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It was on Wednesday when I went to Phiri Village in the afternoon. It was around 14-00 hours where I found young boys of a about 8 to 13 years boys in age.

I got surprised after seeing a common hobby the young boys pumping condoms and wrapping them with other plastics and using them as football.

It was my 4th or 5th time with such incidents around Luka Area this is very common.

I asked them where they got then they responded that they bought them from shops in the groceries.

I also probed further that how come they knew that they are found in shops one of the boys of about 12 years said that some of the men sends the bys to buy them the condoms and previously the stole one from the packet so since that time they got used and its now a habit to the area.

I then asked them that do they always but them one young boy said that they even get used condoms and wash them with soap and water then pump them not all boys but them.

Then I left right down where I found people gathered at a football pitch where people gathered for a drama group from Mangochi which came at the area. It was one of the Aids Toto Drama group.

In the play they were encouraging people in the villages to be sending children to school and telling the girls to say NO to sex, they critised the girls to be going for sugar dads hence most of the girls are after money that's why they are falling in love with big men and married people because of money so this way is contributing to HIV / AIDS transmission most of the girls will be dying because of this pandemic.

They told the youth to abstain themselves and work hard at School stop all immoral behaviours and this will help them instead of dying of the HIV / AIDS.

They encouraged the youth to be doing sporting activities during their free time or studying they made several plays but some were not mentioning issues related to HIV / AIDS.

Then lastly they made an interested play which were criticising parents in the area especially women who are encouraging the girls to be doing sex or falling in love with men they said women tell their daughters to (sell their bodies) doing sex in order to get money they said to buy (matemba, soap) for household consumption they said that in yao.

Mtauleje mkahule naga nkukana ngamlya ugali soni mlolecheye kuti mpatile makobile ngawa m'wuje wangali mbiya ni mkaika akuno!!

Menaing that the women in the households some of them forces their daughters to go for prostitution they send them to go if you deny you shall not eat meals and if they go for prostitution they should make sure that they should bring money if the girls will not bring cash they should not report at the household so the girls in such a way they are forced to do immoral behaviours because of the parents then the drama group told the people in the area that this is bad because once the girls are married they transmit the virus to the man who marry them after they die they say the husband has killed their daughters forgetting that they were forcing their daughters to go for men hence that time they were infected with the virus the problem is that one can stay up to 5+ alive so people do not know that one can look health yet they are infected with the virus.

And also a final play was also targeting women if they go for political meeting at Vingula or Balaka Mwendu after the functions some women married start doing immoral behaviours prostitution forgetting that they have left their spouses at house this is contributing to the spread of HIV / AIDS they criticised both men and women not only women but also men do sex during political meetings if they reach late in the afternoon they start pairing on their way back forgetting that there is a deadly disease in front of us.

After this play they thanked the people for participating and sparing time to attend the plays hence it was in the mid week.

And also encouraged the people to keep in use what has been said and seen during the 5 plays they shown.

Then they finally thanked the chiefs who also came to attend the drama. Then I left for Vingula very late.

07 – 05 – 2005.

It was on Saturday morning when people gathered at Playe chiefs ground around 9:00 hours in the morning there was a group called nachanda in M'chanda who were sending messages to the people of the area around Playe, Nwanilima, Nyenga, Damalesi, Luka and many others just to mention a few.

This group started some time back 2 to 3 years ago. They were letting the people of the dangers of HIV / AIDS and how it is spread and how different people are getting affected with the pandemic.

The man of about 24 years from the group stood up and greeting the people who gathered at the chiefs ground he started talking to the people that at present almost everybody is aware of HIV / AIDS radios, drama groups TVs and some political leaders and don't forgetting NGOs, are busy and were busy make people to be aware of the HIV / AIDS knowledge, how to prevent the spread of HIV how some cultural practices may increase the risk of HIV infection but people are busy doing immoral behaviours having many sexual partners do you think the virus will end the way we are behaving most of the people said that (osatheka) NO!!!.

The man said that you are just commenting here but as you go home you will be busy prostituting and womanizing.

