Introducing programme partners and participants to each other’s work, and showcasing key activities achieved together through KP REACH in countries across Southern Africa.
WELCOME...

... to the first issue of Positive Vibes’ (PV) KP REACH newsletter!

This regular update aims to introduce programme partners and participants to each other’s work, and to highlight some of the key activities we have done together through KP REACH in different countries across Southern Africa.

Certainly for PV, this newsletter forms part of our ongoing commitment to learning, and we hope it will encourage the further forming of connections within countries and across organisations, and the identification of synergies between the network capacity strengthening, community-based human rights monitoring (Rights, Evidence, Action: REAct) and citizen journalist (Key Correspondent, KC) programme streams to strengthen our work to build an evidence base and identify best practice for more responsive HIV programming, and further our advocacy agenda to ensure ‘key population’ (KP) voices are heard and stigma and discrimination is removed.

This first issue gives a brief overview of the PV programme and who our country-based partners are, and then provides some snapshots of their work, including a focus on what we are learning. It concludes with a section called ‘Looking ahead’ in which we share some ideas about the programme direction and key activities over the next implementation period.

We are pleased to share this publication with you!

The PV KP REACH team

Members of the KP REACH team with PV colleagues at a planning session in March 2017
(back row: Flavian, Marlow, Abigail, Warren, Nobhongo, front row: Francesca, Lee, Antony, Zuki, Annah and Ben)
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

KP REACH is a three-year programme in year two of implementation. The grant focus is threefold:

1. strengthening networks (African Sex Workers Alliance, Coalition of African Lesbians, African Men for Sexual Health and Rights and the Southern African Trans Forum) to work closer together to find a collective voice and have more targeted advocacy, challenge policies, and find synergies in working together in the region.
2. improving data collection (REAct), knowledge management, and scaling up best practice by linking across countries.
3. finding a unified, collective KP voice—how can we talk to the media and the world out there in a way that will shift stigma and discrimination, how people think about a lesbian, a trans man or trans woman.

PV’s role in delivering KP REACH is to provide capacity strengthening support to the networks, and to deliver REAct and the KC initiatives. The success of the KP REACH programme depends on people working together. If we work in isolation (just as organisations or just as countries) we cannot achieve these objectives. We want to work better together across countries and organisations, as well as a regional group, hence this newsletter initiative, and its focus on learning and sharing.

We hope you are with us!
Meet some of our KCs as they celebrate Africa Day in May 2017 with a call for unity on the content of the Kilimanjaro Declaration.

Behind the scenes as KCs prep for their team video shoot
WHAT IS COMMUNITY-OWNED EVIDENCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION?

There are many monitoring systems that collect data on human rights violations. Rights, Evidence, Action (REAct) is a human rights monitoring and response system owned and managed by the community organisations who use it. It is based on a secure, IT-based system Martus which captures data, which is then analysed for trends across countries and KP groups by REAct Committees located in each country to inform programmes and advocacy initiatives.

Organisations, who are part of REAct, also provide direct emergency responses to human rights and violence-related needs among community members, and, in addition, can access a Rapid Response Fund (available in 29 countries in Africa and the Caribbean) to respond to situations or events that threaten the provision, access and uptake of HIV services for men who have sex with men (MSM) and LGBT+ people. For more information see http://www.aidsalliance.org/rapidresponsefund. The Elton John Foundation funds this initiative.

REAct collects data to build the body of evidence on the impact of human rights violations that impact on the effectiveness of HIV response, and provides a mechanism to inform and improve human rights-based HIV programming, as seen in the Malawi case study later in the newsletter. This evidence is essential for advocacy and influencing Governments and other actors to promote policy change and legal reform, and to support the rights of all people to access quality HIV services freely.

"This evidence is essential for advocacy and influencing Governments to promote policy change and legal reform"
Martha Kamba identifies as a lesbian in her community and is well known. She resides in the capital city of Swaziland. Martha's sister was aware of her sexual orientation.

Five years ago an incident occurred while Martha's sister was away for a week. Her brother-in-law raped her. She decided to report the case to the police through her ex-partner who was a local educator from an LGBT organisation.

The police asked her to go the hospital for pregnancy and HIV-testing. At the hospital, they examined her vaginal area for "proof of penetration". She was found to be HIV-negative. There was evidence of vaginal penetration.

