**Friends Women’s Association**

**By Parfaite Ntahuba, National Coordinator**



*A total of 10 community sensitization presentations on family planning were done. A total of 2400 people were reached. Burundi has one of the highest fertility rates in the world.* *During the year a total of 3822 women received contraceptives.*

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**Testimony by Marie.** *After the death of all my parents in 1993, I found myself in an internally displaced persons’ camp. In this camp I was sexually abused by a soldier until I had two children -- the first at the age of 14 and the second at the age of 16. After I separated from the soldier, I became a sex worker, first in the countryside and then here in Bujumbura. I got HIV/AIDS when I was a sex worker. The reason why I came for HIV voluntary testing was that I lost weight every day. I always had headaches, temperature, and oral thrush. When I started ARV treatment, my health began to improve. For now, I greatly appreciate the discussion groups because it is an opportunity to meet those who have the same HIV+ status as me. I have been a member of a self-help group for one year. For many years, I had received training in a sewing center, but I had never managed to have capital to have my own machine. Now I was able to receive a loan of 150.000 francs ($86) from my self-help group. I was able to buy a sewing machine. At the moment, my children can eat three times a day and can go to school easily.*

**Caring for HIV Positive People**

In 2018 fiscal year, our medical doctors consulted a total of 881 people, and our nurses received a total of 4781 people including 3226 adults and 1555 children. A total of 3198 people received pre and post HIV test counseling and were tested for HIV. 126 out of the 166 people detected HIV+ were women for 8% of seropositivity. At the end of October 2018, FWA had 269 patients under ARVs treatment followed at NTASEKA Clinic including 216 women and 53 men. This includes monthly discussion groups on HIV/AIDS, nutritional support, and home visits.

**Rape Survivors’ Support**

In 2018, FWA conducted 11 trauma healing workshops, free medical care and home visits for gender based violence survivors. At the end of October 2018, we had a total of 25 self-help groups.

**Action on Gender-Based Violence**

In the year 2018, there were eight GBV workshops with a total of 160 participants including 80 religious leaders and 80 community elected leaders. A three day retreat on self-care and capacity building was organized for 25 GBV facilitators, three workshops on conflict transformation, and one workshop on national rules on families and homes for young people. On June 29, 2018, they organized a community celebration to raise awareness against GBV.

**Two new programs**

The **Street Business School** trains vulnerable women to be empowered to be able to identify what kind of business is needed in their respective communities and how to market their business.

FWA has started a new service , **Pre-natal Consultation**, for the prevention of transmission of HIV from mother to child. This has led to the beginning of the construction of a **Maternity Ward** as women, after they have done all the four pre-natal consultations, prefer to deliver at the clinic.

**What FWA wants to see in 2019**

* The resilience of our HIV positive people is built by creating a safe place where they can share their challenges as a group. This will be done through discussion groups with HIV+ breastfeeding women, HIV+ children, and HIV+ people receiving nutritional support.
* To promote a comprehensive and holistic approach to health care for people living with HIV/AIDS.
* Capacity building of FWA staff to understand our support programs for people living with HIV/AIDS.
* Reduce the stigma and shame of being HIV+ through educational sessions for the community.
* HIV/AIDS transmission from mother to child is reduced through the pre-natal service.
* The key populations (sex workers, drug users, and men) do HIV voluntary testing.
* Additional people are attending the clinic for birth control services.
* Completion of the Maternity Ward construction project.
* GBV survivors are recovered from their trauma through trauma healing workshops
* GBV is reduced in the places where we are educating people on this issue.
* The women economic situation is improved through the self-help groups and the Street Business School.
* Increased voluntary HIV testing for community members.

**Thank you for your support for 2019.**