Another boy of about 19 also commented within the group saying that if a person dies of HIV / AIDS he leaves children and these children sometimes are cared by the grand parents who are the aged these people spend their money assisting the orphans, educating them, dressing them so it is a chain of people who are affected because of the HIV / AIDS in one way or another.

So we should take care hence if one is sick a lot of people suffers even looking for somebody caring him or her at the hospital is expensive please let us change our behaviours and pray to GOD that we should be forgiven but instead of this some are praying for this HIV / AIDS to go away yet some are busy with prostitution how can GOD forgive us if people are dying we always suspect the old people of witchcraft forgetting that we were busy doing bad sexual behaviours so if we can change our bad behaviours I think this pandemic can change and people can not be spending money for this.

Some people were just nodding their heads commenting that (Zoono) its true.

Then another man of about 30 years from the group stood up and said that 'Now I would like to talk about one important issue which is one of the contributing

factor to the spread of the HIV / AIDS especially have in Vingula I will say it openly especially to married couples particularly women.

If a woman is married and sees that she is not producing a child she goes for a (Fisi) (Hyna) meaning to say that the lady goes to get a partner a man regardless of his health status and make sex with him until the lady is pregnant then goes in her household and blaph the husband that he is responsible for the pregnancy then the lady can not be divorced.

Most of the women get divorced because of this problem. If a lady is non-reproductive she can be divorced right away so this (fisi) issue is a very big problem because the fisi can be + to HIV / AIDS so it is automatically that the two people the couple can be infected because of fisi all the people were very attentive to the speaker.

He said that to the women have you heard of the (Fisi) please if you were doing this or you were planning to have a (Fisi Hyna (Spare tyre) stop you will die.

Then the man said that he talked a lot now people should take care of what has been talked about.

This cultural practice is bad hence there is an out break of HIV / AIDS currently. It is better to be divorced than losing life troubling people to be looking and caring after the patient because many of the things are destroyed.

So if one can not bare children it is not a problem just pray to GOD not getting the (FISI) this is risking to HIV / AIDS.

Then the Nchanda ndi Mchanda thanked that is the group thanked all the people who gathered at the chiefs ground.

Then as people were going back to their homes I joined them while walking back to the trading centre people were commenting to what the Nchanda ni Mchanda group talked about people were commenting on the issue of fisi one woman of about 30+ years said that people should bear children if one has no child in a household it is likely that that marriage automatically ends.

Then another man of a about 40 commented to say that not only fisi most of the married women are having hit and ran or one night stand sexual partners so if people will be infected it is not only through Afisi but also even injections / sharing razor blades can also make a person to get infected through exchanging of razor blades and also injections is also one of the way which HIV / AIDS can be transmitted injecting people using the same injections and finally one of the man of 30 years of age that women are having sexual partner ships to cope up

with this current situation of starvation / hunger in households people are lacking meals and other home needs so the women end up getting a sexual partners to get cash to buy meals and some other home needs.

He said that this is very common especially this year there will be a lot of prostitution this year because of poor harvest of 2005 most of the household do not have enough harvest.

He then said that even if messages are passed on to people but it will be difficult for people to prevent the HIV / AIDS pandemic because of starvation and poverty which is the major contributor to HIV / AIDS in the villages he then reached at the trading Centre then we went down to Mwamwa road.

Then I went to the bus stage at the trading Centre until I left for accommodation.

Then I went to Naimlazi Atimu rest house near Vingula Primary school just next to the TDC I slept in room 9 then in the next room number 8 there was a couple which got accommodation in the room it seemed it was a man with his sexual partner while they are in the room they were talking so loud so that I was hearing what ever was talked about.

Around 20:30 Hours the lady was demanding for cash before sex then she demanded also for a condom. The man just laughed and asked the lady why she was demanding for a condom ,she said in yao that KUSAKU KUJOGOISYE NI NGANGUSOSA PLAIN!!

She meant that "I am demanding for a condom because there is a deadly disease country wide and it is risking do sex un protected sex") I don't want un protected sex!

The man said that I Quote "I am health you cant see I am fat I am okey.I am not infected all those who are infected are thin very thin coughs and likes eating meat. trust me don't worry about anything I am okey. hen the lady just said okey as you give me "Kaisala" meaning cash then the man asked how many rounds are we going to do? The lady said its up to you! Then the man said 2 only. How much are you going to charge me?

