

My Turn



BY DOCKS JERE

The author is lecturer at Mzuzu University

HIV prevention in schools

Aids, caused by a virus known as HIV, has no cure.

It has claimed lives of many people all over the world.

The only sure way to "cure" the disease is through prevention.

Aids is becoming a major public health crisis in the world.

In Malawi, its impact will continue to be devastating unless something is done to change the situation.

The challenge Aids poses must be taken seriously.

Aids is fairly a new disease, first discovered in 1981. Since then, the disease has spread rapidly until it became a world-wide problem.

But serious discussions on the disease started in 1985.

Unfortunately, at the time, many sexually-active persons had already been infected.

The disease continues to spread rapidly to the point that many people are now dying.

Malawians must understand that Aids is a killer.

A renowned BBC publication, Africa Magazine, once cautioned by quoting a Nigerian poet Charles Nebo who said:

"One minute you may be careless, another minute you are a victim. Prevention is better than

cure, Aids has no boundaries. Do not laugh at those who have fallen when more slippery ground lies ahead."

Pupils and students in schools need Aids education so that they do not ignorantly catch the virus and die before they contribute to the

socioeconomic development of the country.

Government through the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education should be commended for jointly producing HIV and Aids educational materials for all levels of education.

The philosophy is that the youth should grow with the knowledge of Aids prevention.

At the same time, they will pass on the messages to members of their families and communities they

live in.

In Malawi, Aids is likely to surpass malaria and tuberculosis as a major

killer.

The rapid spread of the pandemic has significant implications on poverty reduction, income and asset distribution and productivity and economic growth of the country as a whole.

Since Malawi is among countries with high HIV prevalence in the SADC Region, the country is likely to bear the brunt of the pandemic in the next decade unless promotion of prevention strategies remain high on the agenda.

Efforts government is putting in the fight against the pandemic are inadequate and there is an urgent need to expand response.

What distinguishes mankind from animals is the ability to build on knowledge that already exists.

The problem of HIV and Aids should not just be ignored as has happened in the past, but rather all resources should be mobilised to contain its

spread right at the grass roots.

Mzuzu University (Mzuni) is already taking a leading role in HIV and Aids prevention.

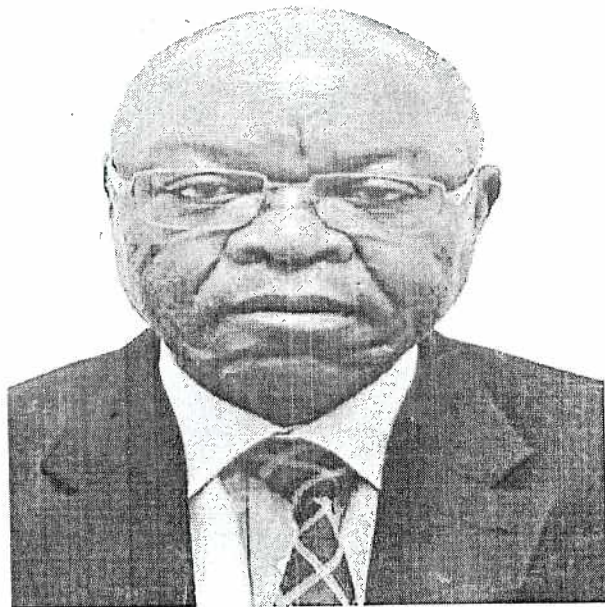
For instance, Mzuni sent a member of staff to be drilled in HIV counselling and testing at the Lighthouse in Lilongwe.

That aside, the university has a committee that spreads messages about the pandemic to students so that they are knowledgeable about HIV and Aids.

It also organises HIV and Aids seminars for spouses of both academic and non-academic staff.

The university also participates in World Aids Day activities where students test for HIV and demonstrate how to take care of the sick.

The university clinic also has a programme aimed at supporting people living with the virus. ■



Docks Richard JERE

Brief Biography Of The Author

Mr Jere is a lecturer in Educational Research at Mzuzu University. He started his career as a teacher and later became a tutor at Lilongwe Teacher' Training College for two years. He obtained his BA (Ed.) degree from the University of Hull in 1980 majoring in Educational Assessment and Statistics and subsequently earned an MA (Ed.) from the University of Reading, UK. Later, he also attended an Advanced Course in Research and Evaluation at the University of Wisconsin- Green Bay in the USA. In the ~~mid~~ 1980s, he joined the Malawi National Examinations Board and worked in the Testing and Research Department before rising to the position of Assistant Director. Prior to joining Mzuni, he worked at the Malawi Institute of Education as an Assistant Director responsible for Curriculum Development, In-Service, Research and Evaluation programmes for ten years.

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A BRIEF RESUME OF Mr. Docks Richard JERE

Recently retired as a lecturer in Education in the Faculty of Education at Mzuzu University (Mzuni) where for fifteen (15) taught Undergraduate students in the following courses: i) Educational Research Methods; ii) Testing, Measurement, and Evaluation; and iii) Curriculum Theory and Practice. He started his career as a teacher in Public Secondary Schools for six years and later became a tutor at Lilongwe Teacher' Training College for two years. He obtained his BA (Ed.) degree from the University of Hull in 1980 majoring in Educational Assessment and Statistics and subsequently earned a Master of Arts in Education degree from the University of Reading, U.K. Later, he also attended an Advanced Course of Training in Research and Evaluation at the University of Wisconsin- Green Bay in the USA. In the 1980s, he worked at the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) in the Testing and Research Department before rising to the position of Assistant Director. Prior to joining Mzuni in April, 2003, Mr Jere also worked at the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) as an Assistant Director responsible for *Curriculum Development, Research and Evaluation, and In-Service Training* (IN-SET) programmes for ten years. Mr Jere is an experienced teacher, Educational Researcher and a high achiever.

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