



Welcome to the 25th edition of the ARASA newsletter

The ARASA team has been extremely busy over the past 6 months and we are excited to update you on what we have achieved since the beginning of the year!

In May, we marked one of the most important events in the ARASA calendar: the Annual Partnership Forum (APF) - which brought together representatives from the 116 ARASA partners to discuss progress and challenges faced since the previous Partnership Forum and identify advocacy priorities for the year ahead.

The first half of 2017 was a period of reflection for us as we embarked on an external evaluation process and begun the development of our new Strategic Plan (2018 – 2022). We are excited to share the findings of the evaluation with you in this edition of the newsletter.

Beyond reflecting on our achievements over the past 4 years and engaging partners to identify our priorities for 2017 and beyond during the APF, we continued to advocate for acceptable, accessible, affordable and quality sexual and reproductive health rights, HIV and TB services for people living with HIV and TB and key populations. This included hosting a meeting on criminalisation of HIV exposure, transmission and/or non-disclosure; working with young people living with HIV to demand that governments adhere to global guidance in their TB policies and programming; working with parliamentarians to reform intellectual property laws to improve access to medicines; and initiating the roll-out of the HIV, TB and Human Rights Training and Advocacy Programme in Kenya. ARASA also continued support the implementation of capacity strengthening and advocacy activities by partners who successfully completed the regional Training of Trainers Programme in 2016 through our Small Grants Programme. You can read about all this exciting work in this newsletter.

Should you have any questions, comments or contributions for future editions of the newsletter, please email communications@arasa.com.

For updates and more information on ARASA's work, visit our website on www.arasa.info, connect with us on Facebook and on Twitter (@_ARASAcotts).

Until next time!

Articles in this issue:

- Highlights from the 2017 Annual Partnership Forum
- The 2017 ARASA HIV, TB and Human Rights Award
- Reviewing ARASA's impact in 2016
- External Evaluation of ARASA's 2013-2017 Strategic Plan
- From N'djamena to model laws and beyond: Revolutionising approaches to criminalisation of HIV non-disclosure, transmission and exposure

- Promoting access to essential HIV and TB medicines through the reform of Intellectual Property laws
- Introducing the Kenya HIV, TB and Human Rights Training and Advocacy Country Programme
- “Show us the money for health!”: Achievements of the financing for key populations programme
- Young people demand that governments step up for TB
- Grant-making for HIV, TB and human rights training and advocacy

Highlights from the 2017 Annual Partnership Forum

On 22 and 23 May, ARASA hosted 94 representatives from 116 ARASA partners during the 2017 Annual Partnership Forum (APF) held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The ninth meeting of its kind, the 2017 APF provided a platform for the staff and trustees of ARASA to update partners on the achievements of the organisation since the previous APF and for partners to network, share lessons learned and explore ways to address HIV and TB-related human rights challenges facing their countries.

As in previous years, partners were invited to identify emerging advocacy issues they would like to discuss during the APF prior to the meeting. These issues, which ranged from access to health services and commodities, sexual and reproductive health and rights, improving the health and rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons and creating enabling legal and policy environments for people who use drugs, guided the thematic sessions of the APF.

Group discussions presented an opportunity for partners to further explore how they could strengthen their advocacy and engage key influencers such as law enforcement officials, judiciary, healthcare workers, media, religious and traditional leaders as well as law and policymakers.

A key discussion centred on how ARASA and its partners are adapting to the changing context in regards to funding and the closing civil society space. Partners suggested that ARASA strengthen its advocacy to protect the rights of civil society to organise and fulfil its watchdog function as well as on funding for civil society organisations working on HIV, TB and human rights advocacy. They also recommended that ARASA consider increasing its role as an intermediary grant-maker and strengthen elements of organisational development in its regional Training of Trainers Programme.

On the second day of the meeting, Uganda was selected as the country for the roll-out of the 2018 HIV, TB and Human Rights Capacity Strengthening and Advocacy Country Programme.

“We congratulate ARASA on the APF. This is more than an Annual Partnership Forum, but has also allowed for a lot of learning, sharing of lessons and opportunities to network with each other,” said Happy Assan from the Tanzania Network of People who use Drugs (TANPUD).