The lady said that for both (plain) it is K400.

Then the man said you cant deduct abit? Then the lady said okey you give me K300.00.

Then the man said key. Then the couple stopped talking the room was silent. Then in the morning I just saw a school girl from Vingula Community Day Secondary School coming out from the room at the Rest House with avendor

the man whom she slept with at the rest house.

I probed further to one of the rest house owners they said that most of the school children of VCDSS do book accommodation especially over the weekends and as the school closes ed of terms.

Then I left at the rest house going to the trading centre.

Then I saw the couple of the school girl who came out of the rest house in the market coming by the stage escorting the vendor who took a mini-bus going to Mwendo. Then the girl stood by the stage several boys her school mates came by her they greeted her and they asked her that who as the one whom she was with?

She responded to them that they were not concerned. One boy of about 19 said that that vendor is married and he has a lot of girl friends the girl said that 'I don't mind as long as he gives me my personal needs'.

Then one of the boys said that you must fall in love with your fellow school mate not the sugar dads have you heard?

The girl responded by saying that what gonna you be giving me? What do you have/ You have a lot of problems how can you care me yet you have your own problems I am after money.

The boys told the girl that you will die very soon don't you know that there is HIV / AIDS we shall burry you very soon.

The girl said that every body shall die and she doesn't mind as long as she is enjoying, she can not waste time with school boys what gonna they give her it like (self help projects) meaning that she can not make sex with anybody for free without giving her money.

Then the boys left the palce and also the girl went where they sell chips she bought a mineral and chips.

I left the stage and took a minibus off I went to Mwendo.

09 – 05 – 2005.

There was also some sort of a drama group from Blantyre which came at the trading centre by the school Vingula Community Day Secondary School ground.

They started performing around 13:00 hours but only a few people gathered at the ground hence it was within the week.

They were referring to HIV / Aids patients that once a person is affected by the pandemic people should do the following.

- (a) People should be love him or her through out all his or her life time.
- (b) He or she must have a freedom of everything as a normal person.
- (c) He or she must eat with people or relatives people should not isolate her or him.
- (d) He or she should not be fired from work or any group.
- (e) He or she must be sleeping or staying together with people.

Then after this play they were now talking about it is good for people to be going for blood testing on HIV / AIDS test voluntarily as of now the turn up is very low there was as encouragement to people that they should go for blood testing because after knowing the HIV / AIDS status one can be free or can be able to know what type of meals to be taking or type of drugs to be taking and he or she can be able to prevent the virus hence he or she can have a basic knowledge on HIV / AIDS and how to prevent the spread of HIV.

There was also a third play which was referring to the consequences of HIV / AIDS they were talking about how people are affected with the HIV / AIDS they said that to some extensions you see a couple of a marriage dies leaving orphans may be 4 or 6 children you see the orphans caring themselves looking after themselves dropping out from school due to poverty and lack of food and home needs.

They also said that some orphans are cared by very old people the aged who care for the orphans educating them providing all household needs for them which is a heavy load to the aged people instead of looking after themselves they care for the orphans this they said that is very common in the villages and most of the orphans do not continue with school hence parents were lost and the children lack support.

The play was extended up reaching to an extent of referring to girl's orphans some start prostitution they end up getting infected and dying following their parents checking the cause of death HIV / AIDS.

Then the last part of the play was warning the people the risk of HIV / AIDS

telling them how they can prevent the spread of HIV / AIDS.

They also (criticising) or telling the girls and women to stop prostitution they should stop liking money because of poverty and orphanage people turn to be money hungry getting infected because of being loose.

Noone can die because of poverty so people should take care of this deadly disease. They lastly thanked the people who gathered at the football ground for sparing their time to watch the drama.

After this all people were going in different directions going in their homes. I joined some 3 men who were going towards the trading centre.

Tehys tarted talking about a story on the play about the orphans who go for prostituion saying that this is because of poverty grabbing after death of parents especially death of a man in families it is leaving a very big gap to the children people grab all the property belonging to the man leaving the children handless that's why children starve and lack household items and Assets yet their parents were rich and had property which the children can use in their educational health and home needs it is not their intention to do bad sexual behaviours but because of poverty of the house hold so they end up prostituting around looking for money.

