these to re-plan and re-engage. We are re-energized by the knowledge of our donor confidence to continue funding us in 2025 based on an unqualified audit report shared during the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

We move on therefore with renewed hope and tenacity. We owe it to you!



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2024 JONEHA AGM REPORTS PROGRAMMATIC PROGRESS

By Joseph Ganthu



JONEHA Members posing for a picture after AGM

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA), Rhoda Zulu, a member of the Programs Committee of the Board of Directors, provided a comprehensive overview of the organization's recent projects' achievements, challenges, and recommendations. During the year under review Zulu reported that JONEHA successfully implemented three valuable projects: the Compass Africa Initiative Campaign, the Citizen Science-Community-Led Monitoring and Advocacy (CS-CLMA), and the United for Prevention (U4P). She pointed out that these initiatives were primarily aimed at addressing critical issues such as reducing essential drug stock-outs, promoting social accountability towards improving the quality of health service delivery and promoting domestic health financing. The achievements of these projects were noteworthy. The Compass Africa Initiative Campaign contributed to dissemination of the 2019 Pharmacy Medicines Regulatory Authority Act (PMRA 2019) to national key stakeholders including magistrates and police officers and conducted a rapid assessment of the Master

Supply Chain Transformation Plan; a ministry of Health blue print for managing the chain supply. The CS-CLMA project produced and disseminated various media products including radio magazine editions and newsletters, while also training media practitioners in effective development communication focused on putting beneficiaries at the centre of interventions through community empowerment for holding duty bearers accountable. The U4P initiative resulted in leading the development and launch of Domestic Health Financing Advocacy Plan (DHFAP) and a position paper; a Civil Society guide for facilitating engagement with key national stakeholders in health financing. Zulu however observed that despite these accomplishments, JONEHA encountered several challenges that constrained implementation. These included late disbursement of funds from some donors, rising inflation leading to increased project implementation costs and slow feedback from stakeholders thereby affecting project timelines.

RISING PHARMACEUTICAL CRIMES ATTRACT PROMOTING USE OF THE NEW LAW FOR DETERRENCE

By Starphel Sithole

The Chief Medicines Analyst for Pharmacy Medicines and Regulatory Authority (PMRA) Steven Chapima explained that the authority repealed the 1988 Pharmacy, Medicines and Poisons Board (PMPB) Act by replacing it with the 2019 PMRA Act to provide necessary reform that would effectively prevent and respond to pharmaceutical crimes such as theft of medicines, illegal possession of medicines and trafficking of falsified and substandard medicines.

Chapima made the remarks at a two day workshop held from 3rd to 4th October 2024 at Chikho Hotel in Dowa District. The workshop organized by the PMRA brought together 23 magistrates from the Central Region as part of the PMRA ongoing regional workshops targeting law enforcers to appreciate the new Act.

“Although the PMRA has embarked on public awareness campaigns on the dangers of trusting medicines from unregulated outlets, criminal prosecution path still remains the main solution,” he said adding that the situation has prompted the need for workshops for law enforcers.

The Chief Medicines Analyst explained that medicines stolen or illicitly trafficked are usually transported without regard to review requirements. This practice affects medicines quality which leads to poor treatment outcomes.

He bemoaned theft of medicines from health facilities pointing out that the behavior is depriving deserving patients access to medicine, the right to good health. He therefore warned that the public health impact of the aforementioned activities should not be underestimated.

Chapima explained that the 2019 PMRA Act was designed to address the regulatory problems encountered with the use of the old Act.

This is an effort to introduce deterrent sentences to protect the integrity of public health. Drug theft and pilferage is considered as one of the contributing factors to persistent drug shortages in Malawian



Steven Chapima

health facilities. In order to curb the vice, the Director of Health Technical Support Services in the Ministry of Health Godfrey Kadewere suggests imprisonment as punishment without giving any option could be the most effective deterrent.