Reflecting on the value of the ARASA partnership, one partner stated: “[ARASA provides] Capacity building, networking and life skills training for effective advocacy for improved service delivery to the most marginalised populations in communities living with HIV.” Another reflected: “ARASA builds grassroots organisations and transforms us to be strong and vibrant movements.”

The 2017 ARASA HIV, TB and Human Rights Award

On the evening of 23 May, Pleaders of Children and Elderly People at risk (PEPA), based in the Democratic Republic of Congo received the 2017 ARASA HIV, TB and Human Rights award for their work in eastern DRC.

“The award, established in 2007, recognises organisations across southern and east Africa for their ground-breaking work on HIV, TB and human rights, often in extremely challenging political climates”, explained Michaela Clayton, Director of ARASA. “The award is accompanied by a grant to support the recipient organisation to implement interventions to strengthen a human rights-based response to HIV and TB”.

PEPA advocates for respect for human rights for prisoners, provides assistance to victims of human rights violations, orphans and vulnerable children and survivors of gender-based violence in DRC and Uganda. The organisation provides access to education, healthcare services, commodities, humanitarian aid and legal assistance. PEPA has also been training representatives of provincial and national government, police service, civil society and judges on the rights of prisoners and engaging Members of Parliament for the adoption of laws aimed at improving the living conditions and access to health services for prisoners.

“We are extremely honoured to receive this award. PEPA works in eastern DRC, a conflict zone and one of the most violent regions in the DRC, with high levels of human rights abuses. Despite this and with very limited financial resources, PEPA has accomplished a tremendous amount of work in 2016 in terms of engaging political leaders, advocating for the respect of human rights and providing basic assistance to people living with HIV and vulnerable communities,” said Appolinaire Zagabe, Executive Director of PEPA.

To learn more about PEPA and its work, visit: <http://www.pepahumandignity.org/>

Reviewing ARASA’s impact in 2016

During the first half of 2017, we reflected extensively on the impact of our work in 2016. We are happy to report that we were able to document clear impact of our interventions in our full [2016 Annual Report](#).

The report tracks the impact of ARASA’s work against our four strategic outcomes, which include strengthening the capacity of civil society to advocate for acceptable, accessible, affordable and quality HIV, TB and SRHR services for key populations and people living with HIV as well as engaging service providers, the media, traditional leaders and policymakers to create an enabling environment for access to HIV, TB and SRHR services.

The report presents case studies of impact achieved by ARASA’s interventions including the Country Programme implemented in Zimbabwe, Small Grants projects and work with law enforcement officials, National Human Rights Institutions and Parliamentarians. The report also provides a summary of the resources developed by ARASA in 2016, as well as media reports about ARASA from the past year.

From N'djamena to model laws and beyond: Revolutionising approaches to criminalisation of HIV non-disclosure, transmission and exposure

The proliferation of HIV-specific laws has been one of the avenues that governments in Southern and East Africa have turned to in an effort to prevent and control the HIV epidemic. This legislation often includes punitive provisions relating to 'compulsory testing', 'involuntary partner notification', 'non-disclosure' and 'transmission' of HIV, fueling stigma and discriminates against people living with HIV. The overly broad and vague nature of most HIV specific laws, accompanied by the imposition of criminal sanctions without empirical or scientific support, further underpins the rift between public health goals and the protection of human rights.

In an effort to review national and regional efforts to address HIV criminalisation, ARASA collaborated with the HIV Justice Worldwide (HJWW) Consortium to convene a two-day meeting with policy and law makers, members of the judiciary, lawyers, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organisations in Johannesburg on 24 and 25 April.

According to Johanna Kehler, Director of the AIDS Legal Network, laws which criminalise HIV exposure or non-disclosure ultimately "maintain and widen the divide between public health needs and human rights obligations".

A key focus of the meeting was on how punitive measures further marginalise and stigmatise women living with HIV and key populations who are already criminalised on the basis of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

The participants agreed that there is a need to focus on the inter-sectionality within the HIV criminalisation discourse, as well as a need for coordination and collaboration amongst legislators, members of the judiciary, parliamentarians, health care workers and civil society organisations to further advocacy related to this issue. The participants also agreed that transformative approaches to HIV criminalisation, require both legal and social reforms, such as sensitisation of community members and the media.