Another man commented that not all children are getting into bad immoral behaviours but is show up most of the girls may be their parents had good jobs in towns like Balaka or they were working in Blantyre city one the parents die they go in rural areas like here in Vingula may be at Playe they see village life and they compare with city life of Blantyre so they go in Hotels for Disco hence they used to go with parents in hotels but they were cared for but due to lack of parental care they start immoral behaviours ending up getting infected with the virus because as they reach in the rural areas they dot get friends to chat with they start looking for fellow friends who hove been town life those putting on trousers so they go in town and ends up going in battle stores beer bars and in entertainment places its where they catch the kachiroambo ka Boma then the men went to the trading centre till they disappeared

It was on Saturday morning on a market day, I went at the trading centre where there were a lot of people I went to a barber shop there were 4 men who were quarrelling with the barbershop owner that he heard on the radio one of the customer was asking the owner of the barber shop that it is true that a shaving machine can also contribute to the spreading of HIV / AIDS virus. He responded to say that may be but he said that his machines are cleaned soon after every shave with mentholated spirits (spirit) he also let the people that early this month if not in April the principal secretary of the Ministry of Health was interviewed on the radio and TVM about the issue of shavers he said that it is very impossible for HIV / AIDS to be spread on these machines hence when these machines are on operation they produces heat which a virus can not survive on that temperature and also when a virus of HIV / AIDS is exposed out it can not survive for more than a minute it dies so the chances of HIV / AIDS virus to be spread is very slim.

What is needed is good care and good cleaning with menthylated spirits before and after each shave.

The customers now agreed to what the owner of the Barber shop was responding to them. Then they started sharing then I left at the place.

One of the man whom as at the Barber shop joined me as I left he started talking to me that but the news of Kachilombo HIV / AIDS is in the month of people daily and hourly people now are and have realized the risk of HIV / AIDS. But you know there is a use of a condom to a bar girl; is followed properly because it is only for a day hit and run but if you have a sexual partner for a long time it is difficult to be using a condom through out you just use to the very early stage of the friendship stage of the friendship then you get used you end up not using the condom because you know what you feel that I am the only one sleeping with the lady forgetting that these people are dangerous they can sleep with more than 1 man within a day.

He kept on talking about the issue people most of the men will and are getting infected because of these partnerships they just may be use a condom during the first sex then they trust the partner then they keep on unprotected then they go home sleep with spouses spreading it to the wives and if the wives go out to their sexual partner they also spread it so a chain of people are getting infected daily until millions of pople will be infected what is need is being faithful to spouses if the only way for married people. I was commenting to some issues so that he kept on talking on the issue of HIV / AIDS.

He then said that he heard that "one of the Nurses in Balaka died of HIV / AIDS I got surprised because I take these medicinal personal to know much better on the risk of HIV / AIDS, they know the knowledge on HIV / AIDS so people get

surprised to hear and see that a nurse is dying of HIV / AIDS.

He then excused me that he was going to Noria on Mangochi road. I went to the Community hall ground near where they sell 2nd hand clothes (Kaunjika) I stood by the road I saw 2 boys of about 20 years old they called on 2 girls then they told them to get the boys where they stood the girls said that in yao BOLA KASAILA NGAWA YA MASAF NI NGATU KUMULANA the boys said that SIPALI NGADANDAULA saying that the 2 girls..... as long as you have cash (money) Masaf meaning for free they can not accept because Masaf projects people work as a self help project for free so they do not allow for free.

And the boys said that the girls should not worry the boys have money I went close to the boys as the girls left the venue after they agreed to meet at lunch.

The boys started talking about that eeeee today they wanna hear us I can not use a condom to that girl she is beautiful oh then the other boy also said the same that the girls are beautiful saying that to use a condom is to waste the condom.

Then they said that the girls looked healthy and nice looking then after some time the girls appeared soon after few minutes the boys joined the girls and went to the rest house near the Community Centre they were moving in pairing openly to the public all people were just looking at the couples entering the gate of the St. Jude resthouse until they went inside.