Kadewere made the sentiments at a day long stake holders follow up meeting on drug stock out held on 25th February, 2022 in Salima. The Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) convened the meeting that brought together representatives from the PMRA, Central Medical Stores Trust, the Anti-Corruption Bureau and Criminal Investigation Department of the Malawi Police Service.

He further said, when one is found guilty; the judges should not be looking at what has been stolen or its value but lives inconvenienced or lost. So, the culprit must be penalized financially but imprisonment should be a must. While appreciating efforts made towards the fight against drug theft and pilferage; Kadewere however said the Act being used is outdated hence the need to replace it with the 2019 PMRA Act. However he expressed his astonishment that the judiciary did not seem aware of the 2019 PMRA Act.

CCGs COLLABORATING WITH HIV IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

By Grace Limba

The collaborative framework established by the Citizen Science Community-Led Monitoring and Advocacy (CS-CLMA) project has transformed the landscape of HIV response efforts by facilitating greater interaction among implementing partners and stakeholders.

Central to this initiative are the Community Consultative Groups (CCGs) established in Kasungu and Dedza districts, which serve as key platforms for discussion, coordination, and collective action on HIV-related interventions; says the chairperson for Kasungu CCG Hannock Msokera. Msokera was speaking during the CCG meeting held at Thope lodge in mponela on 10th May 2024

Implemented by the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA) in collaboration with the Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA), this project seeks to address HIV challenges through a multifaceted approach that includes advocacy, education and support. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC), the initiative has proven to be transformative.

The CCGs provide a structured platform where various stakeholders—including government representatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, and affected populations—can meet to address various challenges posed by HIV.

By encouraging inclusive and participatory decision-making, the CCGs have fostered a sense of ownership among community members, enabling them to engage actively in the formulation and implementation of strategies tailored to their unique need.

Moreover, the CCGs facilitate the sharing of information, resources, and best practices among implementing partners. This enhanced communication channel not only mitigates duplication of efforts but also promotes synergy in program delivery.

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CCGs collaborating with HIV implementing partners

“As a result, the impact of the diverse initiatives undertaken collectively by various organizations is amplified, resulting in more effective and sustainable outcomes in the fight against HIV,” says the CCG chairperson

Additionally, the collaborative nature of the CCGs strengthens advocacy efforts by uniting voices across communities. This collective advocacy enhances visibility and influence, ensuring that the needs and concerns of those affected by HIV are adequately heard and addressed at policy-making levels.

Msokera says “Such engagement is crucial in

shaping responsive and equitable health policies that prioritize needs of the most vulnerable populations,” He adds that through the establishment of the CCGs, CS-CLMA has significantly improved collaboration among HIV implementing partners and stakeholders. By fostering inclusive dialogue, facilitating resource sharing, and strengthening advocacy efforts, the CCG plays an indispensable role in enhancing the effectiveness of HIV interventions.

The CCG chairperson states that beyond addressing immediate challenges the collaborative approach also lays the foundation for a more resilient and responsive health system in the long term.

PMRA FINDS IT HARD TO ARREST CROSS-BORDER VENDORS

By Patrick Albert

The Pharmacy Medicines and Regulatory Authority (PMRA) in its fight against unregulated medicines and devices is facing difficulties in arresting vendors who are selling drugs stolen from the Malawi Government hospitals just a step across the Mozambique borderline at Lizulu open market in Ntcheu District.

In its efforts to combat drug theft and pilferage in public health facilities, the Malawi Government repealed the Pharmacy Medicines and Poisons Board (1988 PMPB Act) and replaced it with a 2019 PMRA Act which contains stiffer penalties as a deterrent.

The Medicine Inspection Officer for the PMRA Joseph Chimerang’ambe reported that the authority has a cleaning exercise in which vendors with their illegally possessed drugs largely stolen from government hospitals are successfully nabbed and taken to court to answer charges relevant to their offenses. He however bemoaned that their arms are always limited at cross-border markets like Lizulu where the illegal market is set just a step inside

Mozambique.

