

RHRP NEWSLETTER



EMPOWER
TANZANIA

WELCOME! I hope you and your families are all doing well and you are enjoying teaching the reproductive health and relationships curriculum. We at Empower Tanzania are making the final plans for the September refresher training and we are very excited to tell you we will have Nelson Nio, a specialist self-defence trainer, join us from America to provide self-defence training. You will recognize him from the self-defence video you have been showing your students. His training sessions promise to be useful and enjoyable.



NOTES FROM DR. JEFF

We are pleased to announce a meeting with the 38 RHRP teachers who were involved in the original training last year. We have decided to call you “champions” because you are fighting for the cause of reproductive health and relationships education! The meeting will be during the short break in September. We are planning on a 3-day meeting on September 11-13. We look forward to seeing you again!

The meeting in September will have four areas of focus: (1) Additional reproductive health and education training, (2) Leadership training, (3) Self-defence training, and (4) A conversation about your experiences training the other teachers and educating the students. The last area of focus will have particular importance because we want to learn from you about your impressions of the program and create ways to make the program better. We will do this through discussion, small groups, surveys, and comment forms. Learning from each other is one of the many strengths of this program.

The trainer on the self-defence video on your pico projectors is named Nelson Nio and he created a system of self-defence for girls and women that he teaches in California, USA. He has agreed to make the long journey to teach you these techniques personally and he is very excited to meet you and learn about Tanzania and its people.

FOCUS SECTION: FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

We want to focus on one topic each issue to provide additional information. These are picked at random, but if you have a request, please contact Jessica!

Female genital mutilation (FGM, also known as female circumcision or cutting, is an illegal procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there's no medical reason for this to be done. It is important to note that FGM is not recommended by any religion or in any religious texts. It most often occurs between infancy and 15 years old.

FGM is done by people with no medical training, so what actually happens during each procedure is variable. The type of FGM also varies, ranging from to removal of the clitoris, with or without removing the labia minora and majora, to the procedure of sewing up the outer labia so there is only a very small vaginal opening. The sewing of a girl raises the risk of urine infections for life, and also makes it difficult for the woman to conceive or give birth to a baby. Any harmful procedure to the female genitalia, including pricking, scraping, stretching and cauterizing the genital area is also classed as FGM. All alterations and scar tissue from any type of FGM can interfere with the normal function of the vagina and urethra.

There are no health benefits to FGM and it can cause serious harm, including:

- serious difficulty with labor and childbirth, which can be life threatening for mother and baby
- repeated infections, which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- constant pain
- pain and difficulty having sex
- problems peeing or holding pee in (incontinence)
- depression and emotional trauma

Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure.

Girls in Tanzania are still being subjected to this abuse. In Kilimanjaro region 10.1% of girls are victims of FGM and in Manyara around 57.7% of girls are victims (MoH, 2016). It is known that in some areas, December constitutes a 'cutting season' (28 Too Many, 2018).

It is illegal under Tanzanian law for anyone to carry out FGM on a girl under 18 years, and FGM can lead to imprisonment of the 'cutter' (Article 21 of SOSPA, Section 169A(1)). If you suspect someone is at risk, please contact the Gender Police Desk immediately.

References:

Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC) [Tanzania Mainland], Ministry of Health (MoH) [Zanzibar], National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS) and ICF (2016). Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey (TDHS and MIS) 2015-2016. Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR321/FR321.pdf>

28 Too Many, Tanzania: The Law and FGM (2018) Online. Available at: [https://www.28toomany.org/static/media/uploads/Law%20Reports/tanzania_law_report_v1_\(may_2018\).pdf](https://www.28toomany.org/static/media/uploads/Law%20Reports/tanzania_law_report_v1_(may_2018).pdf)

The United Republic of Tanzania (1998) The Sexual Offence Special Provisions Act, available at http://tanzania.go.tz/egov_uploads/documents/The_Sexual_Offence_Special_Provisions_Act_4-1998_en.pdf





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is menopause?

A: Menopause is a term used to describe the end of a woman's natural fertility. Periods become less frequent, eventually stopping. It is a natural part of ageing that happens between 45-55 years of age. The hormone levels in the body change, meaning some women will experience a range of symptoms, such as hot flushed, night sweats, vaginal dryness, difficulty sleeping, low mood, reduced sex drive and problems with memory and concentration. Not all women experience these, but many will have a combination of a few.

Q: Does a woman always bleed the first time she has sex?

A: No, not always. It varies from each woman. A woman may bleed when she has penetrative sex for the first time due to her hymen breaking. The hymen is a thin piece of tissue that partially covers the opening to the vagina. It is quite easy for a hymen to break before a woman has sex for the first time when doing certain sports and activities including excessive running or horse riding. It can also break if a woman chooses to use tampons during the period. A woman may not know her hymen has broken because it often doesn't cause pain or noticeable bleeding.