Then another man said that the school pupils especially those from STD 7 and 8 and the secondary pupils who are grown up 15 – 20 if there is a game football and netball matches on Fridays at their schools after the games are through or over around 5pm or 6pm these pupils go for bad sexual behaviours they end up pairing until they reach home so late in the evening if parents ask them they say the games ended late so in such behaviours they end up getting pregnant and getting the virus HIV / AIDS and also dropping out of school.

The man kept on talking about now school pupils 'Even if some organisations and some leaders say that pupils the youth must be doing sporting activities it is true but these pupils get chances of getting sexual partners so people should not get cheated that sporting activities can prevent HIV / AIDS the only way is to encourage the youth to abstain.

'But I don't think that the kachilombo shall end because people are busy doing sex regardless of age all the age groups except the age but these people from 14 to 50 they are busy I think the most contributor is poverty and starvation! He also said that especially this yao culture young girls start sex while they are young about 13 years of age you see them challenging even elderly persons so

this makes the sugar dads to fall in love with the young girls even parents the yaos they can know that their child is falling in-love with! He said I chewa CHIDYAMAKANDA'

this means sugar dad an elderly person who make sex with young girls. All the people laughed! And one man said that these young girls attracts the elderly people deliberately in order to get money for their personal use. Some girls even buys relish for their household in presence of parents most of the parents do not even ask their daughter the source of the money but they likely know that the cash is always from sugar dads to some extension the problem is both the girls and the parents so this kachilombo will be still get spread if people will not be serious to look after their children and make restrictions to them.

Then another man of about 50 years commented that people are busy prostituting even those of 30 to 55+ years women and men are busy and theya re not even having a risk on HIV / AIDS you see somebody has died from town the male person then the wife comes home in the village to stay and people publise that eee the man ahs died of akchilombo but you see men flocking there to propose the woman if you tell them that the ladies husband died of kachilombo they responded to say that the lady is health and she is fat so if one makes sex with the lady he keeps on publicizing to the people so a chain of men go for the woman so if the lady was or is positive a chain of men get infected they say that 'NOWE TUKAPASYE ANYONO AGONILE NAWO NONE TINGASOSE KASAILA BASI MBWE NGAMPASYA JWEJULA.

Meaning to say that if one of the men in the village makes sex with the deceased wife some men says I will also go for the same deceased lady as long as I get cash to pay her as long as I test her I should not die before I test the health fat lady for getting that it takes time for one to show signs of HIV / AIDS so people will be dying of ignorance that's why you see there is AIDS in the rural areas. If theys ee somebody from town people get attracted ending up carrying the virus!.

Then the men went for launch within the trading centre.

I went to the restaurant for launch at the trading centre while in the restaurant one of the guys put on a caps of Chishango blue an colour and some red markings.

One lady started talking about the caps (hat) of Chishango and the woman of about 30+ years said that she cannot accept to use a condom with a man it is better to without doing sex.

People laughed in the restaurant saying oh ! eeh! You can't accept a condom one

of the men said that but it is been advertised on the radio they say "condom ndi moyo wako" meaning to say that if one uses a condom one is not at risk his life or her life is secured you can't be afraid of Hiv/AIDS.

The woman said that I can't accept that plastic I heard that it gives some bad smells and also one if used frequently you develop small sores in the face? The man said that oh! Oh!

We don't that the use of condoms is effective.

The woman said that she heard from a prostitute one of a (professional hule) she said so.

The men kept n mocking the woman then the woman said that I can't waste my time with plastics.

Have you ever seen one eating a sweet while it is wrapped in a plastic wrapper.

Then men said, No you can't feel sweet.

All the people laughed in the restaurant.

And one of the men said that this lady is of rural area life and she is putting herself at risk. Not so! All the men and two other women said that that's true and one woman commented that in Yao Kana kondomu chemwali umi wawo akuwuwika pa ucheche.

She meant that you don't accept condoms you are putting your life at risk sister.

The other woman said that these prostitutes do not accept condoms not all of them but some I think because they see themselves staying for some years may be up to 10 years so they don't think that they can be + they always think that they are negative – because this kachilombo is everybody's duty to prevent it.

