

# The International Community of women living with HIV Eastern Africa

## **ANNUALREPORT**

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## Overview and Background

The International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) is a registered regional advocacy network and membership based organisation. It is part of the Global ICW network and founded in 2005.

ICWEA exists to give visibility to women living with HIV and believes that gender inequalities and the limited access to sexual & reproductive health & rights for women are at the heart of the HIV epidemic. Our advocacy is based on evidence of our daily lived experiences and we use participatory processes to address the priorities of women living with HIV, including young women. Currently ICWEA's operations are in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi with hopes of extended programmes to other Eastern Africa countries.

## Vision

**Our vision is a world where all Women Living with HIV:**

- Have a **respected and meaningful involvement** at all political levels; local, national, regional, and international, where decisions that affect our lives are being made;
- Have full **access to care and treatment services**; and
- Enjoy **full rights** particularly; sexual, reproductive, legal, financial and general health rights; irrespective of our culture, age, religion, sexuality, social or economic status/class and race.

## Mission

A regional network, run for and by women living with HIV that promotes all our *voices* and *advocates* for changes that improve our lives

## Core values

- Self-determination,
- Mutual Respect, Honesty, Integrity and Confidentiality
- Commitment to advocacy,
- Accountability,
- Self-determination.

In order to promote the voices of women living with HIV, striving for changes that can improve the lives of women living with HIV, ICWEA has made a tremendous contribution towards advocacy, research, mobilization on key advocacy themes in Eastern Africa: access to HIV & TB care, treatment and support (ACTS) including prevention, as well as Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR), Violence Against Women (VAW) and meaningful involvement of women living with HIV (GIPA/MIWA) promoting gender equality.

The 2013- 2014 Annual Report reflects the key milestones made during the year and the objectives of:-

- Institutional Capacity and Organizational Development
- Capacity Building of members and Membership networks
- Communication, Mobilization and Awareness Rising
  
- Advocacy, Engagement with Policy and Decision Makers
- Representation and Participation in Advocacy Foras

- Membership Mobilization and Engagement
- Partnerships and Networking

### **Key achievement for 2013 from the Report**

#### *Institutional Capacity Building and Organizational Development*

- During this year ICWEA undertook a review of the 2008-9/12-13 Strategic Plan and started on the Development of the New Regional Strategic Plan 2014-18/19. This was an intensive process that involved holding consultative meetings with key ICWEA stakeholders who included the ICWEA board, members from all countries, donors and other key partners. The final report and the New plan will be availed in the first quarter of the ICWEA's 2014 - 2015 Financial year.
- This year saw ICWEA growth in partnerships and collaboration both at local and international levels with other CSO, funding organizations, bilateral organizations and also with ICW Global and other ICW Africa regions including South and West Africa. ICWEA has upheld the partnership with its key funding partners and also established new ones including Stop AIDS Now, and UNAIDS Uganda ICWEA joined other CSO coalitions to address different issues including Drug stock outs, HIV Prevention and Control Bill, Elimination of mother to child transmission and Stigma Index Research.
- This year saw ICWEA's staff capacity and skills enhanced in Monitoring and Evaluation and Evidence & Rights based SRHR/HIV prevention Interventions for the youth, Social Networking & Website Management, and Engagement in the New funding Model for the Global Fund. 25 members of ICWEA from the operational countries (5) gained skills and knowledge in data collection & analysis; reporting and documentation.
- ICWEA organised a training of 7 national Civil society organisations in Uganda focusing on HIV and one PLHIV representative on the national HIV partnership committee in understanding TB, TB/HIV basic science and the policy framework that exists both at national and global level, the new TB national and global advocacy targets as well as a capacity building workshop of networks of women living with HIV in Policy analysis, sexual reproductive health and Gender in the context of eMTCT.
- ICWEA has realized the growth in the staff with the recruited of the Project Officer Sexual reproductive Health for women living with HIV project and the Communication Specialist
- ICWEA has spearheaded key advocacy meeting at local, national and regional levels using research and evidence from the communities to inform the advocacy agenda for women living with HIV. This has been achieved through holding Think tank meeting, dialogue with policy makers. Issues discussed have included eMTCT, TB, TB/HIV service availability and accessibility, drug stock outs and HIV AIDS prevention and control Bill
- ICWEA organized key stakeholders meeting and membership on eMTCT in the 4 Eastern African countries which provided the opportunity for women living with HIV to get an update on the current status on the implementation of eMTCT/PMTCT programme) and to position themselves to contribute meaningfully in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Programme in their respective countries.
- ICWEA registered increased engagement of young women living with HIV through their participation in dialogue meetings, conducting and running SRHR trainings in Uganda and Kenya that unveiled sexual reproductive health and rights violations experienced by young women at all levels and within the health care system. ICWEA staff and members participated in the 17<sup>th</sup> International AIDS conference on STI

in Africa and taking lead in organizing women living with HIV sessions in the Women Networking Zone increasing ICWEA visibility at local levels

## **1. Institutional Capacity and Organizational Development**

### ***1.1 Strategic Planning process***

ICW Eastern Africa undertook a review and assessment of the 2008-9/12-13 Strategic Plan and the development of the New Regional Strategic Plan is in its final stages. The methodology for the review for ICW Eastern Africa's latest regional strategic plan 08-13 was based on a literature review of about 30 documents including ICW Eastern Africa strategic plan, reports, minutes, policies, audit report, Constitution, Terms of Reference of the board. The framework for the review integrated different evaluation approaches tailored to advocacy, membership, networks and women's organisations.

