

## FLON leads #BeFree movement

**UNAIDS:** As a UNAIDS Special Advocate for Adolescents Girls and Young Women, the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia (FLON), Madame Monica Geingos continues to champion the Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free agenda through her #BeFree movement and has done tremendous work with students, parents, life skills teachers, social workers, nurses and police officers.

The intention of #BeFree is to create a non-judgemental, inclusive platform which encourages honest and robust dialogue and information-sharing between all parties on challenges that hold young people back.



FLON's strategy is to encourage students, parents, life skills teachers, social workers, nurses and police officers to engage on HIV-related issues. Participants have the opportunity to discuss the problems they face as well as the impact of absent father-figures, alcohol-abuse and teenage pregnancy on children's education and well-being.

Following the dialogues, participants are encouraged to become #BeFree ambassadors and help young people at their schools and in their communities by establishing #BeFree regional clubs. The City of Windhoek, Gobabis, Katima Mulilo, Rundu and Walvis Bay have hosted #BeFree events and other regions plan to implement events by the end of 2017.

Subsequently, many young people have confided in the Office of First Lady, revealing issues that trigger pain or relate to traumatic events they have experienced or continue to experience. The Office of The First Lady has managed to intervene in several unreported or unresolved cases of sexual assault, domestic violence, custody battles, baby dumping, teen pregnancy, cyber bullying, harassment and threats and intimidation. You can follow the #BeFree movement on Twitter: @BeFreeAnonymous