To read more about the meeting, follow #Decrim4Health on Facebook and Twitter.

Promoting access to essential HIV and TB medicines through the reform of Intellectual Property laws

During the first half of 2017, ARASA continued to strengthen its collaboration with the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) in an effort to advocate for a reform of Intellectual Property laws to increase access to essential HIV and TB medicines.

On 6 and 7 April, ARASA's Programme Lead, Lynette Mabote, participated as a resource person in a meeting of the SADC PF Standing Committee on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment hosted in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting aimed to increase the awareness and appreciation of Parliamentarians of the interlinkage between access to medicines, healthcare and human rights and to leverage their commitment to make use of Industrial Property Legislation as outlined in the SADC Pharmaceutical Business Plan (2015-2019). The meeting also presented an opportunity to share good practice in the use of Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) flexibilities by Least Developed Countries and influence strategies used by Parliamentarians to promote access to medicines.

The Members of Parliament recommended that Parliaments strengthen efforts to harness the TRIPS flexibilities and adopt a human rights-based approach to increasing access to medicines. They also agreed to encourage SADC Member States, which have started to review their Intellectual Property legislation, to complete the process and to urge the remainder of countries to embark on this important legislative process.

Introducing the Kenya HIV, TB and Human Rights Training and Advocacy Country Programme

By KELIN

During a stakeholder's consultative forum held on 6 and 7 April 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya, various stakeholders pledged their commitment to the ARASA-supported National HIV, TB and Human Rights Training and Advocacy Programme being rolled out by Kenya Ethical and Legal Issues Network (KELIN) in 2017.

The consultative forum was hosted by ARASA partners KELIN, Lwala Community Alliance and Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA) to introduce the programme to key stakeholders and to solicit their support.

Partners present at the consultative forum noted that the programme is timely and will go a long way in supporting community structures to monitor implementation of commitments to guarantee the right to health. The partners identified the following three advocacy issues for the Country Programme to focus on: 1) implementation of protective laws and policies and the reform of problematic ones; 2) meaningful participation of CSOs in the implementation of commitments to guarantee the right to health, especially at county level; and 3) access to information, health care services and health commodities at the community level.

"Civil society ought to design and implement their programmes in ways that advocate for the implementation of the right to health – especially respect for health as a devolved function and the operationalisation of community level structures envisaged by the Constitution of Kenya," said Commissioner Catherine Mumma from the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution.

The consultative forum was attended by over 30 partners, including representatives of civil society organisations, networks of persons living with HIV and affected by TB, representatives of key populations, development partners, and representatives of government agencies.

The Country Programme aims at building a cadre of knowledgeable civil society leaders across the region as the basis of a broad social mobilisation around the right to health and accountability of government and other institutions to their international, regional and national legal obligations for health and human rights.

Kenya was identified as the focus country for the Country Programme by ARASA partners during the 2016 Annual Partnership Forum. The Country Programme has previously been implemented in Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

“Show us the money for health!”: Achievements of the financing for key populations programme

By HeJin Kim, ARASA Regional Key Populations Officer

In 2015 and 2016, ARASA collaborated with the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition to implement a programme aimed at supporting advocacy on funding for health and the engagement of key populations and people living with HIV in Global Fund and PEPFAR structures in Botswana, Malawi, and Tanzania.

The aim of this programme was to ensure proper allocation of Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) resources to HIV and TB interventions targeted at key populations. The programme also worked to strengthen domestic health budget monitoring and expenditure tracking to develop evidence for advocacy on domestic health financing.

Following the conclusion of the programme, ARASA and ITPC hosted a reflection workshop on 6 and 7 March 2017 in Johannesburg, attended by representatives of organisations participating in the Programme, including The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS

(BONELA), Sisonke Botswana, Men for Gender Health and Justice, Silence Kills Support Group, and Rainbow Identity Association from Botswana; the Center for the Development of People (CEDEP), the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders living with HIV/AIDS

(MANERELA+), and the Female Sex Worker Alliance from Malawi; and the Tanzanian Network of Women Living with HIV (TNW+), the Tanzanian Network of People who Use Drugs (TANPUD,) the Community Health Education Services and Advocacy

(CHESA), and Warembo Forum from Tanzania.