The general approach focused on looking at what the network had achieved and its contribution to change whether intended or unintended. The assessment showed that a lot of successes and achievements had been registered in the last five years. Among the areas cited were creating political change and outcomes, increased and meaningful representation of women living with HIV at International levels, strengthened alliances and coalitions with other CSOs, registered long term positive changes for women living with HIV and membership empowerment.

The assessment also recommended that more needs to be done especially around Organisational Development and recommendations made are informing the Development of the New RSP. Some of the key priority areas that are emerging for the RSP include Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR), Representation, Structural development, Membership Development & Capacity Building. The Assessment review report is available and informed the development of the new strategy and serving as an evaluation of the organization. A lot of successes have been registered in the last five years especially around influencing change.

A Technical Working Group (TWG) that made the day-to-day decisions around the RSP development was constituted including representation from all the five countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda 2 members of staff while the Regional Coordinator provided the oversight role in the process.

The process has been finalized and the Strategic Plan will be in place in the second quarter of 2014.

### ***1.2 Resource Mobilization***

This year started with the successful approval of some of the grants and proposals that ICWEA had requested. ICWEA has received support from Robert Carr Foundation, AIDS Free World, AVAC, GNPT+, HIVOS, IAVI, ICW Global, NORAD, Stop TB Challenge Facility, and STOP AIDS NOW!.

ICWEA continued to carry out resource mobilization efforts that included, writing a Grant Proposal to Robert Carr Foundation, UN Trust, Common Wealth, Positive Action for Children (PAFC) UNAIDS so as to continue the work that was started in the previous year. ICWEA partnered with other PLHIV organization and sought for funding from UNAIDS and the Uganda Network on Law and Ethics

### ***1.3 Governance, Human & other Resources***

#### ***1.3.1 Country and Regional Board Meetings***

ICWEA values the important role of governance at all levels of its structure and has invested in governance processes. During this financial and reporting period, ICWEA held a training of its board in governance and leadership and one face-to face Board meeting.

Two ICW Country Chapter Board meetings were held for Kenya and Uganda respectively.

## ***1.2 Capacity Building for ICWEA Staff***

### ***Training of Trainers in SRHR:***

2 ICWEA staff (the Programmes Officer and the Membership Engagement Officer) participated in a Training for Trainers program on *Evidence & Right based SRHR/HIV prevention Intervention for youth*. This Programme was aimed at providing Quality of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education and HIV Prevention Programmes in Africa a project coordinated by Stop AIDS Now! The training enhanced the 2 staff skills and knowledge in topics and methodologies that are crucial in effective programmes promoting SRHR for young people.

The two trained staff supported Tositukirewamu Women's Group focusing on young women living with HIV with similar capacity building training on characteristics of effective interventions and measuring effects of programme activities on outcome level

### ***1.4 Training in Monitoring and Evaluation***

During this financial year, 2013/14 ICWEA were trained in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) The 3-days training ((21<sup>st</sup> May – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013), and in Website Management, and Social Media Networking & Engagement - addressing the capacity needs of staff. The M&E training provided for a good understanding of the key concepts in monitoring and evaluation including the result-based monitoring & reporting as a continuous process of collecting and analyzing information; data management and utilization and for informing programming and policy development. As a result of the training in Social Media Networking & Engagement, ICWEA's Twitter and face book pages have been active

## **Recruitment of Staff Project Officer, SRHR**

ICWEA has recruited a Project Officer SRHR who will take lead in ensuring the implementation of the "Better sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people" SRHR Project in Uganda. ICWEA with support from Stop AIDS Now! is implementing a SRHR program which will focus on strengthening the integration of SRHR interventions into existing community-based, clinical and private HIV programmes, and vice versa.

In addition ICWEA has brought on board a part time Communication Specialist to support the organization in their Communication needs

### **Staff Retreat:**

ICWEA organized a 5 days staff Retreat from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at Royal Impala Hotel which was attended by all ICWEA Secretariat staff. Staff reviewed and developed their individual Annual Work plan and through the guided discussion led by a consultant they recognized their individual weaknesses, and strengths and analyzed the organizational strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The staff discussed where they would want ICWEA to be in the next 3-5 years and made suggestions of what needed to change so as to realize the organizational Goals and objectives

- Review and updating ICWEA Policies and Procedures to reflect the changing social economic and financial climate and in relation to the human resource and organizational needs
- Renew Staff's commitment to the organization, enhance staff team work so as to attain the organizational goals
- Recruitment of key staff to the organization
- Improve on the communication systems within the organizations and beyond

- Shift the mind sets of staff and organizational operations from local perspective to regional levels in relation to program implementation and priorities interventions
- Increasing the visibility of ICWEA through the publicity by use of social media like the organization's twitter, and face book accounts and in addition publish the research and field assessments that the organization has engaged in.

***Website and ICWEA social pages.***

ICW Eastern Africa website (www.icwea.org) has been updated and is more user-friendly and provides up to-date information to the membership with relevant information and updates on key activities taking place in the organization.. ICW Eastern Africa contracted services an IT and Communication person to build the capacity of staff in specific IT needs, supporting designated staff in website development and management, database upgrading and management.

ICWEA has also opened Social network pages which are the face book ((icw Eastern Africa) and twitter accounts. (icweafrica) which are interlinked such that anything posted on ICWEA Facebook page also goes to the twitter account.

***ICWEA database.***

ICWEA database for membership is cleaned on a regular basis and updated confirming the contacts and emails for membership and updating it with any new information available.