Chimerang’ambe made the revelation at a two-day PMRA-organized orientation workshop for 23 magistrates drawn from the Central Region of Malawi in October 2024 at Chikho Hotel in Dowa District. It was observed that the new Act has been underutilized by both magistrates and police officers despite being introduced five years ago as noted by lenient sentences pronounced from several courts.

“It pains when you see drugs clearly identified as property of the Malawi Government but we cannot arrest them and take further action in addition to knowing they can quickly kill us,” explained Chimerang’ambe that the situation on the borders will remain the same unless there is a joint operation between Malawi and Mozambique police officers.

It is reported that the country’s old pharmaceutical act, established in 1988, had significant limitations. It lacked provisions to regulate medical devices and herbal medicines and penalties for the malpractice were lenient.

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“Additionally, a lack of own essential documentation equipment, such as still and video cameras further challenged project execution,” she added.

In light of these challenges, Zulu speaking on behalf of the Board of Directors put forth several recommendations aimed at enhancing JONEHA’s operational efficiency. First, diversifying funding sources for sustainability. Second, engaging with donors for timely disbursement of funds to mitigate delays in project implementation. Lastly, planning for acquisition of documentation equipment is essential to improve the organization’s capacity in effective media production.

Programmatic progress highly impacted on increasing membership growth of over 79% as reported by the Finance and Administration Committee of the Board through Dr. Benson Tembo. On his part Tembo further reported about a successful audit report for the previous year which resulted in donor confidence in 2024 to continue supporting the organisation in 2025.



JONEHA BOARD MEMBERS

IDENTIFYING AND BRIDGING THE PrEP KNOWLEDGE GAP AMONG HEALTH CARE WORKERS

By Christer Kalukuska

The challenges of reducing new infections in Malawi necessitates effective preventive measures such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). However, a significant knowledge gap regarding PrEP has been identified among healthcare workers (HCWs) in Malawi evident by the number of facilities that offer PrEP, a case of Kasungu where 2 facilities are offering the services out of 48 facilities.

In response, the Citizen Science Community Led Monitoring and Advocacy (CS-CLMA) project initiated in-depth, one-on-one interviews to ascertain the level of understanding of PrEP among HCWs. The responses revealed considerable deficiencies in their knowledge, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive training sessions.

To address this critical gap, the CS-CLMA implemented a capacity-building initiative targeting key personnel within healthcare facilities, specifically focusing on the facility-in-charge, ART-focused staff, community members and additional healthcare workers in 8 facilities in Kasungu and 6 facilities in Dedza district.

The project operates in selected health centres such as Tsoyo, Mayani, Kaphuka, Lobi, the Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), and Dedza District Hospital, Kasalika, Kaluluma, FPAM, Mnyanja, Chamwavi, K2 Taso and Kasungu district Hospital. Spearheaded by the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA)

in collaboration with the Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA), this initiative is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC).

The overarching goal of this training was not merely to certify providers but to empower them with accurate information, enabling them to disseminate knowledge effectively within their communities.

