

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018



## Positive Women Together In Action

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As an organization Positive Women Together in Action strives for the empowerment of adolescent girls and women living with HIV and affected communities. Our intention with this annual report is to share on the news about the progress, efforts and programming over the last year (2018)

We would like to highlight the ways in which we, as a community are succeeding and changing lives. We are focusing on uniting to overcome the challenges we face and to speak on behalf of the voiceless. As HIV positive women we aim to shine the spotlight on how powerful and resilient we are as a community and how much we can achieve if we work together.

- ❖ We will build community partnerships and leadership.
- ❖ We create hope
- ❖ We are fit for purpose
- ❖ Together we will triumph
- ❖ We will fight against intolerance, injustice, and inequality

On behalf of the board and the executive committee, we are proud of the work we have done this year. We have trained communities on antiretroviral treatment optimization and empowering the TB and HIV communities including adolescent girls and women living with HIV on how to better engage in the Global fund country structures and processes and ensure a meaningful involvement in those spaces.

We are happy to share with you our efforts and accomplishments over the past year. I would like to express special thanks to all who have contributed in making Positive Women Together in Action a resource for women living with HIV.

Our women including adolescent girls and young women living with HIV and their communities are at the centre of what we do.

***Let us unite, support each other and fight HIV.***

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Albertina Nyatsi".

***Albertina Zodwa Nyatsi***

***Executive Director***

## **BACKGROUND**

Women Together is an organization that began operating in Swaziland in March 2003 as a response to the increasing need for support to HIV positive women. Although by this time Swaziland had several interventions and programs to address TB and HIV/AIDS issues, there were no interventions targeted at addressing the plight of women in society. In a bid to curb the spread of HIV, VCT centers were set up. A majority of those people who responded to the VCT campaigns were women and most of them tested positively. Consequently, those women who disclosed their status among their family members and communities at large were then subjected to discrimination and stigmatization. This was exacerbated by that women are relegated to an inferior status in Swazi society than that of men in all spheres of life; socially, economically, politically and legally.

Women Together therefore seeks to offer support and education to women living with HIV/AIDS in order for them to be able to stand for their rights and improve their lives economically and otherwise.

## **OUR VISION**

Women Together's vision is to see women and girls living with TB and HIV/AIDS enjoying their rights afforded equal opportunities as everyone else without discrimination.

## **MISSION**

Women Together seeks to eradicate discrimination of women and girls living with TB and HIV/AIDS through creating an enabling environment for them and their families where they will be able to share their experiences, participate in society, build their capacity to face challenges of TB, HIV/AIDS and also improve their lives economically.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2018 has been a year of significant progress across the HIV cascade for women living with HIV across the world with different interventions and programs targeting women being scaled up. Our efforts for this year coming to an end to build capacity on treatment optimization and promote adherence have resulted in 3000 women and adolescent and young women sensitised and educated on treatment optimization, pipeline HIV treatment and the road towards finding an HIV cure. We have seen the quiet a number of women and adolescent girls and young women being initiated on ART and linked to care. A total of 7000 women, adolescent girls and young women living with HIV and their families were engaged in Positive women together in Action services, receiving differentiated services between the home and health facility, led by a team of 20 support group leaders in the four regions of the kingdom of Eswatini. Improvements in economic status was also noted as some of the support groups were supported to do income generation programmes which included rearing livestock such as piggery, broiler chickens ,layers and crop production and all these livelihoods programmes are still running.

With the TB coinfection, the organisation conducted a forum for sharing information and empowering TB survivors and women living with HIV on TB and NCDs to which resulted in increased knowledge on these conditions. Women Together also empowered PLHIV and TB survivors on the Global Fund, its in-country structures and processes where they learnt about how the Global Fund operates and how they can better engage in Global Fund processes. This was an initiative supported by the Global Fund's CRG SI grant through the Global Network of People living with HIV (GNP+)

Going forward, we will continue empowering women, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversities through programs specifically designed to target this population. Gender equality is also at the heart of our programs and we will strive to make sure that our women are treated equally with dignity within our Swazi societies where they have been over the years reduced to second class citizens.