***2. Capacity Building of Membership and other Networks of Women living with HIV***

This year ICWEA carried out a 4 capacity building workshops targeting different audiences that included young women living with HIV, Training for Young women in Sexual Reproductive Health  
ICW Kenya held training for young WLHIV on Sexual Reproductive health and Rights on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at Olive Gardens Nairobi, which was attended by 46 young women living with HIV. The training was facilitated by young SRH advocates trained by ICWEA. They raised key pertinent issues faced by young women living with HIV that included limited access to information, limited participation and engagement in policy fora and programming for HIV; fear of bodily changes due to Anti-retroviral drugs fear to start and treatment for life, challenges of disclosure and limited access to family planning options.

It was recommended that ICW Kenya carries out more training in treatment literacy for young women living with HIV and in addition advocacy/engagement with health care providers to ensure youth friendly services that respect the human rights of young women living.

***Regional Capacity Building workshop for ICWEA members and women's living with HIV networks***

ICWEA organized a Regional Capacity building workshop for 25 of its members from Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda aiming at enhancing their capacities in data collection, analysis &reporting; documentation of best practices.

so as to improve in the implementation of the work and put in place mechanisms and strategies for the  
The workshop was successful in enhancing the participants understanding in data collection methods:

*“We have been collecting data but in our own way, sometimes we would do interviews on phone and we never cared to understand the questionnaire ourselves, but now after this workshop, I’m going to do better work” – [participant – Kenya]*

*“I now know what a good report should cover, and I know for example what to include in each of the components of a good report” – [participant – Uganda]*

*“Before I came for this workshop, the M&E concepts especially the indicators and outcomes and how they are related to the objectives was my big problem but this workshop has made possible for me to understand these concepts” [participant - Kenya]*

### ***Capacity Building workshop of National networks of WLHIV in Policy Analysis, SRHR, Gender & HR in the Context of eMTCT***

ICW Eastern Africa in partnership with Uganda Network on Law, Ethics & HIV (UGANET) while implementing a Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Project for Women Living with HIV in Uganda held a 2 days capacity building workshop for seventeen (17) Programme Staff from six (6) Networks of Women living with HIV in Policy Analysis, SRHR, Gender & HR in the Context of eMTCT. The organisations that participated included

the National Community of Women living with HIV (NACWOLA) Together Against AIDS Positive Association (TAAPA), Mama’s Club, Global Coalition of Women living with HIV (GCOWH), and ICW Uganda Chapter.

Each Network developed a plan of action with areas to be integrated in their organizational annual plans focusing on addressing specific eMTCT issues within their mandates while identifying opportunities for meaningfully involvement of the networks of women living with HIV in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the eMTCT Programme

*“As Networks of women living with HIV, we need to analyze and interpret those national and international Policies for the benefit of the women living with HIV. We should be able to know what these documents are talking about and the women living with HIV should be in the know of what they supposed to go through at the health facility even before going there” [participant – Mama’s Club]*

*“The midwives need to get Refresher training courses on how to handle women living with HIV in order to have a successful eMTCT programme and while reporting, our Countries should also indicate the number of babies born with HIV and those who were successfully born without HIV as a result of the interventions in a specific country” – [participant – NACWOLA]* Another participants during the session on the Global

### ***Capacity building workshop for the civil society representatives & Communities on Policy and Strategic National Committees***

ICWEA held a 2-day residential training (August 2013) for 22 Civil Society representatives on the the HIV&AIDS Partnership Committee, Uganda CSO Coalition on Maternal Health, the Country Coordinating Committee for the Global Fund (CCM), and HIV Activists from National Organisations.



Participants were from Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development- (HEPS)-Uganda, Uganda Health and Science Press Association-(UHSPA), The AIDS Support Organization-(TASO), Positive Men's Union- (POMU), Integrated Community Based Initiatives-(ICOB), Together Against AIDS Positive Association- (TAAPA) Family Rescue Initiatives(FRI) National Forum of PLHA Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU), Centre for Health Human Rights, Tusitukirewamu Women's Group, Development-(CEHURD) Global Coalition for Women and ICWEA staff.

The participants gained in-depth understanding of TB basic science transmission, diagnosis, treatment, infection control in addition to policy frame work that exists both at national and global level, new TB advocacy targets at national and global levels basing on the TB strategic plan and enhance their advocacy skills.

*"I have been attending several workshops on HIV and AIDS but this has been the most useful and important information I have gained since the beginning of the year and would recommend that every HIV positive person should get to learn about TB"*  
[participant – CEHURD]

The trained advocates are already articulating TB issues in key meetings as demonstrated by the advocates that participated in the 2 days National Joint AIDS Review meeting in September 2013, and raised the importance of TB constituency/program representation in the National AIDS review meeting.



CSO representatives who attended the TB/HIV training at Eureka Hotel, 14th August 2013

The trained advocates participated in the Pre-Budget Dialogue Conference that discussed the Civil Society alternative budget proposals on the National Budget Framework Paper for FY 2014/15 that happened on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014 under the theme; *"Every shilling count: are the FY 2014/2015 Budget Proposals Efficient And Effective To Deliver Us From Poverty"*

Five trained TB advocates participated in National TB & Leprosy Programme (NTLP)'s Stakeholders' workshop that reviewed the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for the period 2015/16-2019/20 on 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> February 2014

During the report back meeting for the trained TB Advocates which was organized by ICW EA on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014 advocates reported to have been involved in TB activities that included Monitoring of TB drugs availability, Identifying TB Cases and Referral among others.