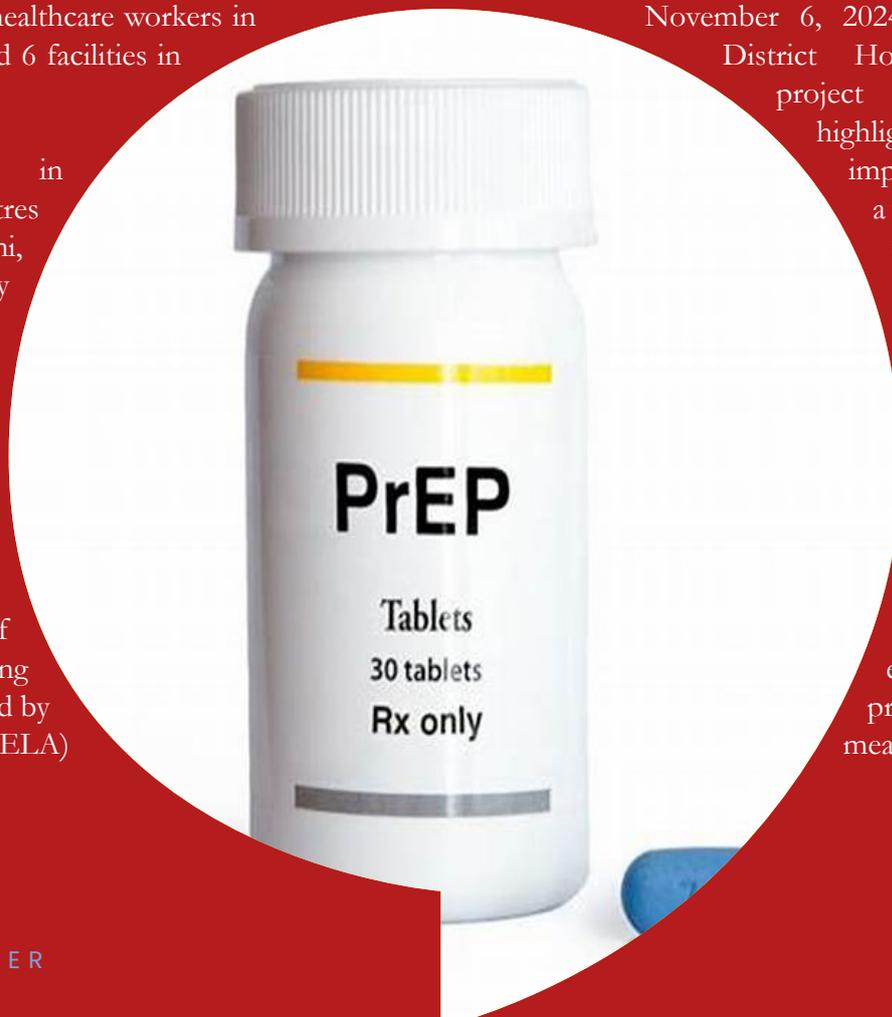
Project Officer Yankho Banda noted that the orientation resulted in a marked increase in the demand for PrEP services: 1st quarter of 2024 registered 488 individuals accessing PrEP unlike the previous quarters, as trained HCWs began to communicate vital information that enhanced community awareness.

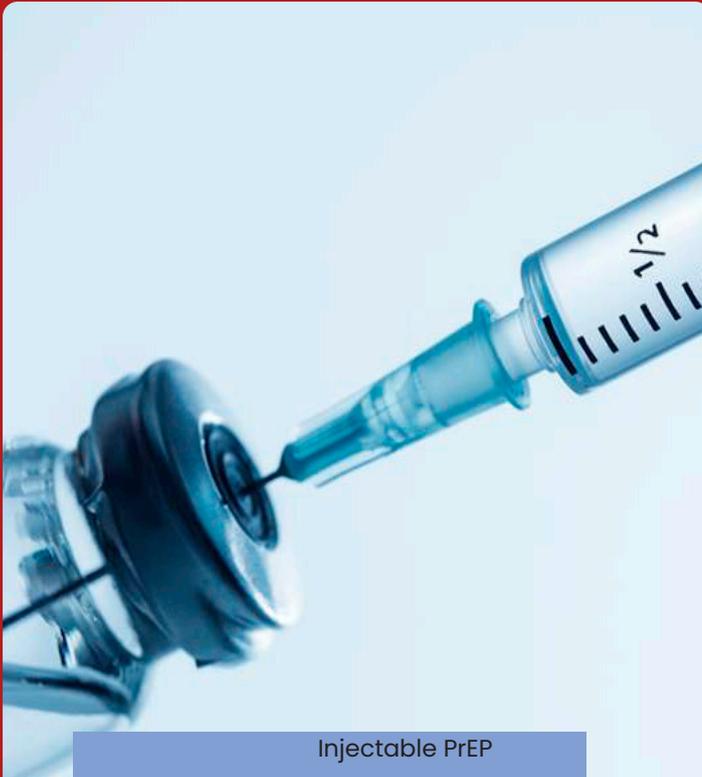
The impact of bridging this knowledge gap was evident during an engagement meeting with the District Health Management Team (DHMT) on

November 6, 2024, at Dedza District Hospital. The

project officer highlighted that improved PrEP awareness among HCWs has led to increased

community demand and enhanced preventive care measures.