Q: What is Thrush?

A: Thrush is a common yeast infection that can affect both males and females. It is not classed as an STI as it can happen spontaneously, but it can be passed between partners. Symptoms include thick white discharge from the vagina or penis and itching and irritation around the vagina, or around the head of the penis and under the foreskin. Yeast naturally lives on the skin in these areas, and sometimes an imbalance can cause it to grow too fast. A simple antifungal treatment will solve the problem. It is advised to visit a healthcare provider the first time a person experiences these symptoms to rule out any other cause.

YOUR STORIES ...

"Before the program one of the female students had a problem of excessive menstrual bleeding for years and she was afraid to share this problem with other people. She didn't tell anyone and she thought it's normal but after the program, after being taught about periods, she knew it's not normal. And after being taught about trusted adults she gained confidence and she was able to explain her problem to one of the teachers. Her teacher knew she needed medical attention so they took her to hospital to get treatment, and now she's fine continuing with her studies full of confidence."

GRACE MWANKYIKA



Madam Grace Mwanyika teaches at Mkombozi Secondary School

My name is Grace Mwanyika. I teach at Mkombozi Secondary School in Same District. I am also student's counsellor. I sincerely thank Empower Tanzania for enabling me to become part of the reproductive health and relationships program especially for our school youth.

Since the problem of teenage pregnancies, stigma, sexually transmitted diseases, moral decline, patriarch system and other have dominated our society, many young people have lacked the opportunity to express their voices with confidence and openness. After providing interactive education about reproductive health and relationships to students and teachers on freedom of expression and confidence, the response has been positive. New image of "Transparency without Fear" have been created which was previously under the shadow of tradition and custom, for example a boy to help and build a girl who is in her periods psychologically. BRAVO ETI...

I call on the community and government to live in this vision of Empower Tanzania and support the organization in order to build a healthy, professional and efficiency nation.

SPOTLIGHT:

We want to know about you! We would like to include a spotlight section on someone new each month. Send us your stories of teaching the sessions and a little bit about you ... you could see yourself here next issue!

OTHER EMPOWER TANZANIA PROGRAMS...

In this section, we want to let you know about some of the other work Empower Tanzania is doing. You are now a part of something much bigger.

Community Hospital Alliance Program

The Community-Hospital Alliance Program (CHAP) was initiated in April 2014 from a partnership between Empower Tanzania and Global Health Administration Partners. The program organized and trained 34 lay Maasai women to serve as community health workers (CHWs) in 21 remote, rural Maasai villages where they live. The core functions of the CHWs is to provide health education, timely life-saving treatments, patient referrals to healthcare facilities, disease surveillance and prevention, and vital events registration. It was important to have community health workers who could educate, provide field triage, communicate information to healthcare professionals, and arrange referrals and transportation. In cases of necessity, the CHWs should be able to also provide basic emergency care services such as fracture splinting, burn and wound first aid, and child delivery assistance. Therefore, an important feature of CHAP is relationship of the CHWs with hospital staff and their two government clinical officer supervisors, which promote close communication for healthcare questions, guidance and referral arrangement.

Initial training was performed in May 2014 using two registered nurses who are Tanzania certified trainers for both home-based care providers and birth attendants using training materials created by the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Films in Swahili addressing healthcare skills produced by Empower Tanzania, Medical Aid Films and Global Health Media Project were used as part of this training during the 15-day curriculum. And they are obligatory to annual refresher training. The involvement of Maasai men in the program has been a catalyst to program success. Also the provision of bicycle have reduced long distance walk to the CHWs from boma to boma and help them manage time.



The picture above was taken at a CHW training in Same last May.

MEET THE TEAM

In this part of the newsletter, we would like to introduce you to the team, one person at a time.



YOEZA MNZAVA

Education Programs Director

Yoeza Mnzava has over six years experiences in the field of community development and is deeply passionate about his work. After graduating with his bachelors degree in psychology, he worked with SMECAO Fund Organization as an extension officer. He joined Empower Tanzania several years ago and works as education programs coordinator teaching children at the Same Learning Center, among other activities. In the meantime, he also earned an MA in community economic developments and holds a number of certificates in related fields.

He is an activist on Anti Teenage Pregnancy Campaign in Same District, which fits well with his current involvement in RHRP. He works closely with Catherine Wales and Efrancia Nzota, so you will see him during his visits at the schools and at the trainings. He is excited to be part of this dynamic, life-changing program.

CONTACT US:

If you have a comment or suggestion about the newsletter, please email Jessica at jhaw1@gmail.com with the subject title "Newsletter."

If you need any help with a teaching issue, please contact Catherine at catherinewales17@gmail.com or Yoeza at yoeza1mnzava@gmail.com



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