



## Tanzanian Adolescent HIV Prevention and Treatment Implementation Science Alliance

### Introducing T-AHISA

Welcome to our first T-AHISA Newsletter. T-AHISA is a Tanzania-based network branch of the global Adolescent HIV Prevention and Treatment Implementation Science Alliance (AHISA). T-AHISA aims to bring together local stakeholders including key members from the Ministry of Health (policymakers), implementers (non-governmental organizations), researchers (academic institutions), Ministry of Education (including educators), Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups (including social workers), and youth (youth HIV advocates) who work to improve prevention and treatment of HIV among adolescents in Tanzania. Together, we discuss evidence-based interventions Women, and Special Groups (including social workers), and youth (youth HIV advocates) who work to improve prevention and treatment of HIV among adolescents in Tanzania. Together, we discuss evidence-based interventions, government priorities, local research findings, and ways in which implementation science research (ISR) can best move the adolescent HIV needle toward an AIDS-free generation in our country. As part of this initiative, we also strive to build the next cadre of ISR researchers and inform policymakers about the critical importance of ISR in adolescent HIV programs. In this newsletter, we will be sharing with you various adolescent activities, strategies, and research implemented for the prevention and treatment of HIV in adolescents. We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter. Any ideas for improvement or additions are always welcome.

T-AHISA team.

<https://t-ahisa.org/mentors/>

#### Mission

- Elevates the Youth Voice and Early-Stage Investigators in Implementation Science Research, preparing the next generation
- Leverage implementation science research to bring innovative and evidence-based solutions across multiple sectors to prevent and treat adolescent HIV.

#### Vission

- Working across sectors together to end HIV for adolescents and helping them to thrive

### T-AHISA meeting in Arusha, Tanzania 13th-14th April 2023



April 2023 meeting in Arusha Tanzania. The meeting delegates from the Ministry of Health, NACP, PEPFAR, FHI 360, NIMR, Kimara Peer Educator, MDH, KCRI, TAWREF, Ifakara Health Institute, Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation, Youth Advocates, Implementing Partners, Research Principal Investigators and, PhD students.

#### About the meeting

The second annual T-AHISA meeting was held at Corridor Springs Hotel in Arusha from 13th – 14th April 2023. The meeting aimed at bringing together stakeholders working in Adolescent HIV in Tanzania, which involves researchers, implementers, health care providers, policy-makers, and youth advocates. The meeting was opened by, **Dr. Catherine Joachim** the Health Systems Specialist Coordinator at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The Head of Pediatrics at KCMC Referral Hospital **Dr. Aisa Shayo**, presented T-AHISA's aims and accomplishments towards achieving the project goal. The National programmatic updates on Adolescents & HIV including policies, strategies, and guidelines presented by the representative from the Ministry of Health **Dr. Michael Mbele**.

**Prof. Blanding Mmbaga** the Director of KCRI and a Pediatrician provided updates about Sauti ya Vijana (SYV), a mental health and life skills intervention to improve HIV outcomes for young people living with HIV in Tanzania. NACP representative **Dr. James Kamunga** presented the priorities and gaps, including a discussion on the HAPACA amendment to lower the age of consent for HIV from 18 to 15 years. Other young people's needs and focuses were pointed out in presentations by **Dr. Joan Rugemalila** (Muhimbili National Hospital, MUHAS), who presented on HIV Resistance Mutations among adolescents in Tanzania.

**Ms. Debora Frank** (Senior Technical Office AGYW, Epic Project) shared about AGYW, prevention interventions. **Dr. Lilian Komba** (Pediatrician Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation- Tanzania) shared an Adolescent Program JITAMBUE Intervention.

**Dr. Alick Kayange** -HIV prevention Advisor from PEPFAR presented the PEPFAR/ Tanzania update on the implementation of DREAMS services in Tanzania and spoke about the six pillars driven by the National Accelerated Investment Agenda for Adolescent Health & Wellbeing NAlA 2021/22 – 2024/25. **Ms. Perry Msoka** (Social Scientist at KCRI, PhD student) presented on the Implementation of point-of-care viral load monitoring research among children, adolescents, and young people living with HIV in Tanzania.

