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AFRICA REACH ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

February 2024

As we stand on the precipice of our 1-year anniversary, we find ourselves reflecting on the incredible journey that began on the sidelines of the African Union Heads of States Summit and Organisation of African First Ladies for Development ([OAFLAD](#)) General Assembly in Addis Ababa in February 2023. It was there, that Africa REACH was launched, igniting a transformative chapter in the fight against AIDS in children and young people across the continent.

In this short span, we have achieved milestones that resonate with our commitment to make a lasting impact. The launch of our Strategic Plan 2023-2025 marked a key moment, setting the course for a future where an AIDS-free Africa is not just a goal but a shared reality. This strategy has provided the compass for our endeavors and the framework for meaningful, sustainable change.

Our journey has been characterised by the formation of tangible, formidable partnerships in the HIV response. We have not only recognized the power of collaboration but have actively sought out opportunities to create synergies with like-minded organizations and advocates. These partnerships are not just alliances on paper; they are the driving force behind our collective efforts to end AIDS.

At the heart of our success lies the guidance and leadership of the Africa REACH Leadership Council. Their insights, dedication, and unwavering commitment have been the compass guiding our actions. Through their dual role of internal influence and external representation on international platforms, they have not

In this first year, we have become active participants in multiple advocacy steering committees, positioning ourselves at the forefront of discussions that matter. These engagements are not mere tokens of involvement; they are expressions of our determination to be catalysts for change. We also focused on in-country programmes by funding small organisations in 4 African countries, where we've seen the significance of community-led responses in the HIV space.

As we reflect on the past 12 months, we recognise the need to catalyse a new action agenda. The urgency of our mission demands continuous innovation, bold initiatives, and a relentless pursuit of progress. We are not just commemorating a year gone by; we are launching ourselves into the future with renewed vigor and a heightened sense of purpose.

This newsletter serves as a testament to our collective achievements, a chronicle of our journey, and a declaration of our commitment to the cause. Together, let us celebrate the victories, learn from the challenges, and march forward with unwavering resolve.

Here's to one year of impact, and to the countless years of change yet to come.



Momentum Building for Policy Change

In 2001, African leaders gathered in Abuja, Nigeria, crafting the visionary Abuja Declaration to combat HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases. Over two decades later, the pledge to allocate 15% of annual budgets to the health sector stands at a critical juncture.

The [Abuja Declaration](#) was a promise of decisive action, signaling a proactive approach to address health challenges in Africa. Progress has been made, but only two out of 55 African Union Member States met the 15% target. It is time to build momentum for policy change, reinvigorating commitments for a healthier future.

In a bid to create momentum for domestic resource mobilization, Africa REACH Leadership Council Members, Hon. Patience Masua and Hon. Emma Theofelus (both members of the Namibian Parliament), co-penned an Op-Ed published in the [Windhoek Observer](#), a Namibian Newspaper, where they urged African Heads of States to reaffirm commitment to allocate 15% Domestic Funding for Health. This Op-Ed is part of a series of activities aimed at putting forward a motion in Parliament and eventually at the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF).

Continental Accountability through Collaboration with African Union Commission and AIDS Watch Africa (AWA)

OPINIONS

A Call for Action: Upholding the Commitment to 15% Domestic Funding for Health in Africa