### **3.Communication Mobilisation and awareness raising**

#### ***Meeting with the Young Women to concretize on SRHR advocacy strategy***

ICWEA held a meeting with 60 young women living with HIV (YWLHIV) from Mbarara, Masaka, Wakiso, Busia and Kampala in Uganda who had earlier participated in Young Women's Dialogue meetings; to discuss and build consensus on advocacy strategy and advocacy plan for better sexual and reproductive health and rights for young women living with HIV in Uganda. An advocacy Implementation plan was developed by YWLHIV 2014



**Young Women living with HIV in Uganda with ICW staff after formation of their network**

*It is fulfilling to know that as young women, we can mobilise our fellow young women, organise all the logistics ourselves and conduct the training ourselves. Even when my mother is in the room, she is only providing guidance and not doing the actual training as previously. Thank you fellow young women and we must do this continuously" [young woman from Kenya*

ICW Eastern Africa conducted five (5) Think Tank Meetings;

- One Think Tank on eMTCT in the context of sexual reproductive health and rights of women including women living with HIV. The Think Tank was between women living with HIV&AIDS and policy and local leaders in the district of Luwero in Uganda;
- Two think Tank Meetings on TB/HIV in the high burden districts of Masaka and Wakiso in Uganda;
- One Think Tank between Parliamentarians, Policy Makers and women living with HIV in Kenya;
- One Think Tank meeting between women living with HIV and the media in Kenya;
- One think Tank with Policy Makers, the media and women living with HIV in Rwanda.

The Think Tank meetings were aimed at bringing all stakeholders together, including district leadership, health care providers, community leaders, women and men living with HIV and the media to discuss and agree on steps for ensuring successful eMTCT & TB/HIV programmes in the respective countries from the view point of women living with HIV.

Some of the key issues raised with policy makers included but not limited to:

- Stock outs of testing kits, ARVs, TB drugs and Essential Medicines
- Unequal distribution of programmes (rural versus urban)
- Loss to follow up: Many HIV-positive mothers fear to disclose their status and therefore do not come back at the health facilities for ARVs & essential medicines and do not bring back their children for PCR tests to determine the children's HIV status.
- Women living with HIV pointed out that most programs target those who already know their HIV status and leave out those who do not know their status.

Immediate outputs from the Think Tank were as follows:

- In Uganda, the Local Council (LC) III Chairperson gave 200 coffee plants to 20 people living with HIV while the Local Council VI Chairperson committed to donate a fish project (of 200 fish) to persons living with HIV in the district.
- ICWEA recommended that women living with HIV should be given the priority in programs to address poverty in the community.
- The eMTCT program campaigns must be expanded to the grassroots level, where most women are not informed.
- Women must be financially empowered in order to avoid being lured into sexual acts because of poverty.
- Traditional and religious leaders must speak about the elimination of mother to child campaigns.
- Programs to bring men on board must be supported in order to contribute to the eMTCT targets.

One of the major issues that were raised by both the media and the Parliamentarians was the human rights violations of women and women living with HIV and especially coerced sterilisation which was still reported as a big issue in Kenya especially in Western Province that hinders women from accessing Antenatal care services as they fear being coerced into sterilization



*Participants from a Dialogue meeting in Masaka*

ICWEA actively participated in meetings and trainings on gender equality and how to push for its inclusion in the New Funding Model for the Global Fund and ensure that respective countries that will be submitting Proposals in 2014 take gender into consideration. Three ICWEA members participated in meetings held in Geneva, Paris and Uganda. In the coming year 2014, ICWEA will be working on advocacy around influencing the funding mechanisms at all levels including CCMs, the Country Operation Plans (COPs) for PEPfar.

#### ***Press Release on the His Excellency the President of Kenya inaugural speech***

Following the election of the New President of Kenya – His Excellency the Uhuru Kenyatta in his inaugural speech on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013, President Kenyatta promised to “ensure that maternity fees are abolished and that all citizens of Kenya are able to access government dispensaries and health centers free of charge.” President Kenyatta also promised to ensure gender equality in Kenya and recognized that “exclusion in decision-making processes” as one of the biggest challenges facing Kenyan people and promised to ensure that women and young people are “seen and heard at the decision-making table at the national as well as devolved levels of government.” in lieu of the above commitments, ICWEA made a press release calling on President Kenyatta to fulfill his promises in office and to ensure that HIV & AIDS remain a high priority in Kenya.

#### **4. Advocacy, representation and Engagement with Policy and Decision makers:**

##### ***Influencing funding mechanisms for better SRHR and HIV service delivery***

In Uganda, in January – Feb 2014, ICWEA carried out on-line consultations with various stakeholders on service delivery on HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment services who included the PLHIV networks and CSO on the performance of the previous PEPFAR COP 2013.

The key submission relation to the deteriorating quality of service, increasing lost to follow up of mothers started on eMTCT and no mechanism to trace them, stock out of ART drugs and testing kits, Lack of pediatric formulations and mothers were expected to divide the adult medicines for the babies (poor dosage) among other were submitted to PEPFAR COP team 2014, for consideration

ICWEA coordinated the meeting of the taskforce for PEPFAR COP in preparation for a joint meeting between CSOs and PEPFAR team.

##### ***Participation in country processes towards the 47<sup>th</sup> CPD in New York (7<sup>th</sup> -11 April, 2014)***

This was aimed at engaging with policy makers and key decision makers to influence the Country Status report on 47<sup>th</sup> Commission of Population and Development. In March 13<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014, ICWEA developed a submission and was presented during the national meeting hosted by the State Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development in preparation for the 47<sup>th</sup> CPD ( April 7 – 11, 2014 in New York). ICWEA was represented on the national taskforce that reviewed and finalized the Country Status report.