Martha's brother-in-law was arrested. Her sister compensated her in return for dropping the charges against her husband. Later, her sister decided to divorce her husband.

How did this incident violate her human right?

Sexual encounter between two or more individuals must be by consent. When Martha's brother-in-law raped her, he violated her right to bodily integrity, ability to live a life of dignity and to be valued as a person.

Responses provided:

Medical Response: Martha was taken to a hospital for medical examination. It was found that she was not HIV-positive and not pregnant. The medical examination revealed vaginal penetration.

Legal Response: Martha reported the case to the police which led to the arrest of the perpetrator.

Responses not provided:

Psycho-social support: Martha went through a traumatic experience but was not provided with psycho-social support.

Legal Response: Martha was not provided with proper legal advice as she dropped the case in turn for compensation.

Solution:

Martha should be referred for counselling where she will receive psycho-social support.
What is our initial data review telling us?

Since December 2016, up until August 2017, 263 cases were documented, with 381 KP community members individually affected. The reason for the difference in numbers is that multiple people can be affected in one case.

Of the cases documented so far, some date back as far back as 2010, with 63 of those happening in the first five months of 2017 alone. Community members are the most common perpetrators, with 106 human rights violations attributed to this group. Malawi (24), Zambia (23) and Zimbabwe (20) have the highest number of community members committing these acts. However, even though community members are the main perpetrators of human rights violations, survivors also report receiving assistance, such as transport to the police and hospital, from other people in their community.

Of the documented cases, sex workers experienced the highest number of human rights violations. This could be attributed to the fact that most sex workers conduct their business at the same location in large numbers, for example in one incident in Zambia, 85 sex workers were arrested simultaneously. Other groups showing high numbers of affected include gay men in Malawi (25) and lesbians in Botswana (21).

Note, the data discussed here represents only what has been collected through KP REACH, and is not a reflection of the full extent of violations that take place in each of the countries.

How are we responding?

Sixty-nine (69) percent of the documented cases were responded to. Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe are showing the highest number of responses provided to survivors to date, which could be attributed to strong and systematic referral systems used by most community-based organisations in the country. As a result of discussion from the Linking and Learning Exchanges,

(see page 12) and as the programme progresses and grows, REAct implementers are working hard to establish a comprehensive network of referrals to such services through alliances with human rights organisations and lawyers’ collectives.

The response to these violations should not be a punishment. We should educate communities, administrative officials and security forces on human rights and to respect people’s freedom of life choices, especially in localities where many of the violations happen.¹

Lessons learned so far

Responding to human rights violations requires coordination, as multiple actions have to be taken and followed through. It is important for organisations to have a structured approach when supporting survivors. To support and promote this, REActors received trauma support training in June 2017 to assist in manage trauma for survivors and for themselves, in order to better provide support to community members who had experienced violations.

Post-assessments of responses provided to survivors will assist organisations to improve their support by determining the quality of responses, identifying and promoting best practices, and improving approaches used to address the challenges associated with responding to human rights violations.

HOW CAN PARTNERS USE REACT TO ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED HIV PROGRAMMING?

REAct can help extend and improve the efficacy of organisations’ human rights programmes including legal services, ‘know your rights’ initiatives, engagement with law enforcement officers and public healthcare officials, advocacy, programmes to address gender-based violence, gender inequality and harmful gender norms, and programmes to reduce stigma and discrimination by providing an evidence base for REACT.

For example, when REAct was being delivered in Uganda, Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) documented human rights violations, provided crisis response, referred cases and provided legal aid when necessary to provide a multi-pronged response.

I am HIV positive and I have lived with it for a year now … One time I walked into a clinic near home and talked to the nurse about what was happening and I told her that I was HIV positive. She referred me to a certain centre where I could access my medication. Reaching that centre, I found a lady seated there and she asked for my history and I told them how I love and sleep with boys and the lady looked at me and she said, ‘we don’t offer services to such people’ (homosexuals). She told me to move out of the centre and go somewhere else. Meanwhile she started calling people to come and see ‘this rotten person’, so I had to walk out the centre. I felt like committing suicide—so lost and confused.²

² SMUG, REAct interview in Uganda, quoted in: And That’s How I survived being killed, April 2016.
WHAT IS A KEY CORRESPONDENT?