Observer 4 Mins Read

Home National Money Energy Tech Sports

WINDHOEK OBSERVER

Live



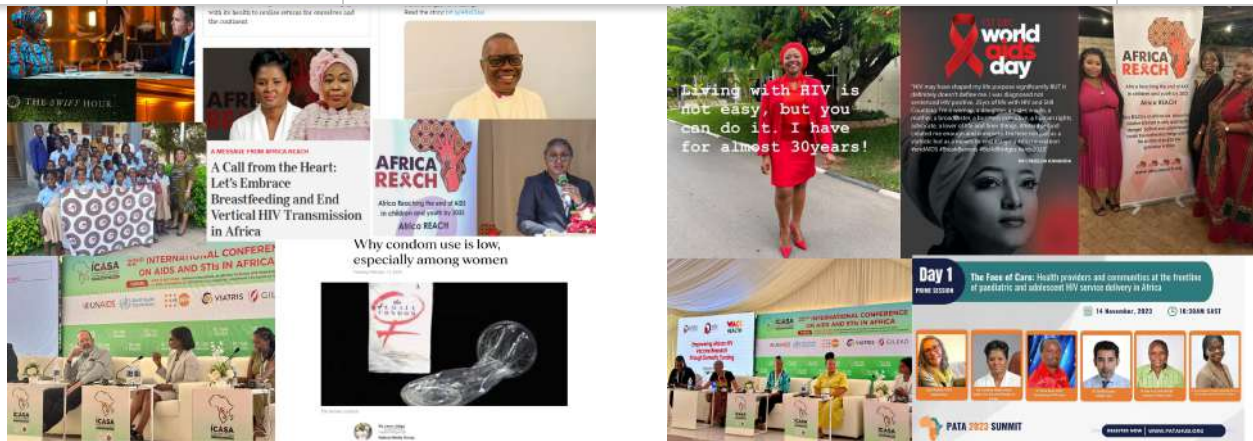
Patience Masua
& Emma Theofelus



Through partnerships with the African Union Commission, particularly within the Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) department and the collaboration with AIDS Watch Africa and the CARMMAPlus campaigns, Africa REACH is instrumental in ensuring accountability among member states. Efforts extend beyond policy advocacy to actively holding member states accountable at the highest level, influencing continental policies and strategies drafted at the African Union.



Africa REACH Leadership Council: Unifying Efforts to End AIDS in Children and Young People



In the past year, the Africa REACH Leadership Council seamlessly blended its dual role of internal strategy influence and external representation on international platforms, shaping a comprehensive approach to eradicate AIDS in children and young people across the continent.

The journey began at the African Union Heads of State Summit, where the Leadership Council convened to launch Africa REACH. Their collective message emphasized the existing structures for change and rallied African leaders from diverse spheres— political, social, religious, and traditional – to unite in the fight for an AIDS-free Africa. This internal advocacy set the stage for the council's external representation.

H.E. Mrs. Monica Geingos, Africa REACH Chair, carried the message to a broader audience during an SABC Africa interview. Reflecting on PEPFAR's 20-year anniversary, she championed the need for African-focused interventions, aligning perfectly with Africa REACH's mission.

The council's reach extended further through digital forums and virtual roundtables. Rev. Godson Kpavuvu



The global stage witnessed impactful engagements. At the Africa Health Agenda International Conference, questions posed by Mr. Leon Lidigu prompted Rwanda's Health Minister to advocate for teens' access to contraceptives. This aligned seamlessly with Africa REACH's goal of closing service delivery gaps, preventing new HIV infections.

Member-driven initiatives further showcased the council's influence. From Princess Kasune's #PEPFAR20 campaign highlighting positive living with HIV to Rev. Godson Kpavuvu's sensitization training on "HIV, Stigma, and Conflicts," each activity contributed to breaking the

adolescents, while H.E. Toyin Saraki highlighted the importance of accessible healthcare for women and girls during a virtual roundtable on International Women's Day. These activities interconnected, emphasizing the need for comprehensive policies and programs affecting the health and well-being of young people.

The council's involvement in global forums like Women Deliver and UNGA highlighted their commitment. H.E. Monica Geingos, Ms. Chido Cleo Mpemba, and Mr. Tinashe Rufurwadzo used these platforms to advocate for diverse perspectives, youth inclusion, and improved maternal and newborn health – all integral components in ending AIDS.

