HIV/AIDS prevention news stories

Women with HIV Get Interest Free Loans from allafrica.com

NIGERIA, 9 March 2009 — If the 2015 timeline of the United Nations to end violence against women is to be achieved, government and corporate organisations must join hands in the struggle for the protection of the fundamental rights of every woman in Nigeria, the Managing Director of FORTIS micro finance bank, Mr. Deji Fisho has said.

To this end, the bank has pledged to give economic empowerment to members of the Association of Women Living with HIV and AIDS by extending interest free loans to them.

Mr. Fisho who made this disclosure at the occasion of the International Women’s Day (IWD), celebration in Abuja said that the gesture is to support women living with HIV and AIDS in the country to be self-reliant and fast track the attainment of justice and equity for the entire women folks.

"On our part, we have decided to give out loans to members of your organisation without interest. This is our support to women living with AIDS and HIV. Let us all therefore boldly commit ourselves to the radical socio-economic and political transformation of women", he added.

Represented by the corporate communications officer, Mr. Sebagen Henry Noboh, the Managing Director said that it is important to celebrate the achievement of women worldwide saying, "the international women’s day will give us a sober reflection to look ahead at the untapped potentials of future generation of women".

He called on the federal government to borrow example from other nations of the world where IWD is given a special place in national history by declaring the day as public holidays. Mr Fisho urged human right organisations to collaborate with the media in the fight for the liberation of women and create sensitization to Nigerians on the importance of the day.

Speaking earlier, National coordinator of ASWHAN, Anthonia Elanu said that the issue of violence against women and HIV and AIDS are mutually reinforcing.

She said that there is need for the legislature to make laws that recognize all forms of violence against women.

To access the article online, go to http://allafrica.com/stories/200903091139.html

Nigerian Advocacy Group Encourages HIV-Positive Couples To Marry, Offers Counseling, Other Services from kaisernetwork.org

BAUCHI, 10 March 2009 — An HIV/AIDS advocacy group in Nigeria’s Bauchi state is encouraging HIV-positive people to marry one another in an effort to prevent the virus from spreading to HIV-negative people, the AP/Google.com reports. The program is run by the Bauchi Action Committee on AIDS and offers counseling and money to couples who are living with HIV/AIDS and are planning to marry.

According to the AP/Google.com, the group does not yet have a budget for the informal program but 94 marriages have occurred among HIV-positive couples since the program began two years ago. Yakubu Usman Abubakar, an official working with the group, said Nigerians “live in a polygamous society where divorce is common and condom use is low." She added that if officials “can stop those who have the disease spreading it to those who don’t have the disease, then obviously it will come under control.”

The program does not aim to introduce HIV-positive people, as that would require re-releasing private medical information, but officials will "step in quickly” ...

This article continues on page 2 . . .
"Nigerian Advocacy Group Encourages HIV-Positive Couples To Marry, Offers Counseling, Other Services” continued, from page 1

... if they become aware of couples with two HIV-positive members and encourage them to marry legally, the AP/Google.com reports. The program provided one couple with $225 toward the cost of establishing a home together, the AP/Google.com reports. In addition, women in the program who are pregnant are offered counseling and treatment to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission. The AP/Google.com reports that some health experts have criticized the program, arguing that the country will experience an increase in the number of orphans if HIV-positive couples are encouraged to have children. The United Nations reports that 1.2 million AIDS orphans lived in Nigeria in 2007. Although some orphans are adopted by relatives or find care through charitable organizations, “many will end up on the streets,” the AP/Google.com reports.

However, officials in Bauchi note that the life expectancy in Nigeria is 48 years and argue that the program has benefits. Abubakar said it cannot be assumed that “someone with HIV will die sooner than someone else,” particularly “if they are taking care of themselves, receiving good advice and proper medication.” Advocates of the program also say that the “positive marriages” provide more than companionship in a society where HIV/AIDS-associated stigma is common. According to the AP/Google.com, Bauchi is the only one of the country’s 36 states known to have such a program.

According to United Kingdom’s Department for International Development, about four million of Nigeria’s 140 million people are HIV-positive. The AP/Google.com reports that while HIV prevalence in Nigeria has decreased slightly to about 4% over the past three years, many health experts warn that the country “still has a lot of work to do to bring the epidemic under control” (Pownall, AP/Google.com, 3/7).

To access the article online, go to http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=57389

Effects of school health nursing education interventions on HIV/AIDS-related attitudes of students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
from the Journal of Adolescent Health 44 (2009) 118-123

NIGERIA, February 2009 — Purpose: One of the greatest challenges facing school nurses is that of identifying and using appropriate strategies to meet the health education needs of adolescents in regard to prevention of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). This study examined the effects of HIV/AIDS preventive health education with parental involvement on students’ attitude toward HIV/AIDS prevention in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Methods: The study population comprised students from three of nine secondary schools in the study area. The three schools were randomly assigned as Intervention Group 1 (IG1), involving nurses only; Intervention Group 2 (IG2), involving both nurses and parents; and a control group.

Results: Results show significant effect of intervention on students attitudes toward preventive measures ($F = 234.27, p < .001$). The intervention that involved nurses only was found to be a more potent strategy in providing favorable attitudes toward HIV/AIDS prevention (IG1 mean, 20.59; IG2 mean, 19.20; control mean, 12.34). Attitudes were influenced by older age but not by gender.

Conclusion: Health education efforts aimed at improving HIV/AIDS-related attitudes should not only focus on children but also on parents so that they in turn could assist to improve on health workers’ efforts in educating the children.

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