##### ***Advocacy for Essential medicines and increased access to ART***

In May 2013, as a member of the coalition to increase access to ART and other essential medicines in Uganda in a bid to end the stock out of life saving medicines and blood testing Kits held a Press conference to challenge the persistent stock outs and shortages of rapid HIV testing kits, ART, reagents in laboratories and drugs for opportunistic infections especially septrin and dapson as well as CD4 machine counts in the country calling on PEPFAR and the MoH to ensure the new “supply chain rationalization” policy does not increase

*the risk of stock outs and that treatment for all pregnant women (“Option B+”) is always provided with minimum standard of quality community-based adherence support and patient follow“*

### ***Participation in the Maternal Health coalition advocacy activities***

ICWEA as a member of the Coalition for Maternal Neonatal and Child health in Uganda has continued to advocate for increased access to maternal health services for women living with HIV challenging the otherwise preventable death of mothers during child delivery. ICWEA was represented in the coalition meetings in which discussed various issues that included involvement in the Budget process, Update on Petition No.16 appeal and the court process, and what can be done on the Black Monday Campaigns,

ICWEA together with Coalition members organized a vigil at the Parliament in remembrance of an MNCH advocate who passed on during child delivery. They urged government to prioritize the health by increasing the health budget as required by the Abuja Declaration and maternal health as a key sector. In a Petition issued by CSO to the Speaker and a Press Conference held later, the Coalition members said

*“We are calling on Parliament to show its commitment to correcting this crisis through concrete action—in particular, by increasing investment in wages for midwives and other critical cadres with an investment of Ushs 43.5 billion.”*

### ***Advocacy for the protection and promotion of the SRHR and human rights of women living with HIV***

ICWEA spearhead advocacy for the protection and promotion of the rights of women living with HIV. This was also proved during a trying incident of Rosemary Namubiru, a Nurse at Victoria Medical Centre in Kampala, who was accused of exposing a child to HIV during the course of administering treatment on January 7, 2014.

The incident incited a media attention, leading to Namubiru’s arrest and was charged of attempted murder. The media tried and convicted Namubiru in the public eye, violating her rights and presumption of innocence. ICWEA engaged with the officials from Victoria Medical Centre (Namubiru’s employers) to have better understanding of the issue, visited Namubiru at the Prison to give her psychosocial support and engaged with the family members of Namubiru to mobilized family support for Namubiru.

ICWEA mobilized a team of legal experts who were providing legal services on probono and ICWEA linked up with AIDS Free World for financial support to facilitate Namubiru’s access to the lawyer. .

ICWEA organized a meeting with strategic journalists (editors etc) to discuss violations of the rights o.

ICWEA participated in the press conference organized by Uganda Nurses and Midwives Union and created rapport with H.E. UN Special Envoy on HIV and AIDS in Africa as opportunity to be used for any other issue relevant to her office including Namubiru case.

### ***Engagement of key policy makers, including parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS and SRHR***

ICW Eastern Africa held meetings with Members of Parliament in Uganda and Kenya respectively. In Uganda, ICWEA has been engaged in advocacy for the deletion of the contentious clauses in the Bill and in conjunction with Uganda Network on Law and Ethics (UGANET) organized several meetings with Members of Parliament on HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control Bill in Uganda and show cause why if it was passed into law it would negatively impact on women and to call upon them to drop the negative clauses of criminalization, mandatory testing, forced disclosure from the bill.

This bill has been on since 2009, a lot of advocacy work has gone into it with some changes but the contentious sections have remained the same.

November 2013, ICWEA made tremendous achievements realized when the members of parliament shifted their position to start supporting the amendments being recommended by the CSO coalition members and demonstrated their change by advocating for the changes in the Bill in media Interviews.

In addition ICWEA mobilized women living with HIV to go to the Parliamentary Gallery whenever the Bill was to order paper of the Parliament

*"I must say that my position on the bill is completely changed now – this perspective I had no idea about until I listened to these women in front"  
[all women living with HIV]*

In Kenya, the meeting was attended by 24 members of Parliament and discussed human rights violations that are currently being reported in Kenya including coerced sterilization and explored the role of Parliamentarians in addressing human rights violations and contributing to the eMTCT.

The Members of Parliament committed to being champions on eMTCT and pledged to work in collaboration with ICWEA & ICW Kenya Chapter and to advocate for budget increase and allocations for issues affecting women living with HIV including SRHR and eMTCT.

#### **Participation in the International calendar days and events:**

##### **) Women's Day and the World TB Day**

ICWEA participated in these key advocacy days by producing press releases that speak to the different themes.

The theme for the IWD for ICWEA was Women living with HIV inspire Change, fight for equality, dignity and fairness. The statement recognized the achievements that women living with HIV have attained over the years in contributing to the HIV fight but also that inequalities still impacts on their health and wellbeing,

The Statement for ICWEA on the World TB day speaks to the Global theme: Find, Treat and Cure all the missed cases for TB. The theme for ICWEA was "Find Treat and Cure Women living with HIV needing TB care and Treatment and save 160,000 women dying of TB every year"

All statements can be accessed on our website ( [www.icwea.org](http://www.icwea.org)) and have also been distributed on the ICW blogs and different list serves.

##### ***Advocacy Dialogue meeting on HIV Prevention Research***

ICWEA is represented on the Uganda Civil Society HIV Prevention Working Group which is aimed at promoting access to proven HIV prevention approaches and to accelerate ethical biomedical research into new options that are safe and effective. Quarterly meeting on HIV prevention research advocacy were held and discussions were centered towards: HIV Vaccine advocacy strategy; the WHO's upgraded Treatment Guidelines of 500 CD4 Count and the need urgent Ministry of Health Interim Guidance on Use of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

### ***Participation in the Stigma Index Research***

ICW Eastern Africa was a member of the National Steering Committee. Since 2012, Uganda undertook a study on stigma levels in the country following other countries that have done this and this was a study by People Living with HIV under the leadership of the National Forum for People living with HIV.