Injectable PrEP

Despite the introduction of oral PrEP in Malawi in 2018, analysis of the 2020 Malawi Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (MPHIA) indicated low prior knowledge and use of PrEP, though interest in its utilization remained high. The data suggested that high-risk sexual behavior correlates with a willingness to adopt PrEP, underscoring the necessity for strategies aimed at increasing awareness and facilitating universal access to this critical preventive intervention.

By empowering HCWs with accurate knowledge, the project contributes to a broader public health initiative aimed at reducing HIV transmission rates in Malawi. The proactive stance taken in addressing these educational gaps not only equips HCWs but also supports the overall goal of combating the HIV epidemic by reducing new infections.

Feedback from community members, including a sex worker, further emphasized the critical role HCWs play in promoting the adoption of PrEP and thereby reducing HIV transmission.

The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates for PrEP as a vital preventive measure for populations at substantial risk of HIV infection, asserting that understanding PrEP awareness and interest is essential for the development of effective PrEP programs.



Oral PrEP

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PMRA finds it hard to arrest cross-border vendors

Therefore the 2019 PMRA Act addresses these gaps with stringent standards aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

While the Malawi government is striving to ensure

quality control, dishonest vendors continue bypassing authorities thereby putting citizens' health at risk. It has been observed that smuggling via uncharted routes has brought in unregistered, low-quality products.



Joseph Chimerang'ambe-Medicine
Inspection Officer

AMA PRESIDENT URGES MAGISTRATES TO KEEP THEMSELVES UPDATED ON NEW LAWS

By Alinafe Kaphaizi

President of the Association of Magistrates in Malawi (AMA), Kondwani Chinangwa, emphasized the importance of magistrates staying updated on new laws and amendments during a recent training workshop. The event, attended by 23 magistrates from the Central Region, aimed to enhance their knowledge on pharmaceutical laws from 3rd to 4th October 2024 at Chikho hotel.

Chinangwa expressed gratitude to Justice Violet Palikena Chipao, Chairperson of the Judiciary Training Committee, and Chief Justice for supporting the training initiative. He also acknowledged the Pharmacy and Medicine Regulations Authority (PMRA) for sponsoring the workshop.

The AMA President stressed that magistrates play a crucial role in upholding justice, particularly in cases involving drug theft, which denies citizens their good health and right to life. He encouraged participants to apply the knowledge gained from the workshop in their daily duties.

In their workshop evaluation reports among other key points the participants appreciated the importance of staying updated explaining that as magistrates they must always be well informed about new laws and amendments. They said the workshop has ignited a clear understanding the laws that regulate medicines and pharmaceutical products.

“We have also learnt the law on the human rights aspect where it is violated through drug theft which is a malpractice that denies citizens their good health and right to life ,” said one of the participants adding that they have also appreciated the passing of sentences that deter would-be offenders and protect public health.

Chinangwa concluded by urging participants to utilize the knowledge gained and ensure that their judgments reflect the seriousness of violating pharmaceutical laws. He said by doing so, they will contribute to safeguarding the lives of Malawians and upholding justice in the country.

Visits to magistrate courts and police stations in Mulanje, Machinga and Mangochi districts on 19th, 20th and 21st September 2023 respectively by the Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through PZAT under the COMPASS Africa Initiative to assess the use of the 2019 PMRA Act revealed that the majority of the law enforcers had no knowledge of the new legislation.

They admitted of having comfortably and innocently kept on applying the repealed 1988 Pharmacy, Medicines and Poisons Board (PMPB) Act.



Kondwani Chinangwa-President of the Association of Magistrates

K2 TASO FIGHTS A LITANY OF HIV RELATED STIGMA IN SCHOOLS

By Maggie Chisi

In responding to the findings of the Citizen Science Community Led Monitoring and Advocacy (CS-CLMA) project; K2 Tigwiranemanja AIDS Support Organisation popularly known as K2 TASO has successfully assisted in reduction of a litany of stigma and discrimination experiences among adolescents living with HIV in primary and secondary schools.

