



**October Update: Family Planning & Reproductive Health Challenges for
Women in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Dear friends & partners,

We send warm greetings and hope this email finds you and your communities well.

The Girl Child & Her Long Walk to Freedom Project



I am glad to inform you that our organization is partnering with Imago Dei Fund on a project called, "The Girl Child & Her Long Walk to Freedom: Putting Faith to Work through Love to Break Ancient Chains". Emily Nielsen Jones, (Founder and President of Imago Dei Fund), and I to co-authored this resource manual to educate global community especially those with interest on the intersectionality of faith, gender equality, and humanitarian Development.

In our different yet overlapping spheres of work and cultural engagement, Emily and I have one foot in the Christian world and one foot in the larger world of global

development. Together we have insights and strategies for enlisting the timeless current of freedom and justice within our faith traditions to partner with culture in transforming the highly stratified “Old World” gender norms which continue to persist yet which are undermining humankind’s collective Long Walk to Freedom.

We are excited and thrilled to have gathered 137 participants from 18 countries on this reading journey all divided into 15 separate Journey Teams and our GOAL is to have the opportunity for a smaller, more intimate conversation to share insights, questions, and wonderings along the way. This reading journey was started on the October 10th (International Day of the Girl Child), to March 8th (The International Day of Women)

16 Days of Activism, 25th November – 10th December 2020

The Anglican Communion through the Director for Gender Justice has arranged a series of interactive panel events and three webinars during the 16 Days of Action to highlight the issues and responses of Anglicans across the Communion. I’m glad that I’m one of the selected panelists and I will be talking about “Engaging Men in ending GBV” on Friday 27th Nov at 2pm GMT. It is really encouraging.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an international campaign that takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide.

Family Planning and Reproductive Health Challenges for Women in the Sub-Saharan Africa



In the picture above is Stephanie (real name concealed), a mother of eight children who is now 26 years old. She dropped out of school for early marriage at the age of fifteen to an old man in the age of her grandfather and as of now, she has eight children. We met Stephanie in June 2020 during Covid-19 relief food distribution activity and I was interested to follow into her life/marriage history. When we asked her about planning her family, she was bold to tell me that her Christian faith is against family planning, and her husband won't listen something like that.

Personally as a church/faith leader, I believe very strongly that giving reproductive health education to young women and access to family planning is key and crucial in achieving Sustainable Development Goals, and is the surest way to end suffering and biting poverty in the sub-Saharan Africa. My mother too dropped out of school and was married as a second wife also at the age of 15 and gave birth to 12 children. We experienced firsthand suffering due to her inability to make choices on family planning.

Unwanted/Unplanned pregnancies comes with so much hurdles like interrupting young women's plans in many ways. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, one out of four young women/girls becomes pregnant and drops out of school. This lowers the lifelong earning potential of the girls trapping them and their family in an inter-generational cycle of poverty that will never end. Babies born to young teenagers and young mothers are also more likely to die before the age of 15, be malnourished or suffer poor health, and lack of education opportunity.



Stephanie is one of the women we are currently supporting on Livelihoods & Economic Empowerment. Through your support, she is running a village kiosk selling basic food items. Please thank you so much for your donation and support that enables Stephanie to feed her family. After due talk with her and husband about family planning, she decided to go for 5 years family planning injection.

We advocate for access to family planning and improved reproductive healthcare as we believe that unless more women are empowered to take their reproductive health into their own hands, other interventions to reduce poverty and inequality in Africa may be far less effective

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Thank you for your Support!

Sincerely,

Rev. Domnic Misolo

Executive Director

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