December 9, 2011

**PHI's Adolescent Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Initiative Awards $50,000 to Improve the Lives of Young Girls and Women in Malawi**

OAKLAND, CA -- Supported by the United Nations Foundation and the Compton Foundation, the Adolescent Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Initiative (AGALI) of the Public Health Institute (PHI) has awarded $50,000 in funding to organizations in Malawi to implement new advocacy strategies aimed at improving adolescent girls' health, education and livelihoods.

"Adolescent girls in Malawi suffer from widespread physical, economic and social violence," said Denise Raquel Dunning, MPA, AGALI's Program Director. "Only by improving policies, programs and budgets to benefit girls will it be possible for girls to realize their full potential and contribute to Malawi's future."

Proposals were developed and submitted by AGALI's 2011 Malawi Fellows, senior civil society and government leaders selected for their extensive leadership experience and their personal commitment to improving girls' lives. The nineteen Fellows participated in an intensive one-week advocacy workshop in Mangochi, Malawi in August 2011 led by AGALI. The workshop focused on strengthening participants' capacity to implement advocacy strategies to improve the health, human rights, education and socio-economic wellbeing of adolescent girls and young women. The final phase of the training provided Fellows with coaching and support to develop advocacy project proposals focusing on the rights of girls and young women.

After the advocacy training, Fellows returned to their organizations to finalize and submit their advocacy proposals to AGALI. Following a competitive selection process, the following proposals were awarded seed grants to support implementation of their advocacy strategies:

- **Chilimba Women and Orphans Care Group**
  This project, led by a village chief, is advocating with chiefs and local leaders in the Zomba district of Malawi to modify and develop alternatives to traditional initiation practices that negatively impact adolescent girls.

- **Foundation for Community Support Services (FOCUS)**
  FOCUS is advocating to raise the legal age of marriage from 14 to 18 years in Malawi by working with traditional leaders and members of Parliament to pass the revised Marriage Act.

- **Girls Empowerment Network (GENET)**
  The Stop Child Marriage Project will work to reduce the incidence of child marriages among rural adolescent girls ages 10-18 years in the Chiradzulo district of Malawi.
• Sub-Saharan Child and Community Development Trust (SACCODE) 
  SACCODE is advocating with district education authorities to improve adolescent girls' 
  access to education.

**About the Adolescent Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Initiative**

AGALI promotes global health and development by enhancing the capacity of Latin American 
and African leaders to improve the health, education and livelihoods of adolescent girls and 
young women. Implemented by the Public Health Institute, AGALI strengthens the ability of 
senior leaders to improve adolescent girls' human rights, health and socio-economic well-being, 
while simultaneously empowering young women to develop their own solutions to the obstacles 
they face.

For more information about AGALI and to view photos of the 2011 Malawi Fellows training and 
profiles of AGALI grantees, please visit [www.agaliprogram.org](http://www.agaliprogram.org) or contact Emily Teitsworth, 
AGALI Program Manager, at eteitsworth@phi.org.

**About The Public Health Institute:**

The Public Health Institute (PHI), an independent nonprofit organization based in Oakland, 
California, is dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people throughout 
California, across the nation and around the world. PHI's primary methods for achieving these 
goals include sharing evidence developed through quality research and evaluation, providing 
training and technical assistance and promoting successful prevention strategies to policymakers, 
communities and individuals.

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