From 2021 the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders living with or affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA) in collaboration with the Network Of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) have been implementing the CS-CLMA project with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC). The project being implemented in Kasungu and Dedza empowers recipients of care in leading advocacy for improved quality of services in health facilities.

The CS-CLMA identified many forms of stigma and discrimination that had rooted in schools. This poses a potential barrier for accessing antiretroviral medicine among the population group in this location. It further threatens the future

of the country. A 2022 study called stigma and mental health challenges among adolescents living with HIV in Zomba found out that youths and adolescents aged 10-24 account for about 50% of new HIV infections.

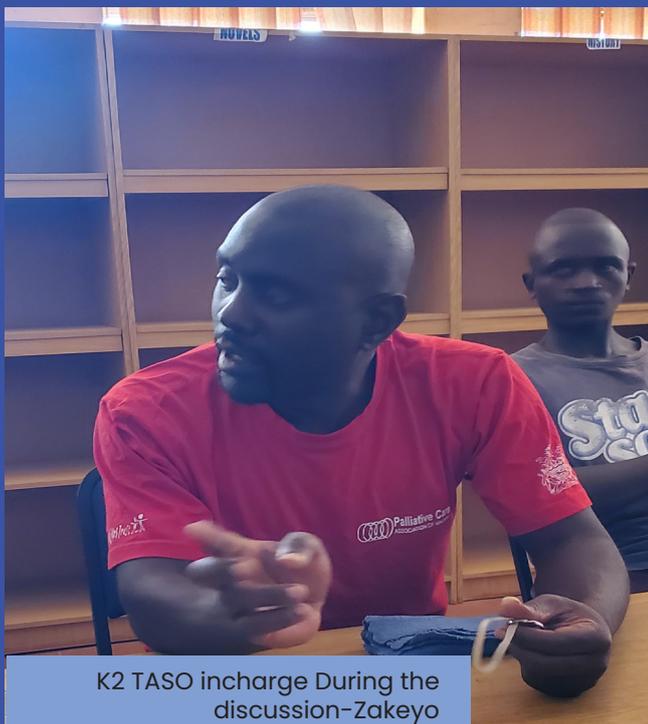
Bullying, name calling, exclusion from activities, teachers' laxity by leniently punishing naughty learners among several acts of violence were reported as part of life that traumatized adolescents living with HIV.

After thoroughly analyzing the data gathered by CS-CLMA the K2 TASO and partners organized meetings that brought together parents representatives, head teachers, Area Development Committee (ADC), Village development Committees (VDCs) and religious leaders to come up with solutions for various schools in the district.

Participants to the meetings went through the 2018 HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management Act from which they learnt some of the stiffer penalties contained in the Act. For instance, an offender of PART IV on discrimination in relation to HIV and AIDS which states that a person who discriminates contrary to subsection (1) commits an offence liable upon conviction to a fine of K5 million; in the case of an individual a five year imprisonment but for a legal person the fine goes up to K10 million.

They also learnt that the Act further states that a person who discloses the HIV status of another person commits an offence that shall be liable upon conviction to fine of K5 million or 5 years imprisonment in the case of an individual but for a legal person it amounts to K10 million.

After the meetings held at the schools around the K2 TASO the information shared was taken to respective communities such as schools, villages, families and religious institutions. The sharing of the information about the tough 2018 HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management Act has been a game changer resulting in a decline in stigma and discrimination in the schools.



K2 TASO incharge During the discussion-Zakeyo

MAGISTRATES URGED TO EFFECTIVELY APPLY PHARMACEUTICAL LAWS

By John Folena

In a bid to promote public health and safety the High Court judge who is also Chairperson of the Judiciary Training Committee Justice Violet Palikena Chipao urged magistrates to effectively pass sentences on violations of the 2019 Pharmacy Medicines Regulatory Authority (PMRA) Act which has replaced the repealed 1988 Pharmacy, Medicines and Poisons Board (PMPB) Act.

