

[View this email in your browser](#)



Dear Friends and partners,

Merry Christmas!

My heart is full of gratitude as we close this quarter, September - December 2024, as we reflect on a period filled with impactful activities, inspiring milestones, and stories of resilience.

Our journey has been marked by significant progress, including witnessing one of our brave survivors of sexual violence, Jackline reclaiming her strength and beginning a new chapter. This progress reminds us why we need safe spaces for survivors of Gender-based violence (GBV) in the church and community.

In this newsletter, we have shared key highlights from our recent initiatives, moments of transformation, and the collaborative efforts that drive our mission forward in advancing advocacy for gender justice. Together, we've made progress in advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) knowledge and information among women, youth and religious leaders, promoting gender equality and empowering women and survivors of sexual violence.

These achievements are because of your support and solidarity, please thank you so much. Together we are working for a world where women and girls are safe and free from sexual and gender-based violence.



In our ongoing efforts to promote youth engagement, address gender-based violence, and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, we've been deeply committed to fostering stronger partnerships with women, youth, faith actors, Government Ministry of Health (MoH), and local communities.

Below, we highlight key activities and the tangible outcomes from our recent efforts, as well as the challenges we're working to overcome.

Radio Talk Show: Transforming Communities through the Airwaves, Advocating for Inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Services

On 18th September 2024, the Institute for Faith and Gender Empowerment (IFAGE) hosted a groundbreaking radio talk show on Radio Nam Lolwe, Kisumu County in Kenya, to champion advocacy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). This engaging session aimed to address the systemic barriers faced by marginalized groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds. Central to the discussion was the Intersectional See, Judge, Act (ISJA) tool—a transformative framework for identifying and dismantling cultural and religious barriers against SRHR.

The interactive talk show featured a vibrant panel of faith leaders, youth advocate, and health experts who shared success stories and practical examples of integrating intersectionality into SRHR advocacy.



IFAGE Team and religious leader during the radio talk show

Listeners across the region were invited to participate through live calls, SMS, and social media platforms, creating a dynamic two-way dialogue that resonated with diverse audiences. Personal stories shared by listeners underscored the pressing need for inclusive SRHR services and showcased the power of community-driven advocacy. The program also highlighted the pivotal role of faith leaders as changemakers, demonstrating how religious leaders can champion SRHR within their congregations to shift mindsets and foster inclusion.

The talk show was a resounding success, raising awareness about the importance of inclusive SRHR, empowering faith leaders with actionable strategies, and inspiring communities to embrace intersectional approaches. Listeners feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing a desire for more programs like this to spark deeper conversations and drive sustainable change. To build on this momentum, IFAGE plans to expand its reach through additional broadcasts, community training sessions, and advocacy efforts aimed at transforming SRHR access and policies.

This achievement is a testament to the impact of innovative, faith-based approaches in addressing critical health and rights issues. With your support, IFAGE can scale this initiative, empower more communities, and ensure no one is left behind in the fight for inclusive

SRHR. Partner with us today to amplify these efforts and create lasting change. Together, we can make inclusion a reality for all.

Commemorating International World Contraception Day.

On 26th September 2024, the **Institute for Faith and Gender Empowerment (IFAGE)** participated in a commemorating World Contraception Day organized by **Siaya County Ministry of Health**, alongside local NGOs and CBOs, at **Nyilima Grounds in Rarieda Sub-county**. The event, themed “Contraception Choice: The Power is in Your Hands,” focused on raising awareness about contraception and family planning. Over 300 participants, including youth, religious leaders, and community members, attended the event, which provided access to various sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, such as family planning, HIV testing, cervical cancer screening, immunization, and antenatal care.



The event strengthened partnerships between local health authorities, NGOs, and CBOs, laying the groundwork for future initiatives to improve SRH services in the region.

Despite challenges like limited resources and inconsistent follow-up services, the event successfully engaged the community and emphasized the importance of family planning in improving health outcomes. The collaboration with local leaders and faith actors proved vital in advocating for SRH services and ensuring broader acceptance of contraception.



Debriefing meeting with Siaya County Health Management Team.

On 30th September 2024, we (IFAGE) facilitated a meeting with the Siaya County Health Management Team (CHMT) at Siaya County referral hospital. The session focused on sharing the progress and impact of ongoing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) programs, emphasizing positive outcomes and identifying areas for improvement. Participants, comprising 30 CHMT members, engaged in collaborative discussions to address gaps in SRH service delivery and update strategies to enhance accessibility and quality. Key objectives included strengthening partnerships between health facilities, youth safe spaces, and faith-based organizations to ensure SRH services are youth-friendly, affordable, and accessible.



Members of Siaya County Health Management Team during the sessions with IFAGE.

The meeting reinforced the role of religious leaders in promoting SRH education within faith communities, leveraging their influence to foster community-based support. Challenges such as limited resources and

balancing stakeholder priorities were noted, with lessons highlighting the importance of regular evaluations and strong collaborations. Moving forward, IFAGE and CHMT aim to strengthen linkages between health facilities and safe spaces, monitor updated strategies, and conduct quarterly reviews to ensure progress and sustained impact.