Gender minorities on the African continent and the world over suffer an inordinate amount of discrimination, stigma, and human rights violations because of their identity. The KP REACH programme has selected 24 KCs or citizen journalists based on their affiliation with ‘key population’-led organisations and allies.

The KCs are content producers; creating content with the intention of affecting behaviour change within people in spaces of power and influence: policymakers, law enforcers, medical practitioners, traditional leaders, as well as educational, religious, and local communities. The information is intended to empower them with the agency for advocacy—to convert sectors which are often intolerant into potential champions of KPs.
Testimonies and evidence documented through REAct over its years of implementation are being used by communities themselves to advocate for the human rights of beneficiaries. Violations take many forms and require nuanced responses.

In Malawi, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP), currently has one of the highest reporting rates for human rights violations cases. This may be in part due to their appointing full-time resource people who are responsible for implementing human rights violations programmes, the scoping and design of which uses REAct to inform their programme direction and advocacy initiatives, such as the design of a ‘know your rights’ sensitisation workshop to educate young women on what to do if their human rights are violated. Additionally, all human rights cases and responses provided by CEDEP are presented in an annual report that is shared with its partners as part of influencing and advocacy efforts.

In South Africa, REAct is being used by Aids Legal Network as a community-participation tool with over ten community-based organisations to complement research on the vulnerability of Queer women to gender-based violence (GBV). The research looks at the dual identities of HIV status and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), and associated risks and prevalence of human rights violations. This will inform the development of programme and advocacy frameworks and processes such as community dialogues to better respond to GBV in the country using a human rights-based approach.

Storytelling as a tool for advocacy, will be tackled by KCs using a multi-pronged media approach. Written content will be produced for a dedicated website, with produced videos for the YouTube channel. KC stories will help motivate civil society action, stimulate dialogue and hold policymakers accountable for their commitments.
Advocacy stories so far
Click on the links below to see some of the stories coming from our KCs:

**Same-sex marriage – Malawi’s stance**
Chimwemwe Padatha from Malawi partook in a pro-life and pro-family march earlier this year. He shares the experience and his insights.

**Her name was Simelane**
Advocating for behaviour change must be confronted on all fronts – even in the entertainment world. It’s why spaces like the Batho ba Lorato Film Festival are necessary. Botswana’s Mmobatho Motsamai spoke to the organisers and fellow festival goers about the importance of the event.

**Standing up for women’s rights – someone had to**
Zimbabwe’s Daphne Jena speaks to two women activists about the endeavour for equal rights for the LGBT+ community, and how HIV/AIDS exacerbates the struggle in ways many haven’t considered.
WHAT ARE WE LEARNING?

PV has facilitated four Linking and Learning Exchanges (LLEs), in four KP REACH countries, hosted collaboratively and inviting the other four programme countries. These two-day learning processes are opportunities for KCs and REActors to connect and learn from each other; this is the focus of the first day. They also offer an opportunity to troubleshoot and review the data that has been collected thus far.

The second day provides an opportunity for in-country partners, allies and potential strategic partners to meet the two teams of documenters. The basics of documentation are covered and ways in which we can work better together, find synergies and share what we know works—are explored.

LLEs have shown us:

• the importance of not only better connecting REActors to KCs, but also to our in-country partners.
• how our in-country partners can best support REActors and KCs, and how well the programmes work with said support.
• It also offers participants the opportunity to share their lessons learnt and best practices.
LOOKING AHEAD

Activities for the remainder of the year will focus on:

• Designing a data analysis ‘how-to’ guide and toolkit that supports partner organisations to interpret and use REAct data and KC stories to inform their programming and advocacy initiatives;
• Strengthening the in-country REAct Committees, many of whom have had a first meeting and devised initial Action Plans to apply the collated data to programme and advocacy plan design;
• Hosting a KC reflection at the end of October in Pretoria. The two-and-a-half-day process will consist of two parts: 1) a knowledge sharing and reflection process based on discussions from the year’s LLEs and using lessons learnt from the work in-country as a basis to reflect and look at ways to improve the programme; 2) a focus on video training and software editing.
• Starting the end of year newsletter, which will focus in on advocacy and influencing and our network strengthening work, among other things, so if you have a story you would like to share or an initiative you want to promote, please get in touch.
• Planning for 2018 activities.

To share a story idea, an update or to give feedback, please email us on support@keycorrespondents.org