Justice Chipao expressed these sentiments at Chikho Hotel in Dowa District, where she officially opened a two-day workshop for 23 magistrates drawn from the Central Region of Malawi from 3rd to 4th October, 2024. Unlike the old Act which had soft sentences, the new Act has stiff penalties to deter would-be offenders.

“If sentences are not deterrent enough, the law loses its value, as individuals who weigh the potential of the courts of crime against the benefits of crime before deciding to engage in a criminal activity find it more beneficial to engage in a criminal activity,” bemoaned Justice Chipao.

A series of meetings with police officers and magistrates organised by the Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) in Mulanje, Machinga and Mangochi, held respectively on September 19, 20, and 21, 2023 revealed that most law enforcers were not aware of the new Act. They were still using the repealed 1988 PMPB Act with its lenient sentences. The meetings organized by JONEHA were funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through PZAT under the COMPASS Africa Initiative to assess the use of the 2019 PMRA Act.

The high court judge observed that though the sentences in the new Act appear to be severe so far, decisions and penalties from the courts still do not have the necessary deterrent effect to curb misconduct. She once again reminded the magistrates that criminal law must end at deterring individuals from engaging in criminal activities when enforcing penalties.

“This is crucial because your judgments or sentences set precedents and send strong messages about the seriousness with which we treat violations of this law,” said Justice Chipao pointing out that the government must take a significant step towards enhancing a collective understanding and enforcement of the laws and regulations that affect the pharmaceutical sector in the country.

She observed that the Act gives a cornerstone to the country’s health system that has been designed to ensure the safety, efficacy and quality of medicines made available to the public. She added that the magistrates’ role is very crucial in interpreting and enforcing the law.

The regional

workshops by the PMRA were organised to provide a learning course on offences under the Act and provide a platform where wide range of issues could be



Justice Violet Palikena Chipao

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LAW ENFORCERS EXPRESS IGNORANCE OF THE 2018 HIV AND AIDS ACT

By Shuppe Jamasi

While the 2018 HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Management) Act aims at addressing gaps in existing legislation to provide comprehensive prevention and management of HIV and AIDS in Malawi; its implementation is not yet in full swing as most of the law enforcers mainly police officers and magistrates are still not aware of it.

The HIV Prevention and Management Officer for the National AIDS Commission (NAC) Ellious Chasukwa alluded to an assessment conducted by the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) on the implementation of this legislation and observed that most of the juniors are not aware of this Act.

Chasukwa shared the findings at a two-day workshop for 23 magistrates drawn from the Central Region of the country in October 2024. To confirm the MHRC assessment results Mr. Chasukwa asked the participants to raise their hands if they had some knowledge regarding the legislation. Almost 80% of them did not raise their hands.

He said though dissemination and sensitization activities of the Act started sometime back; there is still a backlog of work because not many have been reached with the document adding that the exercise is still going on. The NAC Officer expressed an urgent need for dissemination of the Act to law enforcers to ensure effective implementation of the legislation.



Ellious Chasukwa

Random interviews with ordinary citizens expressed fears that a magistrate or a police prosecutor who is not conversant with the law can easily misapply it in the case of a magistrate and on the part of a prosecutor he or she can easily lose a case thereby creating a conducive environment for perpetrators of violations of human rights.

It is a known fact that if the law enforcers are not oriented in the new Act its key provisions like criminalization of harmful practices, prohibition of discrimination, prohibition of disclosure of HIV status and expansive public health provisions can easily be overlooked.

The Balaka magistrate court on 11th March 2024 ordered a certain man to pay a woman a total sum of MK65 thousand as a punishment for disclosing her HIV status without her consent. On the unlawful disclosure, the Act stipulates that if a person

who discloses the HIV status of another person otherwise than provided for under this Act commits an offense. He or she shall be liable upon conviction like in the case of an individual, a fine of MK5 million and upon conviction imprisonment for 5 years and a legal person a fine of MK10 million.