A thread of unity ran through each activity, forming a narrative of collaboration, shared commitment, and impactful advocacy. The council's insights and contributions, whether in media engagements, webinars, or international conferences, worked harmoniously towards a singular objective –an AIDS-free future for the children and young people of Africa. Their unwavering dedication has not only shaped Africa REACH's approach but has also expanded the organization's reach, reinforcing the collective endeavor to end AIDS on the continent.

National Grants for Community-Led Initiatives





Africa REACH's small grants, in line with World AIDS Day's theme "Let Communities Lead," empower community-based organizations in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV advocacy. These grants support initiatives like capacity building for community health workers, knowledge sharing, psychosocial support, and communication activities. The goal is to empower local communities and contribute to an AIDS-free Africa.

In Zambia, Renny from [Latkings Outreach](#) shares how challenges like the Cholera and COVID-19 crisis, coupled with heavy floods, hindered young people's access to health facilities. Despite these obstacles, dedicated foot soldiers were able to reach remote communities, ensuring support and awareness.

Adanna, representing [Inspire IT](#) in Nigeria, highlights the impact of strikes on their sexual education programs. However, through creativity and digital technology, they collaborated with the public sector to provide a safe space for young people to discuss SRH and HIV, overcoming challenges posed by the strikes.

the grants provided by Africa REACH play a crucial role in supporting community-led initiatives for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV advocacy. By empowering local organizations like Latkings Outreach and Inspire IT, these grants enable communities to navigate challenges creatively, ensuring that even in the face of crises, essential services and support reach the most vulnerable. This underscores the profound impact and resilience of community-led efforts in achieving a future free from AIDS in Africa.

Strategic Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholder Approach

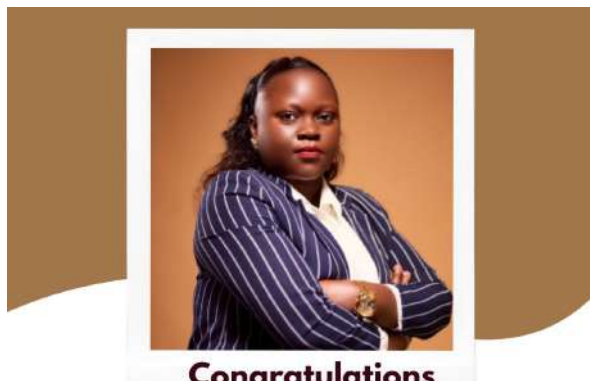
steering committees, such as the Global Alliance to End AIDS in children by 2030, partnership with Y+ Global, GNP+, and PATA, highlights our commitment to a multi-stakeholder approach. These collaborations contribute significantly to our vision of achieving an AIDS-free generation by leveraging collective expertise and resources.



The successful introduction of the Friends and Partners Group on the sidelines of ICASA 2023 brought together like-minded individuals dedicated to garnering long-term support and resource mobilization for paediatric and adolescent HIV initiatives. This network will play a crucial role in sustaining our efforts in the long run.



What's New?



Congratulations

Africa REACH Leadership Council Member, Hon. Judith Kapinga on your appointment as Deputy Minister of Energy in Tanzania



Congratulations

Africa REACH Leadership Council Member, Dr. Agnes Mahomva on your appointment as Public Health Advisor to the President and Cabinet of Zimbabwe.





Congratulations

Africa REACH Leadership Council Member, Hon. Emma Theofelus on her appointment as Minister of Information, Communication and Technology in Namibia.



Congratulations

Africa REACH Leadership Co- Char, Rev. Godson Lawson Kpavuvu on his appointment as Vice President of the All Africa Council of Churches.



Condolences



REST IN PEACE President Geingob

As Africa REACH, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of Namibia's late President Hage Geingob. His unwavering dedication to service and leadership will forever be remembered. Our thoughts are especially with Africa REACH Chair H.E. Mrs. Monica Geingos during this difficult time. May she find strength and solace in the memories shared. In the face of this loss, let us unite in honoring President Geingob's legacy and the positive impact he made on Namibia and beyond.



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