

The PACANet Chronicles

A quarterly newsletter of the Pan African Christian AIDS Network
www.pacanet.net

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Introduction

Welcome to the PACANet Chronicles for the 2nd quarter, 2014. In this volume, we talk about governance at PACANet following the board meeting that was held in June, PACANet strategy 2014-2023, update from CCANets-the case of Burkina Faso and the trainings in the Democratic Republic of Congo – Ituri district as the district goes through the network development process for a Christian response to HIV and AIDS. These events were made possible in partnership with DMCCD, and it is with sincere gratitude that we appreciate their invaluable continued support.

“Rev. Edward Baralemwa relinquishes his role as Executive Secretary of PACANet. ”

Recognizing his contribution over the years since 2002 at the inception of PACANet, Rev. Edward Baralemwa has served as the Executive Secretary at PACANet for over 10 years. During this period, PACANet grew to realize her mission of linking Churches, Christian organizations and Christian networks in Africa to enhance their HIV and AIDS responses with Country Christian AIDS Networks-CCANets established in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Madagascar, Uganda, Cameroun and most recently South Sudan and DR Congo.

It is in this past quarter in consultation and approval by the board that Edward made the difficult decision to relinquish his duties as the Executive Secretary, but rather focus more on

the sustainability and strategic issues of the organization. This means Edward may not be as regular as before but he can still be found on his PACANet address; thus ebaralemwa@pacanet.net and continues to support PACANet with his vast experience and knowledge of the organization. The organization shall remain focused as Joel Kigenyi who has served as programme manager since 2010 steps in as Acting Executive Secretary. Watch this space as we continue updating you.

PACANet reviews her Strategy

PACANet strategy ended 2013, which called for a review of strategy. This was done during the last two quarters, with reflection on the PACANet time line since the previous strategic plans, both internal and external organizational assessment was done, considering the experience and lessons learnt previously. The 10 year strategy 2014-2023 was structured following input from the constituency at the lessons learnt conference held in Botswana in May 2013, country experiences as drawn from the Country Christian

AIDS Networks-CCANets, and the trends in Africa. In the effort to further the vision, mission and strategic direction of PACANet and her constituency, the theme of this strategy is *“A self sustaining and comprehensive Christian response to HIV and AIDS, leading to total community transformation in Africa.”* The implementation of this plan will be guided by the overarching goal to positively engage and position the Church in Africa as an effective and efficient key partner in the response to HIV and AIDS.

PACANet will seek to achieve this strategy by facilitating a comprehensive Christian response to HIV and AIDS; support and equip for personal development to ensure economic empowerment, initiate sustainability strategies, and ensure synergy through a Pan African Christian collaborated response towards an AIDS free Africa. We cherish your prayers and support.

Governance at PACANet

PACANet held her annual board meeting on 13th and 14th June 2014 at Garuga country Lake resort in Uganda. At this meeting, the sustainability of PACANet was the main center of discussion. This took the path of exploring local resource mobilization through innovative income generating ventures, exploring the potential of the Church in local resource mobilization to deal with the HIV and AIDS problem from within the Church congregations and the immediate wider community, and the opportunity to tap and harness the capacity from within the church to build the capacity of the church for effective HIV and AIDS response.

'Church Human Resource HIV and AIDS Competence Training' -DR Congo

To enhance networking among churches and the Christian communities for an effective Christian response to HIV and AIDS, PACANet conducted a 4 weeks training in DRC aimed to develop a human resource base with the right attitude, knowledge and skills on HIV and AIDS who in turn will support interventions at the grassroots.

The training was conducted in Bunia - Ituri district specifically for churches and Christian organisation leaders. The training had 2 phases. The 1st phase held drew 40 participants which included 18 females and 22 males. The 2nd phase held between May and June 2014 drew 38 participants including 16 females and 22 males. The participants came from 13 Churches and 10 Christian organisations from the 5 Territories of Ituri district namely Aru, Mahagi, Djugu, Irumu and Mambasa.



Mr. Justin during a practicum in Kpandroma / RDC



HR Participants in group discussion

At the end of each phase of the training, participants were able to develop Action Plans based on what they have learned in relation to their individual church and community context. In between the phases, they did a practicum which continues also at the end of the training". These trainees were prepared to initiate, manage and sustain impact-appropriate HIV and AIDS interventions as well scale-up reach in their local churches, organizations and communities.

Change towards HIV & AIDS and PLHIV

The Change Agents training in DRC

In the bid to address HIV and AIDS more effectively and to reduce HIV and AIDS related stigma and discrimination of the most vulnerable groups,

during the month of June, PACANet conducted a change agents training in DR Congo in the district of Ituri. The training aimed to provide and

establish a resource pool of paradigm shifters to influence positive change in attitude and behavior towards HIV and AIDS among key church leaders, key

lay leaders and congregation members.

To this end, the capacity of Church leaders was enhanced towards support for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS in the community. The training also enabled the

church leaders to identify areas that need change in relation to HIV prevention, care and support, and to positively engage the relevant authorities to contribute towards lasting solutions in the target Ituri district.

The training drew 29 participants including 12 females and 17 males from the 5 regions of Ituri district, thus (Aru, Mahagi, Djugu, Irumu & Mambasa).

Update from CCANets: Burkina Faso

The network in Burkina Faso has been working hard to enhance the capacity of church leaders to deal with the issues of HIV and AIDS in their local church congregations and communities. Among the different approaches used, one of them has been sensitization trainings on topics such as sex education among children and children rights. Such topics on education and sexuality previously considered taboo have since been welcomed by the church leaders. This has been evidenced by the increased number of local churches that have expressed interest to attend the trainings.

In the past quarters, the network managed to capture some of the stories as below;

A pastor from Ouagadougou did not believe in sex education among adolescents within the church. He considered this a taboo and as one of those factors that corrupt children to indulge in early sex. This belief was challenged during the trainings on sexual education and violence. From these trainings, the pastor was able to change his mind set and now appreciates the importance of sex education among adolescents and is now a strong advocate.

The network continues to boast of a medical practitioner and pastor who was trained by the CCANet, and has served his church and region to sensitize on HIV&AIDS related issues, premarital counseling and VCT.

Since the beginning of the year, 6 girls managed to escape genital mutilation and forced early marriage with support from the church.

One of the church leaders who attended the training on sex education and children sexual violence in Ouagadougou transferred what she had learnt to her congregation. A congregation member who was organizing to mutilate her 3 daughters in the Central-southern region (Kombissiri) abandoned the plan. She instead decided to persuade her friends and family to stop the practice. She is now an advocate against the practice.

At another incident, a participant in the training on sexual education and children sexual violence at Dori understood how bad excision was, and openly promised to spare the girl he had intended to mutilate.

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