The Regional Coordinator was the Chair of the National Steering Committee for the Stigma Index Survey. This report was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at Hotel Africana

## **5. Representation and Participation in Advocacy Fora**

### ***Participation at the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference of AIDS and STI in Africa (ICASA)***

ICWEA meaningfully attended the 17<sup>th</sup> ICASA Conference which was held in Cape Town, South Africa between 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013. At least 4 staff and I Board member attended and took lead in several sessions in the Women networking Zone and the main Conference. ICW Eastern and Southern Africa were among the organisations and sponsors of Women Networking Zone (WNZ) and ICW organised the following sessions in the Women Networking zone:

- eMTCT and integration: What does it mean for women living with HIV?
- Young women living with HIV: Where are the human rights protections?
- Women's realities and needs in negotiating treatment
- Dialogue on Hormonal Contraceptives and Human Rights
- A discussion on GBV and women living with HIV
- Forced and coerced sterilisation of women living with HIV



### **Three staff of ICW attended the breakfast meeting for the grantees by Robert Carr Network Fund**

The poster presentations focused on the Assessment on the Barriers of Access for Family planning services for women living with HIV in Uganda, Assessment on the availability and accessibility of TB/HIV services for women living with HIV.



ICWEA program staff participating in an Advocacy campaign  
ICWEA TB//HIV activities



An ICWEA poster presentation on

Three poster presentations and one oral presentation were made. The presentations focused on the work that ICW had engaged in specifically the Assessment on the Barriers of Access for Family planning services for women living with HIV in Uganda, Assessment on the availability and accessibility of TB/HIV services for women living with HIV and the eMTCT. Below are some of the photos of the Posters presented during the 17<sup>th</sup> ICASA, 2013.

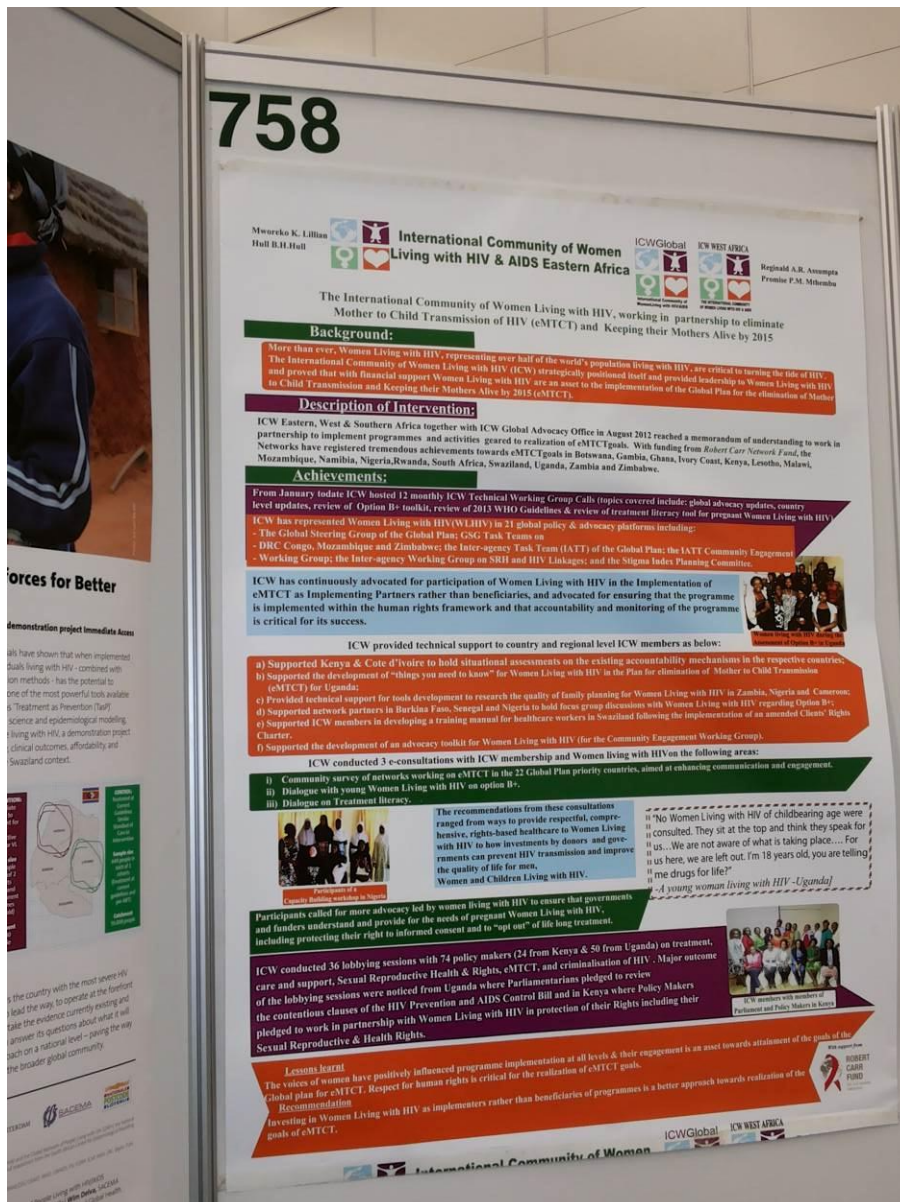


**ICW Members Conducting a panel session in the Women's Networking Zone at ICASA.**





**ICW Namibia Member asks Ambassador Mark R. Dybul a pointed question about the Global Fund's focus on gender at the ICASA Women's Networking Zone**