Siaya County Health Management Team during the debrief meeting

Post-Training Evaluation with Religious Leaders.

In November 6th and 7th 2024, we conducted a post-training evaluation with religious leaders from Bondo and Rarieda Sub-counties. This follow-up session was designed to assess the effectiveness of our earlier training on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) using the ISJA (See, Judge, Act) tool. It aimed to reflect on the integration of SRHR topics into faith-based practices, identify challenges, and explore the way forward for sustainable SRHR advocacy within the local communities.



Faith Actors during the post evaluation Session



This evaluation brought together 60 religious leaders, fostering a collaborative dialogue on how to better address SRHR issues within faith-based settings. Through open discussions, religious leaders shared practical examples of how they have incorporated SRHR messages into their services, using stories from the Bible to engage their congregations effectively. Many leaders expressed a stronger commitment to promoting youth-friendly SRHR education, and several have already begun to integrate SRHR topics into their sermons, which has positively impacted the youth and community members seeking guidance.

Call to Action

As we continue to build on this momentum, we call on more faith leaders to embrace their role in shaping conversations around SRHR. Let us strengthen these partnerships and keep advocating for inclusive, accessible SRHR services. We invite more religious leaders to join the next round of training sessions to enhance their skills in addressing SRHR issues within their congregations.

Formation of SRHR Interfaith advocacy coalition.

On 20th November 2024, IFAGE made a very significant milestone in advocating for SRHR in Siaya county, by forming SRHR Interfaith Advocacy Coalition, the first ever in Siaya county and in Kenya aimed at uniting religious leaders in addressing SRHR challenges. This coalition is made up of 20 religious leaders from different denominations, who we had previously trained on the ISJA (See, Judge, Act) tool.

The coalition aims to work with Siaya County health department, policy-makers, and other faith-based organizations to actively advocate for accessible, affordable, available, and quality SRHR services to reduce cases of teenage pregnancies, new HIV infection among youth, and GBV cases in Siaya County.



The coalition also aims at forming safe spaces within their respective religious settings where youth and women can have access to SRHR information, debunk myths and misconceptions around SRH, and make informed choices about reproductive health services.

Our dream is to link these safe spaces with nearest health facilities to increase accessibility of SRHR services among women youth and also to get health education from qualified health care providers.

Roundtable Dialogue with Siaya County Health Management Team on Youth SRH.

On 21st November, IFAGE in collaboration with **Forum For African Women Educationalists (FAWE)- Kenya Chapter** and the Circle of

Concerned African Women Theologians (through the **Make Way project**), we facilitated a roundtable dialogue with the **Siaya County Health Management Team** and various **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** to disseminate the findings of the **Intersectional, See, Judge and Act (ISJA) research**. The dialogue aimed to highlight the challenges adolescents and young people face in accessing critical sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, especially contraception.



A primary finding from the research was the limited access to contraception, with many young people unaware of their full range of options. The discussion emphasized the need for increased training of healthcare workers in youth-friendly services and mental health counseling. It was also stressed that instead of creating separate youth-focused healthcare centers, integrating youth-friendly services within existing healthcare frameworks is key to addressing the needs of young people.

A significant barrier identified was misinformation around sexual health, contraception, and STI prevention, often influenced by peers. Additionally, cultural and religious barriers were discussed, particularly with religious leaders, who highlighted the fear of judgment that discourages young people from seeking guidance. There was a strong call for communities and religious spaces to create supportive, non-judgmental environments for open dialogue on sexual health.

The dialogue was further enriched by the **Siaya County Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescents Health Bill 2024** (RMNCAH Bill 2024), which, once published, will allocate 5% of the county budget to SRH commodities, improving access to services.

Together, we are committed to advancing access to SRH services and addressing the needs of adolescents and young people.

Intergenerational Dialogue on SRH, a successful dialogue between youth and religious leaders.

On November 26th, 2024, IFAGE hosted an intergenerational dialogue between youth and religious leaders at Christ Millennium ACK Church, Ndori, Siaya. This event aimed to break down cultural and generational barriers surrounding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) by fostering open, respectful conversations. The dialogue engaged 45 participants, including religious leaders from diverse denominations and youth, to address SRHR challenges, foster understanding, and create actionable collaboration plans.



Youth giving out his opinion during the intergenerational dialogue

Key Highlights:

The event promoted open communication, bridging the gap between youth and religious leaders on sensitive SRHR topics. Discussions highlighted the intersection of religious teachings with SRHR issues, emphasizing that faith can support healthy relationships and respectful

decision-making. Youth shared challenges like confidentiality concerns, limited access to services, and affordability issues. The connection between gender-based violence (GBV) and SRHR was also addressed, with leaders encouraged to promote respect and consent in their teachings.