# WHAT WE DO

## Counseling and Support Services

- Offer pre and post HIV test counseling
- Offer treatment counseling information
- Establish support groups to provide support services and experience sharing

## Training and Education Programs

- Hold training workshops on women's legal rights, TB and HIV/AIDS issues
- Hold training workshops to educate women on treatment preparedness, literacy and adherence and positive prevention
- Information gathering and sharing

## LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

We believe it is essential to support the leadership development of women and AGYW living with HIV and to help advance the next generation of women HIV advocates. We offer a variety of programming that enhances,

- Treatment advocacy
- Reduction of the stigmatization and discrimination of people living with HIV
- Capacity building among women and AGYW living with HIV

## COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Women Together is honored to play an important role in the HIV community, one of the most remarkable and tireless

groups of organizations and individuals in the world. We develop mission-aligned partnerships to advance common goals, including current collaborations with some of the most influential organizations in the field. These relationships elevate each other's work and ensure that all of our endeavors add value by uniquely addressing gaps in current programming and resources

## Income Generating Programs

- Assist support groups in setting up income generating projects to assist with financial and economic sustainability.
- Training on basic business skills

## MALE INVOLVEMENT

Since it is difficult to reach males since they are always at work and because of norms of masculinity, a special effort is essential:

- Conduct activities that will reach males in their customary gathering places
- Conducting education and TB and HIV screening and testing at the cow dipping tanks
- Sports campaigns (soccer tournaments where criteria for engagement TB screening and HIV testing for clubs and community members).
- Sidla inhloko (eating of the cow head) and discussing issues in a male dominated space.

# 2018

## OUR PROGRAMS

### 1. TREATMENT OPTIMIZATION

Positive Women Together in Action implemented a literacy training program which focused on educating PLHIV especially women and AGYW living with HIV on the available treatment in the country with a major focus on DTG which was a new drug. Regional representatives, PLHIV Network leaders, and members from the Key populations (Living with HIV) were all trained. This was done as a strategy of creating community awareness on the availability of the new drug and as a way of preparing PLHIV on the transition to the new regimen.



*Treatment optimisation workshop*

## Achievements

- Smooth transition to DTG
- Increased knowledge on HIV treatment regimens

## 2. TB AND TB RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME



*TB/HIV Summit supported by ARASA through the small grant program*

This project was implemented with the support from ARASA. A TB/HIV summit for 50 women and adolescent girls living with HIV and TB survivors was conducted after which a baseline study on TB Related human rights violations was conducted. The aim of the summit was to share updates on the HIV and TB response in the kingdom of Eswatini, share experiences and identifying unmet needs and priorities of women and adolescent girls living with and affected by HIV and TB.

## Achievements

- The summit report and study were presented to the National TB/HIV meeting which was organized by the ministry of health where officials from different civil society, national TB Program and Swaziland National AIDS Program were present to help influence future programming by these stakeholders.
- The summit report was used to inform the writing of the Global fund TB /HIV grant by the writing team and it was one of the reference tools used in the country's proposal.

## 3. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN GLOBAL FUND PROCESSES

Strengthen constituent capacity (train, mentor, fund) including specifically CCM representatives and other leaders, AGYW, and task forces, to engage in consultation and/or advocacy and policy initiatives. Mobilize and train community advocates in investment and community-led, rights-based, and gender responsive programming and transition planning.



*Workshops and community forums on the Global Fund country structures and processes*

## Achievements

- This platform provided a platform to share more information on the Global fund, its structures and available opportunities for communities to engage on the Global fund processes. (increased knowledge about the Global Fund among community members)
- Strengthened the capacity of key communities in managing Global fund grants
- Reinforced the importance of communities in the GF processes

#### 4. LIVELIHOODS PROJECTS FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV IN ESWATINI

The project aimed at assisting women and AGYW living with HIV by economically empowering them using agriculture, the valuable resource of land and labor that is already available in a more efficient manner that will ensure huge and sustainable dividends. We supported groups from Velezizweni, Mvembili, Dvokolwako, Vikizijula, Moneni and Ngculwini. The main activity of project was the cultivation of major food crops and the raising of livestock in the 6 areas that had identified 3 hectares of land each. In addition, these groups of women were trained on basic financial management and cooperative management to ensure successful running of their projects.