The lady responded so loudly that in Yao, " Ni mpaka ngajonanje machili kutikulira chikondomu ngati mpaka nasalre walume kuti m' bola aleche une ngawa mkunda mpaka nasalire kuti njauleje ako ni ima oil yenu"

She said that she can not waste time doing sex using a condom because her energy can be wasted and said also that she can command the man not to use the condom if the man keep insisting on using it she can tell him she Doesn't accept and she can tell him to go away, with condom which contains oils.

One man said that "please sister if you were doing that please change your style." Please, please sister hence you do sex with different people start accepting for the condoms sister.

Another man said that "aa! Aulalire mkati awa ngalimbana nawo!"

Meaning that this lady has been already affected with the Kachilombo.

All people laughed at her but unfortunately enough she was not concerned even if the men were advising her.

She finally responded that she doesn't care and may be some of the people will die earlier before and she said that do not trust a condom it can burst or one do not know how to insert it especially you villagers so do not cheat yourselves that you are on the safe side we are all dying not prostitutes will be dying Hiv/AIDS even normal people are dying of this problem leave me alone I shall not accept to use a condom tell other people not myself. She got out of the restaurant and went away.

The restaurant was now quite business was on . I finished eating my meal and recorded all the talks which were talked by the people about the condoms until they finished.

While I was paying cash for the meal the woman who said that sister it is not using condoms because she sees herself up to now yet many years have passed she finally said that now it is better for all people dying of HIV/AIDS to be disclosed, during funeral ceremonies this can help the people to know her or his sexual partners and reject them if they propose them. Because this can reduce the suspicion of witchcraft to the aged in the village because when one dies most of the people decision is suspicion of witchcraft beating and abusing the aged persons in the village and people and some can change sexual behaviours because what happens to the church leaders during funerals even if one was a prostitute they say, "this one has chosen his way or her way to life she knew that there is God she will be in paradise so this is disappointing people and these types of funerals are respected than somebody who was faithful to his family/wife and faithful to God please the church leaders must start disclosing the cause of death to every funeral.

Finally as this lady finished talking I requested the lady to answer me few questions, she said that it was most welcome. I started asking her about the lady which went home, mainly I was interested to know her background and characters.

She responded that she was one of the prostitutes at Vingula she has been there for over 5 years and she stopped learning and dropped out from school while she was in STD 5.

And most of her fellow friends died sometime back. And she said that she always quarrel with people especially, if one has not paid her (Dispatch fee) charge for sex she reaches to an extent of going in offices of men to demand for cash if not paid. Sometimes she snatches cell phones if not paid cash she has no nosense.

I thanked the lady for answering me the few questions. I asked her because I knew that the lady was gone hence I was confused on condoms issue that is she married or not. How come she doesn't accept a condom.

And I told the lady who gave me the characters of the lady that the information is confidential I will not disclose it to anybody and I told her not to disclose to the prostitute. She said that she can't tell anybody I should feel free.

I thanked her and went out of the restaurant.

Thereafter I went to the bus stage and went to Mwendo by Minibus.

21/05/2005

it was on Saturady when I went to Damalesi village where there was a lot of people gathered by the chief's compound. It was in the afternoon around 13:30 pm

The chief was addressing the people to maintain the roads in the villages and he called on the people to clear their gardens as early as possible. After he talked about village developments he advised the people especially married couples to be faithful to their spouses hence there is out break of the virus.

Another old woman also stood up and corrected the chief that some of the women are tired their husbands went to the Republic of South Africa long time ago some have been there for 2 or more years and are not assisting their families so some women do immoral behaviour in order to cope up with the situation they lack assistance (money) for the household so this is making people to do bad behaviours it is not their intention to do so but problems they do not even write letters to their wives the women end up getting spare tyres some even are getting pregnant and after some years I the owner of the wives come they get new children being born, so the men just divorce the women as time goes you see the women dying but even if the women are getting infected the causers are the men who are taking long in Johannesburg RSA.

Then all the woman at the Chief's compound were nodding their heads and commenting that it is true. But not all men stay longer some stay few months then assists their households.

Then I left the venue around 17:00 hours back to the Trading Centre.

THE END.