**Dr. Theopista Jacob** (Child Health Specialist), presented data on behalf of EGPAF, the implementation of adolescent clubs, and HIV services models. Youth representative **Ms. Angelina Goi** shared Ushiriki wa Vijana (Youth Engagement to end the HIV epidemic in Tanzania), building youth community advisory boards (CABs) with the youth CAB liaison of Moshi, Ifakara, Mbeya, and Mwanza who were present at the meeting. **Ms. Pfiiali Kiwia** presented on the CATS program on behalf of Kimara Peers.

**Dr. Dorothy Dow** also presented an overview of Implementation Science Research frameworks, outcomes, and research examples.

#### Way-forward:

T-AHISA should involve the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups in our activities to be more comprehensive in reaching all adolescents, and be part of the adolescent sub-working group meetings and work more closely with TACAIDS.



Dr. Michael Mbele. A Representative from the Ministry of Health Adolescent Desk. T-AHISA meeting 2023 "One of the actions for the programmatic areas is to increase the number(coverage) of health facilities providing adolescent-friendly SRH services.

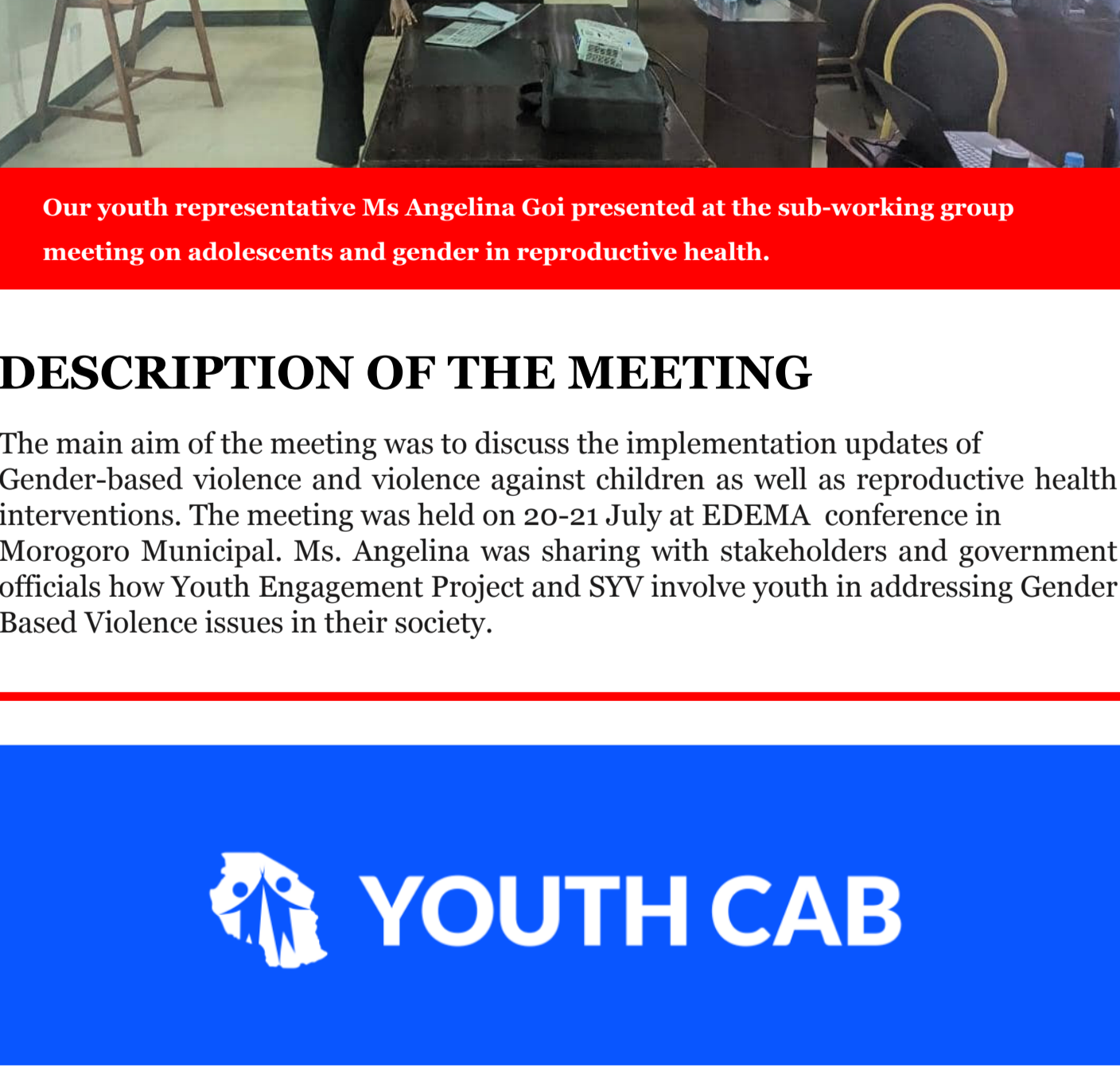


Dr. Getrud Mollle. A Representative from Ifakara Health Insitute at the T-AHISA meeting held at the Arushs Corridor Spring in April 2023.



Youth liaisons **Robert William** from Moshi, contributed his ideas in front of the Policymakers, Implementers, Health Workers, Donors, and the government.

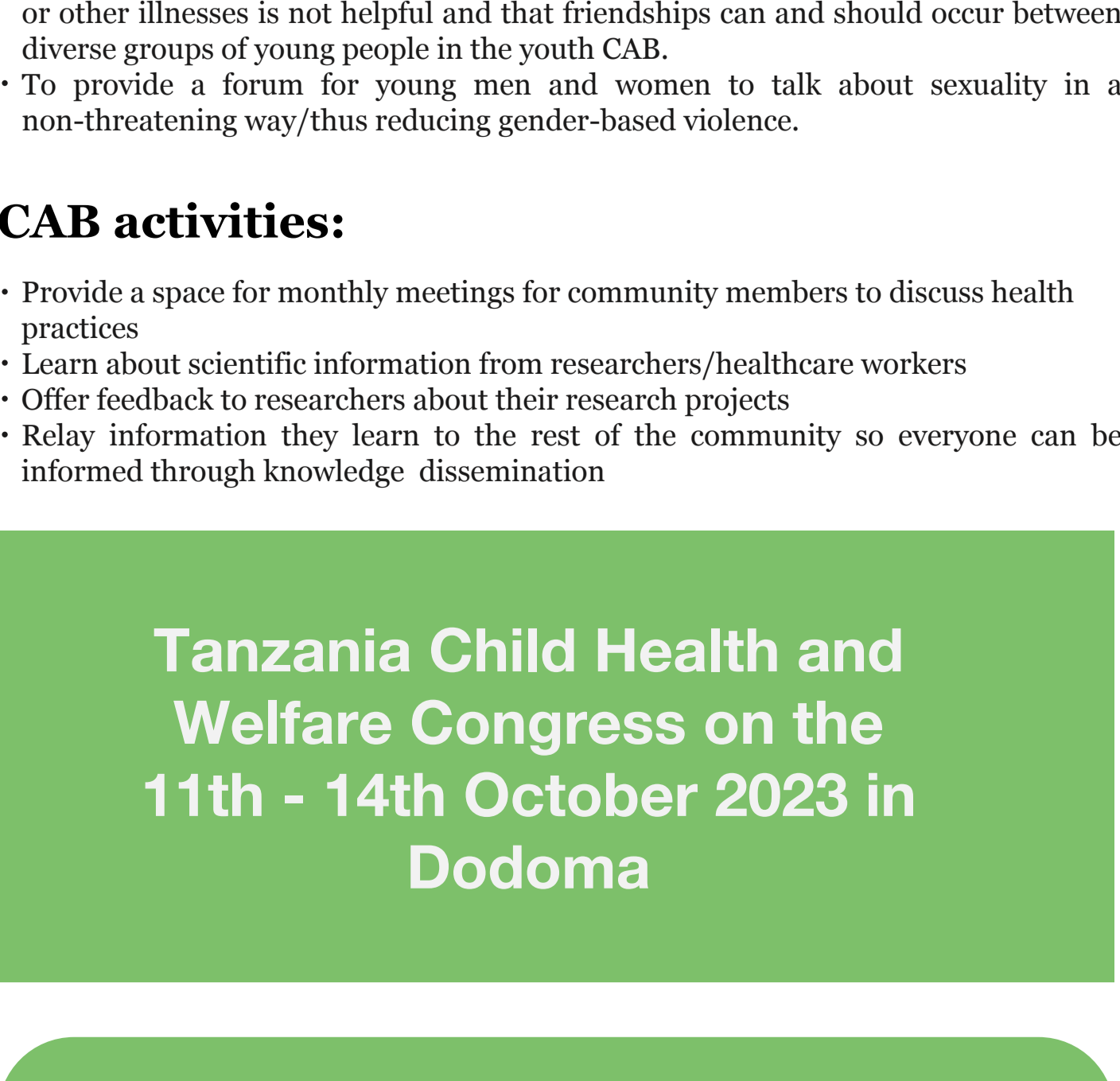
### AHISA meeting in Lusaka, Zambia 24th-26th April 2023



