

# TANZANIA CIVIL SOCIETY AGYW PLATFORM FOR ACTION

## Towards increasing Domestic Resources for health and wellness of Tanzania's next generation of women.

### Who we are

Tanzania Network of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (TNW+) is a membership network established and run by women living with HIV from 4 NGOs and 19 CBOs. It is made of a strong membership of 55 WLHIV support groups reaching 1500 members in 12 regions of Tanzania Mainland. It was registered in May, 2005 as a Non-Governmental Organization with a registration S.O.NO.13146 and certificate of compliance NO. 1543 as a first network of women living with HIV in Tanzania.

We have for a long time worked together to advance the interest of people living with and affected by HIV and for the health of all Tanzanians and TNW+ is contributing to an AIDS-free Generation through a comprehensive HIV programs that are targeting women of all diversity.

We would like to acknowledge the effort by the government to create and implement policies, provide health services to the citizenry of Tanzania including Adolescent Girls and Young women. However, we do realize that currently there are some gaps both in service provision as well as policy.

### The rationale

THIS for 2016 to 2017, PEPFAR and GF data informs that Adolescent girls and young women are one of the most valuable segments to HIV epidemic response in the country. The health of our daughters, sisters, and the future generation of leaders is imperiled by inadequate investment in HIV prevention, treatment and comprehensive sexual reproductive health rights programming that is available and accessible in a comprehensive and timely manner without stigma or discrimination.

According to National Bureau of Statistics population projections, Tanzania Mainland has a population of 6,935,564 between the ages of 10-14 years (3,462,701 females and 3,472,863 males) and 5,862,972 between the ages of 15-19 years (2,936,119 Females and 2,926,853 males) which account for 1/3 of the total population.

Adolescents have largely been inadequately reached by social, health specifically HIV prevention services as a unique segment of the population. While the importance of this age group has been acknowledged, the health of this group has received very little special attention.

This large cohort presents significant potential for the country's social and economic development by making the necessary investments improve to health and productivity

Evidence from DREAMS current best practices in Tanzania and from other countries show that investments in adolescent health, particularly reproductive health, can triple dividends.

There are some valuable examples of what this programming could look like such as the PEPFAR DREAMS program and the AGWY program funded by Global Fund. However, both interventions are not able to reach all young women in need due to limited coverage and scope. PEPFAR is currently in just seven councils and reaching a total of approximately 220,000 adolescent girls and young women, with a cumulative investment that will reach approximately USD\$16,326,356 by September 2019.

On the other hand the Global fund AGYW program is covering 11 Councils different from PEPFAR interventions reaching adolescent girls and young women with a cumulative investment of USD \$ 16 million by end of 2020. With approximately 6.3 million AGYW nationally and approximately 1 million identified as vulnerable by the population estimates generated by the Tanzania HIV/AIDS Indicator Survey (THIS) study, in 26 regions with a total number of 189 districts this level of investment is wholly inadequate.

The policy environment on the other hand does not allow for implementation of evidence based interventions. Unavailability of data in its disaggregated form and lack of awareness among AGYW of existing interventions and how to access them, exacerbates the situation even further.

### RECOMENDATIONS

We therefore request the Parliament through the HIV and AIDS Parliamentary Committee and the Parliamentary Budget Committee under their respective ministries (MoHCDGEC and MoPF) to Publicly support our platform for addressing the adolescent girls and young women health challenges in Tanzania today, by addressing the following priorities;

## 1. Doubling the adolescent girls and young women investment

Government of Tanzania has made adolescent health and wellbeing a priority as reflected in domestic budget allocations and through secured commitments from The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and The Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM.) Present allocations are roughly US\$ 16 million by the end of September 2019, we therefore seek an additional hundred million USD as a minimum investment secured through the following channels:

### **Government of Tanzania investment of budgetary resources and political will for a comprehensive health platform for adolescent girls and young women.**

The current proposed National Accelerated Action & Investment Plan for Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (NAAIA) lays out an excellent framework for Tanzania-owned and directed programming across sectors to ensure the health of AGYW and reap economic dividends. We humbly request the Parliament through these two committees to facilitate the endorsement of this plan and further support establishment and funding of the AIDS Trust Fund with a significant proportion earmarked for young women and adolescent programs.

### **Targeted use of Global Fund grant savings for adolescent girls and young women programming**

The Global Fund is currently supporting adolescent girls and young women Interventions in 11 councils worth US\$ 16 million which is not enough to reach many girls in need of services. Civil society in Tanzania are however aware of a possibility of a grant savings from the current available for reprogramming. We therefore request some of the savings be allocated to the expansion of the current adolescent girls and young women interventions to more needy additional regions and districts/councils. We request the government to support our demand and make this allocation possible.

### **Increasing the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) investment**

The Determined, Resilient Empowered, AIDS Free, Mentored and Safe Women (DREAMS) program is only covering 7 districts in 3 regions targeting 218,916 adolescent girls and young women.

DREAMS however provides an evidence base for expansion of adolescent girls and young women programming throughout Tanzania.

Since the launch of the DREAMS partnership in 2014, studies have shown that DREAMS interventions have a significant impact on the lives of young women. In the 2018 PEPFAR country operational plan, Tanzania's plan to expand DREAMS to additional districts was revised at the direction of Washington DC headquarters such that the resources remained concentrated in a select series of districts. We humbly request through the AIDS and Budget committees under their respective ministries and other stakeholders to sensitize and influence PEPFAR expands its investment and its coverage during COP2019.

## 2. Enhanced Coordination of adolescent girls and young women interventions at National, Regional, Council and community levels.

With waning resources in the terrain improving coordination as well maximizing on existing synergies is the only way we are going to achieve the goal of reducing new HIV infections among AGYW cost effectively. Increasing coordination at all levels is therefore critical.

### **Increased demand Creation and Uptake of Health Services**

Currently there are existing isolated and uncoordinated interventions being implemented especially at council level. Evidence also shows that there is very little awareness of the various interventions being implemented among AGYW which in turn affects uptake of the services.

Creating demand for health services among AGYW is therefore a high priority. Civil society has comparative advantage to access these groups of people through peer education, capacity building and outreach work and creating IEC materials. We therefore request government to put in place mechanisms that allow for improved coordination among all key players especially at Council level. The role of CSO needs to be recognized and supported at all levels.

### **Conclusion**

The Government of Tanzania can lead on a comprehensive health platform including services, policies and community engagement that builds on what has worked in DREAMS. Expanding DREAMS interventions to other districts would help reduce the HIV risk among AGWY which is the overall goal of the DREAMS project