*Piggery and broiler chicken production projects by two of the women support groups*

#### Successes

- ❖ Women living with HIV benefited directly from this project where their groups established their own markets to sell their produce.
- ❖ Empowered groups of women managed to support their families economically and thus lessened the burden on the families (paying of school fees for their kids, buying household supplies)
- ❖ Improved food and nutrition security among women and adolescent girls living with HIV and their families.

#### OUR PLANS BEYOND 2018

Women living with or vulnerable to HIV including AYGW are always at the forefront of our planning and programming. In the coming years we will undertake efforts to ensure that we are reaching the women who are most affected and those with the least access to resources. Furthermore, as we advance our efforts to support **emerging advocates**, we will work to build their capacity to ensure that they have a seat at the advocacy table.

Moving forward, we will amplify our efforts to engage with other relevant organizations, including those outside of the HIV space who are working more broadly to advance reproductive justice, gender equality, and women's health. We are also developing relationships with those who work with and/or are allies of women living with HIV, including healthcare providers, case managers, peer educators, AIDS service organizations, family, and friends.

We plan to execute a number of strategies to continue to organically grow Positive Women Together in Action and better serve the needs of our ever-expanding community:

- develop and enhance the content and expand the reach of Women Together's online offerings and programming
- cultivate connection and engagement among women living with HIV
- develop resources that advance the health literacy and agency of AGYW, women living with and vulnerable to HIV.
- create and foster partnerships with mission-aligned organizations.
- plan and convene the Women's HIV is Not a Crime summit and advance policy issues specific to women and HIV.



***EMPOWERING POSITIVE WOMEN, ONE  
WOMAN AT A TIME!***

## OUR 2018 GRANTORS

*Every year, our fundraising drives helps us increase awareness about the organization, expand our funding base, and support our activities. We are so appreciative of everyone who gave us the grants to support our activities in 2018 – your support means the world to us!*

*AIDS and Rights Alliance of Southern Africa (ARASA)  
Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)  
New Zealand AID Programme  
Africa Community Advisory Board (AfroCAB)  
National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA)*

## OUR PARTNERS

*We have the profound honor of working with organizations that share our vision of connecting women and AGYW living with HIV across the globe to each other and to lifesaving information. We are humbled to be part of such a remarkable community that over and over again has endeavored to change the world and empower women and AGYW living with HIV.*

- ❖ Stop TB Partnership*
- ❖ National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS*
- ❖ University Research Company (URC Eswatini)*
- ❖ Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)*
- ❖ AIDS and Rights Alliance of Southern Africa (ARASA)*
- ❖ TB Proof*
- ❖ Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA)*
- ❖ Africa Community Advisory Board (AfroCAB)*
- ❖ SafAIDS (Eswatini)*
- ❖ Swaziland Migrant Mineworkers Association*
- ❖ Medical Impact*
- ❖ Anlaidis Lazio*
- ❖ Touched by TB*
- ❖ Africa Coalition of TB (ACT!)*
- ❖ Eswatini Parliamentary TB Caucus*
- ❖ Swaziland Positive Living (SWAPOL)*
- ❖ UNAIDS Eswatini*
- ❖ Ministry of Health Eswatini (National TB program, National AIDS Program)*
- ❖ WoteYouth CBO*
- ❖ Swaziland Network of Young Positives (SNYP+)*
- ❖ Eswatini AIDS Support Organisation (EASO)*
- ❖ WHO Eswatini*
- ❖ Youth2EndTB*

# LEADERSHIP

## TEAM

- Albertina Zodwa Nyatsi, executive director
- Talkmore Taurai Mazorodze, projects coordinator
- Gcebile Yvette Dlamini, project officer
- Lindani Pitso, volunteer project officer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Promise Dlamini, board chair
- Nomcebo Mngomezulu, vice chair
- Nomsa Mpila, board member
- Makhosazana Lukhele, board treasurer
- Thabsile Mavimbela, board member
- Vumile Dlamini, secretary
- Lungile Mabuza, board member

## SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS

- Busisiwe Mkhanyana
- Dudu Manana
- Phindile Masango
- Gugu Magagula
- Thabsile Mavimbela
- Nomsa Mpila
- Sisana Dlamini
- Nesta Shabangu
- Phephile Phungwayo
- Nomphumelelo Kunene
- Ayesha Dlamini
- Lindiwe Shongwe
- Lungile Milazi

**JOIN THE FIGHT, KEEP IN TOUCH**

**WITH US**



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