

## MANERELA+ ENGAGES GOVERNMENT ON HIV TREATMENT STRUCTURES

By Starphel Sithole

Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living or Affected with HIV/AIDS (MANERELA+) has roped in government to boost its collaborative efforts towards the fight against HIV and AIDS in order to orient communities especially recipients of care as well as gatekeepers in the groups which include chiefs, block and religious leaders on treatment structures in Kasungu district;

Speaking during the Community Led Monitoring training at Ministry of Health Programs Officer at the Department of HIV, STIS and Viral Hepatitis Brown Chiwandira said, empowering communities with effective HIV knowledge is one of top priority agenda of Ministry of Health.



*Brown Chiwandira*- Ministry of Health Programs Officer at the Department of HIV, STIS and Viral Hepatitis

"We have been working hand in hand with MANERELA+ to ensure that people have right information to HIV treatment. said Chiwandira.

Chiwandira added that communities on issues that affect them as government focus much on the biomedical aspect of HIV treatment and we are able to address misconceptions

surrounding the HIV treatment hence we are combating HIV defaulter rate which resulted from insufficient information”

Data Collector at Kasungu District Hospital Esther Chimbewa said the initiative is a game changer as it has provided them with the right information regarding HIV and related services.

“This training has equipped us with other ways of providing treatment in remote areas which will combat issues related to long distances to ART treatments, therefore we have a duty to inform other people on the right information surrounding access to HIV treatment”, said Chimbewa.

One of the participants Amina Salanje hailed the initiative as it has imparted her with right knowledge on how to properly manage her daily life whilst on HIV treatment.

According to Malawi National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS response 2020 to 2025 empowerment, involvement and engagement of community structures especially recipients of care and gate keepers in the community such as block leaders and Religious Leaders is one of the core pillars guiding the work towards the fight against HIV.