**One of the Posters that was presented at ICASA featuring progress by ICW on eMTCT under RCNF**

## 6. Membership Mobilization and Engagement

### *Stake Holders' meetings on eMTCT and PMTCT*

Following the subsequent SRHR capacity building workshops for ICWEA members in the 5 Eastern Africa regions (Kenya, Uganda Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda) since 2010 - 2013 that build the capacity of women living with HIV in Sexual health and rights literacy ICWEA secretariat organized and coordinated stakeholders meetings on eMTCT and PMTCT Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

The meeting that brought together key stakeholders who included Development partners, UNADS, PEPFAR, Ministry of Health, eMTCT implementing partners and key service providers and the Women living with HIV, provided an opportunity for women living with HIV to get an update on the current status on the implementation of eMTCT/PMTCT program, and the Country plans for the next years and to share

evidence from the women living with HIV to inform the future eMTCT/ PMTCT program planning and implementation.

In Uganda 20 women living with HIV were mobilized from the different regions of the country to participate in the eMTCT stakeholders' meeting with was organized by Ministry of Health on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013, at Speke Resort Munyonyo.

In Burundi, the stakeholders meeting took place on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at Gahahe Hills hotel in Bujumbura and was attended by 20WLHIV, 2 MPs and one from senate, the PMTCT Coordinator MoH, PMTCT program coordinators in different health centers, CSOs, and health workers.

In Rwanda the meeting was attended by the representatives from Ministry of Health, the Gender and the HIV departments, UN agencies – UNAIDS, UNFPA, and representation from the network of PLHIV.

In Tanzania, although a national stakeholder's and consultation meeting similar to that which was held in Uganda was taking place women living with HIV had not been invited to the meeting , ICWEA lobbied through other partners for representation in the meeting and two women living with HIV participated in the meeting



Members of the Rwanda WLHIV network after the stakeholder's meeting  
*attended the stake holder meeting*



*Women in Burundi who*

One day meetings were held for the women to reflect on the Stakeholders' meeting and to strategically position themselves to contribute meaningfully in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the PMTCT Program by identifying the key priority areas to focus on for the coming one year and drew work

## **Partnership and Networking**

### **Participation in the AVAC Partners Forum**

February 10 – 14 the SRHR Project Officer and the ICWEA Regional Board Chairperson participated in the AVAC Partners Forum through as a Panelist the discussions on Hormonal Contraception and HIV risk. The discussions focused the issues generated from the WLHIV, human rights implication and Family Planning 2020 commitments.

A concept note on Hormonal Contraception was developed by ICWEA – represented by the Project Officer SRHR and the Chairperson ICW Eastern Africa and the Regional Coordinator, ICWSA

***Dialogue platform meeting held in Kuala Lumpur from 27th to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013.***

The membership and Development Officer is a member of the Dialogue platform of women living with HIV which is the new initiative that was launched in December 2012 by UNAIDS to be a safer space for; Fostering partnerships among the networks of women (and girls) living with HIV at the country, regional and global level.

She participated in meeting which was attended by over 10 dialogue platform members from the different parts of the world which was organized by UNAIDS in Kuala Lumpur on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

**Participation in the Seminar on key human rights issues affecting women living with HIV in Africa- Dakar, Senegal.**

ICWEA was represented in a seminar on key human rights issues affecting women living with HIV in Africa. This was a three days seminar that took place on 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013 in Dakar- Senegal

The Membership and Development Officer made a presentation on key human rights issues affecting women living with HIV in Eastern Africa

Various key stakeholders, including the members of the African Commission, experts from the committee on PLHIV, government representatives, national human rights institutions, national AIDS commissions, women's groups, organizations working with PLHIV, and WLHIV attended this workshop

A key outcome from this meeting was; the development of a draft Resolution on Involuntary sterilisation and protection of human rights in access to HIV services to be adopted by the African commission.

***Capacity Building Workshop on Gender and Global Fund 2013***

The Program Officer and the Membership and Development Officer participated in a capacity building workshop on "Gender and Global Fund" at different times which were organized by the AIDS Strategy Advocacy and Policy (ASAP) with the support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and TB which took place in Geneva and Cape Town, South Africa in November and December, 2013 respectively . The meeting was aimed at building their capacity to engage in Global Fund processes by ensuring an understanding of Global Fund processes, in particular the New Funding Model (NFM), and the points of entry to Global Fund systems and decisions.

***Participation in the Inter-Agency Task Team on the Prevention and Treatment of HIV Infection in Pregnant Women, Mothers and their Children workshop***

The Program Officer – ICWEA was invited to participate in a Models of Service Delivery Workshop from 28 to 31 October 2013 in Dar es Salaam which was organized by the Inter-Agency Task Team on the Prevention and Treatment of HIV Infection in Pregnant Women, Mothers and their Children (IATT).

The workshop was aimed at describing, defining and developing key programmatic considerations for promising service delivery models in eMTCT and Pediatrics integrated with maternal health and family planning

***Community Advisory Group (CRAG)***

The program officer is a member of the Community Research Advisors Group (CRAG) which is an international community-driven advisory body that was established to enhance the value and impact of TBTC research for the benefit of the TB affected communities. Every year the advisory group composed of 8 members based in communities where TBTC studies are enrolling globally meet to take stock of what they

have been doing in relation to their agreed work plans and terms of reference This year 2 meetings were held in Decatur, Georgia Atlanta from the May and October 2013.