T-AHISA team in Lusaka, Zambia

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING

T-AHISA met in Lusaka, Zambia April 24-26, 2023 for the annual AHISA meeting. During the small awards presentations, members of AHISA were updated on sustainability and youth engagement projects. Our Tanzania youth representative **Ms. Angelina Goi**, presented our work on Youth Engagement (USHIRIKI WA VIJANA), sponsored by AHISA to establish Youth Community Advisory Boards and create a platform for young people to be engaged in research, share the needs of their community, and be recognized as key stakeholders having a voice in local government adolescent health policy. We learned more about ISR training in Zambia from **Dr. Hikabasa Halwindi**, Dean of PH,U of Zambia. We heard impressive updates from PATCH projects, and discussed sustainability (Dr. Juliet Iwelunmor) and the importance of harmonizing implementation outcome measures for more impactful research outcomes (**Dr. Geri Dennenberg**). We learned about an adolescent transition readiness app, EHARTS, developed in South Africa (**Dr. Brian Zanoni**), updates on the VOICE call, developing consensus on adolescent consent processes for HIV Research, Implementation of Novel Biomedical Agents to Address HIV in SSA/LMIC (**Dr. Irene Njuguna** and **Dr. Laura Guay**), Priorities for UNICEF (**Dr. Damilola Walker**), and meaningful youth engagement from Zambian youth facilitated by Dr. Mike Mbizvo. It was a tremendous meeting and we are happy to bring the knowledge gained back home to Tanzania.



Tanzanian youth representative Ms. Angelina Goi presenting on behalf of the Youth Engagement Project (USHIRIKI WA VIJANA).

### Sub-working group meeting on Adolescent Health in Morogoro, Tanzania 20th - 21st July 2023



Our youth representative Ms Angelina Goi presented at the sub-working group meeting on adolescents and gender in reproductive health.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING

The main aim of the meeting was to discuss the implementation updates of Gender-based violence and violence against children as well as reproductive health interventions. The meeting was held on 20-21 July at EDEMA conference in Morogoro Municipal. Ms. Angelina was sharing with stakeholders and government officials how Youth Engagement Project and SYV involve youth in addressing Gender Based Violence issues in their society.



#### Youth Community Advisory Board

Youth community advisory boards (CAB) are a collection of youth advocates who are both seropositive and seronegative, in and out of school, aged between 13-24 years of age. They meet and engage with researchers, healthcare workers, and other invited guests to discuss scientific ideas, lived experiences, and ideas for improving the health of adolescents in their community. The goal of youth CAB is to include community members in conversations about research and medical practice so research/medicine can better reflect the needs of the adolescent community.



This picture was taken during our T-AHISA annual meeting which took place on 13-14 April 2023 at Arusha Corridor Spring. In the picture from left are Alan (Mwanza), Robert (Moshi), Yasid (Mbeya), Juma (Ifakara) Youth CAB liaison and Angelina program coordinator of the Youth Engagement Project (USHIRIKI WA VIJANA).

#### Youth Cab Mission:

- To provide a safe place for youth advocates to bring unanswered health questions to bolster learning, to suggest research ideas based on community needs, to advise on youth-related research (feasibility), and to disseminate results back to their local community.
- To be an example to the local community that stigma towards youth living with HIV or other illnesses is not helpful and that friendships can and should occur between diverse groups of young people in the youth CAB.
- To provide a forum for young men and women to talk about sexuality in a non-threatening way/thus reducing gender-based violence.

#### CAB activities:

- Provide a space for monthly meetings for community members to discuss health practices
- Learn about scientific information from researchers/healthcare workers
- Offer feedback to researchers about their research projects
- Relay information they learn to the rest of the community so everyone can be informed through knowledge dissemination



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