The workshop aimed to explore and document the impact that this programme has had in the 3 focus countries. Participants also reflected on the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and discussed how the programme has contributed to changes in funding for key populations over the two years.

The participants shared the significant impact of this programme in their countries, which included the following:

In Botswana:

- An organisation of people living with HIV became Global Fund sub-recipient and key population organisations became sub-sub recipients for the first time in 2015;
- Increased allocation from US\$0 to US\$ 2.9 million to human rights programming (through BONELA as sub-recipient) in the 2015 – 2017 Global Fund grant; and
- Allocation of BWP 7 million by PEPFAR for key population programming

In Tanzania:

- Revision of the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) governance manual to allow for key populations representation;

- Direct representation of key populations on the CCM as full and alternate members for the first time;
- US \$ 800 000 allocation to key population programming under the Global Fund grant

In Malawi:

- Establishment of the Female Sex Worker Alliance (FSWA) as an independent sex worker-led organisation;
- US\$ 1.2 million provided to a key population organisation (CEDEP) to implement the men who have sex with men (MSM) module of the Global Fund grant; and
- Strengthened sex worker representation on the CCM

To learn more about the Key Population Financing Programme, watch a short film [here](#). See photos from the Reflection Workshop [here](#).

Young people demand that governments step up for TB

On 24 March 2017, World TB Day, African Young Positives (AY +), a regional network for and by young people living with HIV and AIDS, as well as networks of young people living with HIV in Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia launched a Youth Call to Action for governments to step up for TB and implement the latest World Health Organisation guidelines, by World TB Day 2018.

With support from ARASA, young people in the five countries hit the streets to raise awareness and urge policy makers and implementers to prioritise TB in policy development and budget allocation. The youth-led initiatives implemented on World TB day included flash mobs, press conferences and community engagement, as well as a vibrant social media campaign under #AfroYouthStepUpforTB. Young people used Facebook and Twitter to increase awareness for service uptake among young people (especially young people living with HIV) to be screened for TB, support people on TB treatment and to advocate for improved access to TB treatment, care and support.

For more about the activities, follow #YouthStepUpforTB on Facebook and Twitter, see a gallery of photos of the events [here](#).

Grant-making for HIV, TB and human rights training and advocacy

Catalytic investments for HIV, TB and human rights training and advocacy

By Soraya Mentoor, ARASA Regional Capacity and Small Grants Officer

ARASA has a competitive small grants programme that enables participants of the Training of Trainers programme and other partners from Southern and East Africa to implement HIV, TB and human rights related training and advocacy campaigns.

During the first quarter of 2017, we selected the 16 grant recipient organisations and they are already well underway with the implementation of their projects. The scope of the projects being implemented ranges from addressing legal barriers to access to services for key populations to monitoring and analysing the efforts of national governments to protect, respect and uphold human rights in the context of HIV and TB.

ARASA's small grants programme goes beyond providing financial support to include continued technical support before, during and after the implementation of these projects. A key vehicle to deliver this support and enhance the project implementation and monitoring and evaluation skills of the grantees, is a pre-implementation workshop hosted from 21 to 23 February 2017 for 29 participants from Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Comoros and Swaziland.

During the workshop, the grantees presented their situational analysis, project proposals and budgets to each other for review. This peer review process leveraged the existing skills and knowledge of the participants to strengthen the proposals and presented a great way for participants to network and share their experiences. Participants reported that they appreciated the skills and knowledge sharing between the various organisations and were keen to use these skills to strengthen other projects implemented by their respective organisations.

"One of the highlights for me was the constructive feedback from partners and the ARASA team", said one participant from Malawi

The workshop also enabled grantees to enhance their skills on financial management and how to engage the media to enhance the visibility of their work and the issues they are focusing on during the implementation of their projects.