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Safe Churches, Safe Communities-Building Faith Leaders for Gender Justice

Dear partners,



A group photo of priests from Pentecostal churches with IFAGE team at Dotreece Hotel in Bondo at the Christian Leaderships training with Rev. Prof. Collin Miller

It is with great humility and gratitude that we present to you our latest updates, focusing on our groundbreaking initiative **"Safe Churches, Safe Communities - Building Faith Leaders for Gender Justice."** As we navigate this transformative journey, we invite you to dive deep into the remarkable progress and impact we have achieved this month.

Empowering Faith Leaders for Change

Our journey always begins with a resounding commitment to empower faith leaders to become steadfast advocates for gender justice. Through our carefully designed training sessions, faith leaders are gaining the knowledge, tools, and inspiration needed to ignite a profound transformation within their congregations. They are at the forefront of a movement that is challenging norms, embracing inclusivity, and fostering understanding and change.

Effective Evangelism through Digitalization:

At IFAGE, we understand the importance of adapting to the digital age. In collaboration with Global Horizon Inc we hosted a training that brought together Pastors from Pentecostal Churches in Siaya. The training was led by Rev. Prof. Collin Miller, a Senior Lecturer at North Central University USA.

Rev. Prof. Collin Miller trained the pastors to harness the power of Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint to create compelling materials for effective evangelism. This digital transformation was to enable them to engage with wider audiences and spread messages of empowerment and equality to new horizons.



Rev. Prof. Collin Miller, second right, showing a group of pastors the basics of Microsoft Word during the leadership training

Challenging Gender Norms

In the heart of engaging with the pastors were courageous conversations. The faith leaders were engaging in thought-provoking discussions that challenged long-established gender norms. These conversations were not only redefining the narrative but also shaping a more inclusive and equitable interpretation of the Bible and religion. We witnessed a profound shift as faith leaders reevaluate their roles in promoting gender justice within their communities. The pastors from the Pentecostal churches are now part of our trained Gender Champions to challenge gender norms that limit the agencies of women and girls in our communities.

Addressing Biblical Misinterpretation

IFAGE is dedicated to challenging any misinterpretations that have historically perpetuated gender inequality. By addressing these issues head-on, we are ensuring that religion and the Bible become tools for empowerment, not oppression especially to women and vulnerable persons.



Priests in groups during Microsoft Word practicals during the leadership training

Strengthening Faith Leaders' Capacity to Challenge Retrogressive Beliefs and Respond to Survivors' Needs

Faith leaders have a pivotal role to play in our mission. To challenge retrogressive beliefs and respond effectively to the needs of gender-based violence survivors, we are working to enhance the capacity of pastors and religious leaders. IFAGE has taken the lead in training these religious leaders to be Biblical Gender Equality advocates and Para-Social Workers to heed the needs of survivors.

Enhancing Mental Health for Women and Vulnerable Individuals

Women and those who experience violence are 3-5 times more likely to be diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder -PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, and problems with substance use. GBV/IPV is also associated with poor long-term mental health such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

At IFAGE, we recognize that Survivors often face barriers to seeking help or support, including stigma and fear of retaliation from their abusers. Together with the pastors we developed resources and support networks to enhance their resilience and mental health by:

- Addressing both the immediate safety of survivors and their long-term mental well-being.

- Ensuring our trained Para-Social Workers do no harm and offer Survivor-Centered approaches.
- Enhance survivors' access to mental health services, counseling, and support systems through referrals and linkages.



A priest from Christ Adoration Church taking a pledge to his church a Safe place for GBV/IPV survivors

In the end, the champions took a pledge to make churches and spiritual Houses Safe Spaces for Survivors. Safe churches are the cornerstone of our mission. These places of worship are designed to be sanctuaries where every individual, regardless of their gender or background, can find solace, respect, and a deep sense of belonging. The creation of such safe spaces is not just a physical transformation but a profound change in the hearts and minds of our faith communities.

Our commitment to creating safe spaces for survivors remains steadfast. We believe that churches and spiritual houses should be places of refuge and healing for those affected by GBV. IFAGE is actively working to make this vision a reality.

Finally, we want to express our deepest gratitude to our supporters and partners who make our work possible. Together, we are making churches, communities,

and the world a safer place for women, girls, and those vulnerable to Gender-based Violence and/or Intimate Partner Violence. Thank you for being a part of the IFAGE family.

With humility and gratitude,

Rev. Domnic & IFAGE team

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