**FAIL FORWARD-**

**Economic Empowerment for Youth Through Football**

Driven by the words “You can talk about abstinence, faithfulness, and condoms, but these strategies will achieve little without empowering people with information and skills to embrace safer ways of making the money they need, ”Vijana Amani Pamoja (VAP) whose primary purpose is to use the power and the popularity of the game of football/soccer as a conduit to fight HIV/AIDS, working with various schools and community centres targeting youth aged 11-22 years, started an economic empowerment initiative through Mrembo Salon vocational training.

The main aim of the Mrembo Salon vocational training was to create an economic empowerment pathway of youth participants who graduate from the social programs ie.HIV and sexual health reproductive and rights to gain necessary soft skills that would enable them to be equipped with employability knowledge and experience thus opening up job opportunities and how to start their own businesses.

Since there was no funding to start up the project and we really wanted to get the project up and running, VAP decided to make an internal small fundraising from its members and friends. The fundraising was done through various ways that also included selling of cakes,etc.For the first 3 months the project could not start due to lack of enough capital that would also enable VAP to set up a Salon for the trainings.Additionally,the local and internal fundraising was not aggressively conducted.

The whole exercise brought in massive experience and learnings to the entire organization when it came to matters of ‘fundraising’ and mobilizing resources. First, VAP has been taking advantage of various campaigns conducted by Global Giving and the first campaign ran by Global Giving enabled VAP to fundraise adequate funds that enabled us to set up a Mrembo salon for the hair and beauty vocational training for social program graduates. The fundraising was done aggressively by every member who mobilised friends and various partners to contribute through Global Giving fundraising platform. As an organization, VAP has been advancing and taking advantage of the various international and local online fundraising platforms to strengthen its vocational training set-ups and that has resulted into opening up a new restaurant that integrates and trains social program graduates on pastry and baking courses. In addition,VAP has managed to learn various fundraising skills to support and sustain its projects.