Outcomes and Commitments

The dialogue strengthened relationships, fostering respect and understanding. Religious leaders pledged to include SRHR messages in sermons, offer counseling, and advocate for youth-friendly services. Youth committed to sharing SRHR information, engaging with leaders, and advocating for accessible services.



Looking Ahead:

Future actions include integrating SRHR into church programs, youth-led community initiatives, and follow-up sessions to assess progress. This dialogue marks the beginning of continued engagement and collaboration, with plans to expand involvement from other community leaders.

Get Involved:

Support SRHR advocacy by joining future events or donating to sustain these critical dialogues and services. Together, we can foster a more informed and supportive community.

SAFE SPACES FOR COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Following the formation of SRHR interfaith advocacy coalition, the members are creating safe spaces within their religious set-up, and this quarter, we have officially launched 3 safe spaces created to provide culturally sensitive and accurate information gender equality, women's health, and safety. These safe spaces aim to foster open dialogue on pressing issues such as **teenage pregnancies, STIs, domestic abuse, power relations, and the impact of patriarchy on women, youth, and children.**



The collaboration with religious leaders has been crucial in sustaining these safe spaces and ensuring the message is consistently communicated within faith-based settings and within grassroots communities. We were also able to commemorate 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. with the youth, women, and faith actors.

Strengthening SRHR Services: Insights from Youth Feedback Session.

In a transformative step toward improving youth-friendly SRHR services in Siaya County, IFAGE hosted a collaborative feedback session that brought together youth and healthcare providers. This platform facilitated candid discussions about the challenges youth face while accessing SRHR services and spurred commitments to action.



Youth participants highlighted several key challenges during the session. These included privacy concerns, with reports of providers and community health volunteers (CHVs) breaching confidentiality, as well as inadequate supplies of vital SRHR commodities in health facilities. Hidden costs were another pressing issue, with instances of youth being charged for services that are meant to be free. Additionally, lengthy wait times were noted as a deterrent to seeking care, alongside cases of discrimination where favoritism and unprofessional demands by some providers were reported. Youth also expressed dissatisfaction with unfriendly services, citing a lack of supportive and youth-centric approaches among healthcare providers.

In response, healthcare providers pledged to address these challenges by conducting visits to facilities and individuals cited during discussions, enhancing privacy measures, and enforcing confidentiality protocols. They also committed to advocating for youth to speak up and exercise their health rights. Meanwhile, youth participants committed to using barazas (community forums) to raise awareness of health rights and educate their peers and communities.



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Every year, from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day), the world observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). This global campaign calls for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls and serves as a time to reflect, advocate, and act toward achieving gender justice.

This year, we IFAGE, in collaboration with CLEATARA Centre (run by African Anglican Women Bishops), the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), and the Anglican Diocese of Bondo, marked the conclusion of this impactful campaign with a special event in Bondo, Siaya County.

Under the theme “Towards Beijing: Unite to End Violence Against Women and Girls”, the event also commemorated Human Rights Day with the message “Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now.”





Highlights of the Event

The day featured a vibrant street walk to raise awareness about human rights, femicide in Kenya, and the prevalence of GBV, drawing attention from the local community. This was followed by engaging panel discussions with notable speakers, including Bishop Emily Onyango, the first female bishop in the Anglican Church of Kenya, survivors of GBV who courageously shared their stories, representatives from law enforcement and the State Department of Gender and Affirmative Action, and mental health professionals. The discussions focused on the harsh realities of femicide and domestic violence, collaborative strategies to combat GBV, and the role of the church as a safe haven for survivors.

As part of the event, we also observed the Red Chair Campaign, a powerful symbol of the countless women and girls who have lost their lives due to gender-based violence. The campaign is a call to action to end the silence surrounding violence and to stand in solidarity with survivors. It was a poignant reminder of the urgent need for collective efforts to combat GBV.

Celebrating with our new partner, Micah 6:8 Foundation.

On 6th and 7th December, we had the privilege of joining our friends Gladys from the Micah 6:8 Foundation and Sifa from World Renew on a benchmarking visit to the Youth Running Club projects in Meru and Nyeri, Central Kenya. These projects, supported by the Micah 6:8 Foundation, These projects, supported by the Micah Foundation,

provided us with invaluable insights into innovative approaches for youth engagement and development.



This visit was an incredible opportunity to learn best practices that we can adapt and implement in our programs in Western Kenya. We are excited about the potential for collaboration and growth that this partnership with the Micah Foundation will bring.

Get Involved:

Support our gender equality programs by joining future events or donating to sustain these critical dialogues and services. Together, we can foster a more informed and supportive community.

Click the link below to donate to support our mission.

[Donate Now](#)

Thank you for being part of this amazing success.
Merry Christmas and a prosperous New year 2025

with gratitude,
From Rev. Domnic and IFAGE Team.



*Copyright © 2024 IFAGE International, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website*

our mailing address is:
IFAGE International
Shalom House & Estate
P.O BOX 663-40100 Kisumu-Kenya
Bondo 40601
Kenya