

Fight against pediatric HIV/AIDS: Caritas calls for the individual commitment of Kisangani religious leaders



Kisangani, 21 September 2018 (caritasdev.cd): "My impressions are very positive in relation to this workshop. I read a lot of interest and commitment from participants about pediatric HIV / AIDS. It is therefore a question of starting to work seriously. Religious leaders and care providers must truly commit to and respect the commitments they have made to save children. It's not going to be easy. It's going to be a volunteer work, a personal commitment," said Mr Stefano Nobile, Caritas Internationalis HIV Focal Point, speaking in Kisangani on Thursday to religious leaders and healthcare providers. It was as part of the capacity building workshop to identify cases of pediatric AIDS and to mobilize communities for the diagnosis and early treatment of children living with HIV / AIDS in the Archdiocese of Kisangani, Province of Tshopo. These meetings were closed Thursday, September 20, 2018 by the Provincial Minister of Health, represented by its Director of Cabinet, Mr Kires Kitambo.

Identification, awareness, screening, treatment ...

As a result of this work, the hundred or so participants adopted activities to be carried out. "The first part of these activities will consist of identifying children who have the first signs that may be related to pediatric AIDS: skin problems, recurrent diarrhea, etc." Said Mr Nobile. For him, the idea is that religious leaders, who live in the community, can see these children and can talk with their parents and invite them to consult a health facility where the child must be tested and submitted to antiretroviral (ARV) , once detected positive.

The other part is to combat the stigma against these HIV-positive children and also to sensitize the community so that they live in a favorable atmosphere. It will also be necessary to take to the hospital for screening other children who do not show any preliminary signs, noted the Caritas Internationalis HIV / AIDS Focal Point.

PNMLS: the ARV access rate for children is still very low

"The management of pediatric HIV / AIDS has been identified as an important approach to the National Strategic Plan for the 2018-2021 AIDS Response to save the lives of children," said Dr Bernard Bossiky, Executive Secretary, Deputy National Multisectoral Program for the Fight against AIDS (PNMLS), discussed by the press at the end of this workshop.



Dr Bernard Bossiky du PNMLS

"At the moment, the access rate for ARVs for children is still very low. This is due to the fact that we have many cases of lost sight. That is, positive children who are no longer brought to the hospital by their parents for ARVs, where available. That is why this approach developed by the Catholic Church with other religious denominations reinforces the contribution of communities in the search for these children and their referral to medical training. This will increase the number of children born or living with HIV who receive ARVs," said Dr. Bernard Bossiky. And to inscribe: "This is really a rather important contribution that we have been encouraging, coming here to Kisangani. This project, although minimal, is important because the model will be transplanted into other dioceses and other religious denominations. My impressions are very positive, as the expected results will contribute to improving the quality of life for children living with HIV, as well as saving their lives. "

Appropriate identified catalytic activities

Speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary of Caritas Congo Asbl, Fr. Eric Abedilembe thanked all those who made this workshop a success. From the Archbishop of Kisangani to the participants, through the trainers and Caritas Development Kisangani. "It is true, the workshop to strengthen your commitment as leaders in the fight against pediatric HIV / AIDS is closing today. I would like to remind you on behalf of the Caritas Congo Asbl that this closure is rather an opening for you. (...) Each of you is called to appropriate the different catalytic activities identified this morning ", urged the 1st Deputy Executive Secretary of Caritas Congo Asbl.



Father Eric Abedilembe

"I therefore appeal to the conscience of each and every one of you so that children living with HIV / AIDS are identified and transferred to health facilities for appropriate care allowing them to live with dignity. Together, we pledge that within six months, the expected results of this project will be achieved in order to serve as a springboard for a project to combat pediatric HIV / AIDS in the Archdiocese of Kisangani, Province of Tshopo and in the other dioceses and provinces of our country ", concluded the Abbe Eric Abedilembe.



A group of participants in crossroads

To make it easier for them, Caritas Congo Asbl provided participants with an awareness leaflet in three languages (French, Lingala and Swahili) as well as a 136-page booklet containing the different knowledge provided during these works. were held from 18 to 20 September 2018 at the multipurpose hall of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of Kisangani.

This work was organized by Caritas Congo Asbl and Caritas Kisangani with the support of Caritas Internationalis and the support of UNAIDS and PEPFAR, as part of the PEPFAR - UNAIDS Initiative for Religious Organizations. For the record, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is an emergency aid plan for the fight against AIDS that US President George W. Bush launched in 2003.

Guy-Marin Kamandji

Special Envoy