In 2012, ICW Eastern, West & Southern Africa and ICW Global Advocacy Office continue to work together while implementing the Robert Carr Network Fund for scaling up SRHR and in particular scaling up participation of women living with HIV in the implementation and monitoring of elimination of Mother to Child Transmission and Keeping their Mothers Alive by 2015 (eMTCT), This is a Project entitled , ***“HIV&AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights project among women living with HIV”*** was funded for one year – 2013 coordinated by ICWEA.

### ***Sexual Reproductive Training for the NIKIDASIKA Development Program Beneficiaries***

ICWEA partnered with NIKIBASIKA Development program that supports orphans and vulnerable children and to hold a SRHR worksjop their beneficiaries. The 2 days training which took place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013, in Kasese Town at ATACCO Hotel brought together a total of 26 Children under the Nikibasika Project who included both girls and Boys in their adolescent ages and was facilitated by the ICWEA programs Officer, the Membership and Development officer, and the Programs Assistant.

The facilitators held a meeting with the staff of the Project to discuss some of the key observations from the training and to also giver feed back to the project team so as to address some of the key issues arising from the training.



*Participants from NIKIBASIKA program who attended the SRH training in Kasese*

### ***SRH and Right Training for Women Living with HIV coming from communities which are participating in the HIV vaccines in Lake Victoria Islands and landing sites.***

ICWEA in collaboration with UVRI-IAVI HIV Vaccine program carried out training on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for Women Living with HIV (WLHIV) in Kasenyi Landing site in Wakiso district and 3 other islands of Nsazi, Kiimi and Myende in Mukono district.

The 2-day training workshop and 1-day policy dialogue with policy makers from both districts meeting took place at Eco Resort Hotel located on Kasenyi Landing site in Entebbe, 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2013. It was attended by 18 participants, representing women. The facilitators consisted of 2 ICWEA staff. IAVI funded this activity.

Some of the key challenges faced by women living with HIV as they access the much needed services included

- The lack of government health facility on some of the Islands like Kimi and thus have to make journeys to access these services elsewhere which is expensive “Giving birth is also done at clinics and one has to pay 40,000/= for a normal delivery, or Bugombe health centre III which is also on another island. If you fail to deliver normally, you have to hire a boat at 100,000/=, buy 20 litres of fuel for a return journey, hire the engine at 20,000 and a captain at minimum 20,000/=; to Kasenyi - Wagagai where you pay 650,000/= or Entebbe hospital where you pay 300,000/= for a caesarian section.” “In Nsazi with a HC II always has stock-outs. We end up having to buy from clinics”

- Access to ARVS is another challenge At Bugombe HC II, one has to pay 3000/= to get ARVs, yet they are meant to be free.

- Women don't like to go for ANC so at the time of giving birth, they are not tested and given that the islands have a challenge of transport and the health facilities are far;” it will be too late to save the baby from HIV infection at birth”, said one participant.

“Family planning has put us to waste. It has taken away our sexual desire so our men go out to look for other women Clinics give family planning methods without explaining the potential side effects to the women”

These issues were raised during the dialogue meeting which was attended by the district leaders who included Wakiso District HIV focal person, the Chairman LC III Koome Sub county in Mukono district, the Health Centre in charge for Katabi Health Centre III in Entebbe-Wakiso district, one health worker from the IAVI site at Kasenyi landing site.

### **7.3 One to One (101) Meeting by CHAU**

The Membership and Development Officer and the Program Assistant attended the one to one workshop which was organised by CHAU a partner Project in the Link Up Project that brings together different partners including GYCA, ATHENA, Marie Stopes International, Population Council and STOP AIDS NOW which is represented by ICW-EA and designed to make a significant contribution to the integration of vital SRHR interventions for young people in Uganda.

In addition other organizations like Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), UNYPA, and implementing partners like Mild may, Mariestopes, Naguru Teenage centre, UYDEL partici..participated



*Hajjarah facilitating the controversial 'evolving capacities' exercise.*

### **SRH training for Tositukirewamu Women;s Group**

Following the participation of the ICWEA staff in the Training of Trainers Project (TOTP) organized by Stop AIDS Now, the Programs Officer and the Membership Development Officer, the two staff identifies and trained Tositukirewamu Women's Group staff is one of the organizations to pass on the skills and information that they attained

The training with Tositukilewamu took place on 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at their office in Bwaise It was attended by 4 Staff and the sessions carried out covered Behavior change Theory, and Different Steps in Intervention Mapping. The staff participants in addition started analyzing their SRH Program using the Planning and support Tool.

## **7. Challenges**

Some of the key challenges experiences during this year include:

- Although ICWEA recruited one more staff to join the team , there is need to continue fundraising for more staff positions so that more program implementation can be achieved in a timely manner otherwise the staff are still few and get overwhelmed with a lot on activities and program to implement and thus this affects the organizational output and resource consumption
- Language barrier in some of the EA countries – eg Rwanda and Burundi which are French speaking while Tanzania which is purely Swahili speaking. The members would want some of the documents translated
- Overwhelming demands from the membership amidst the limitation in resources to effectively implement work in all countries equally. ICWEA exists as a regional network, but nevertheless has not effectively worked in other ICWEA countries as we the membership demands, and this is due to the limitation in resources. ICWEA plans to establish a focal point persons , in these countries who would coordinate the activities and who will be accountable to the organization

## **8. Conclusion**

ICWEA is grateful for the support it received from all partners that enables us to reach our members better this year and also to the membership for the tireless work they have been engaged in that has increased the visibility of the organization at all levels