'Almost 80% of them did not raise their hands'....

LAW ENFORCERS EXPRESS IGNORANCE OF THE 2018 HIV and AIDS ACT

In a related development on 13th March 2024, the Mangochi magistrate court ordered two women to pay MK2.4 million each for violating the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management Act and the Pharmacy and Medicines Regulatory Authority (PMRA) Act. The convicts were advertising a false product claimed to be a vaccine for HIV called Gamora via a TikTok video.

On 13th June 2024 the Mwanza magistrate court sentenced a man to 15 months in imprisonment for advertising a fake HIV cure in the name of Gamora tablets. On publication of misleading information, the legislation dictates that a person who proclaims, utters, publishes misleading, false or inaccurate information concerning HIV and AIDS to any other person or the public commits an offense that is liable upon conviction to a fine of MK5 million and imprisonment for 5 years and while in the case of a legal person it attracts a fine of MK10 million.

There have been situations of a law enforcer having

little or no knowledge about the PMRA Act 2019 or the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management Act. The case of a University of Malawi (UNIMA) student comes to mind. The student was arrested for selling fake HIV treatment called Gamora. The student's legal representatives argued that the state "failed in all the charges to prove that the drugs tendered in court was indeed Gamora and that the said drug does not cure HIV and AIDS", arguing further that "while the court is well versed in the law, it lacked sufficient knowledge and expertise to determine whether the drug cures HIV and AIDS"

The suspect's lawyers also challenged the authenticity of the screenshots presented as evidence, stating that "the state flouted procedural laws on documentary evidence, hence further undermining the credibility of the evidence. As a result the Zomba magistrate court in the first week of September 2024 ruled that the prosecution had failed to provide sufficient evidence to support the claims, leading to the suspect's full acquittal.

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《《 MAGISTRATES URGED TO EFFECTIVELY APPLY PHARMACEUTICAL LAWS

discussed such as risks associated with the handling of illegal drugs by the public and the difficulties that magistrates and courts encounter while handling drug-related matters.

Chipao expressed gratitude to the PMRA and the Association of Magistrates in Malawi (AMA) for organizing the workshop pointing out that continuous learning is crucial for an effective and efficient judicial system.

“If sentences are not deterrent enough, the law loses its value....



Participants after the PMRA meeting

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About Us

The registered trustees of Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) is a media Non- governmental organization created by Malawian journalists to participate effectively in the national HIV and AIDS response by addressing individual and professional needs.

This is a result of an earlier PANOS Southern Africa observation that while the media was communicating HIV and AIDS interventions, it needed more targeting in HIV and AIDS rather than just being used as agents of information.

VISION

Effective media advocate for quality health service delivery.

MISSION

Coordinate media practitioners for responsive health reporting and documentation.

BOARD MEMBERS

Chairperson

Mr. David Mhango

Vice Chairperson

Dr. Benson Tembo

Members

Mr. George Jobe

Mrs. Rhoda Zulu

Mr. Nickson Ngwira

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote the uptake of services such as HIV Testing Services (HTS), COVID 19 Prevention and Testing, Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT) and Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) among media practitioners and their audiences
2. Harness the power of media in the National HIV and AIDS and related conditions response.
3. Increase risk perception to HIV infection among media practitioners and their audiences.
4. Reduce stigma and discrimination due to HIV and AIDS and related conditions among media practitioners and their audiences
5. Engage media practitioners in HIV and AIDS and related conditions communication for media practitioners and their audiences.
6. Identify critical needs of media practitioners and their audiences living with HIV and related conditions at personal and professional levels.
7. Involve media practitioners and their audiences living with HIV and related conditions in HIV and related conditions research.

VALUES STATEMENT

- i. Respect: We treat all people with dignity and respect.
- ii. Stewardship: We honour our heritage by being socially, financially and environmentally responsible.
- iii. Ethics: We strive to meet the highest ethical standards
- iv. Learning: We challenge each other to strive for excellence and to continually learn.
- v. Innovation: We embrace continuous improvement, bold creativity and change.