

Women ARISE



Key Messaging Document

One of the main drivers of the HIV epidemic is gender inequality. Globally, about half of all people living with HIV are female, and in every region of the world, the number of women contracting HIV is on the rise. Moreover, young women are increasingly vulnerable to HIV, with roughly 45% of all new infections occurring among 15-24 year olds. It is imperative, therefore, that in the International AIDS Conference's program, plenary sessions, press conferences, abstract sessions, non-abstract driven sessions, workshops, and all other mechanisms and activities, women and girls' perspectives, voices, and realities are reflected.

Women from different networks/ organizations and involvement in the AIDS response, identified some key areas of work for highlighting women at the next AIDS Conference. We hope that these will be taken into account in future planning processes, from Vienna and beyond. Women... ARISE!

Access: to information, services, prevention, care, treatment, support

Rights: sexual and reproductive health and rights, property, inheritance, non-discrimination, equality, justice

Ivestment: budgets and funds for women and girls

Security: mental, physical, psychological, financial

Equity: education, empowerment, resources

Women's Human Rights: promote, protect, and fulfill women's human rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights

- Promote and guarantee the human rights of all women and girls, including protection from discrimination and stigma, as well as all types of violence and coercion in public and private life.
- Fight against all laws and norms criminalizing the transmission of HIV
- Guarantee women and girls' sexual and reproductive rights, including those of women living with HIV. This includes zero tolerance for violations of the reproductive rights of women living with HIV such as forced contraception, forced abortion, and forced sterilizations. This also includes giving women living with HIV accurate and non-judgmental information about their fertility options.
- Ensure that the rights of all women are promoted, protected, and fulfilled, regardless of their HIV status, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, sexual practices, or other and that they have full access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information without any form of discrimination.

- Ensure women's equal access to social and economic rights such as inheritance and property rights, to make free and informed decisions about marriage, including age of consent, as well as the right to social and political participation.
- Guarantee girls' and adolescents' access to education, including comprehensive sexuality education, in equity with boys.
- Challenge current practices around privacy and confidentiality of HIV and AIDS testing, including disclosure of status and Provider-Initiated Counseling and Testing models where adopted for vertical transmission programmes.

Addressing Violence against Women and girls in the HIV and AIDS response

- Recognize all types of violence against women and girls as both a cause and consequence of HIV.
- Strengthen the evidence base on the intersection of violence against women and girls and HIV and AIDS
- Strengthen the health and legal framework to protect women and girls from violence and enable systems of support for survivors of violence.
- Develop programs and services that promote safe and enabling environments to prevent violence against women and girls, including violence used as a weapon in armed conflict
- Promote initiatives to reduce structural determinants of violence, women's social and economic empowerment and challenging cultural and social norms around femininity and masculinity

Linking Sexual and reproductive health and HIV

- Ensure comprehensive sexuality education in and out of schools as a key prevention strategy
- Ensure access to quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, information, and supplies. This should consist of, among others, confidential and voluntary counseling, testing and treatment for HIV and all sexually transmitted infections; prevention of unintended pregnancies; equitable and affordable access to contraceptives, including the provision of all condoms, especially female condoms and programming; access to emergency contraception; safe and legal abortion, including post abortion care; care and treatment to prevent vertical transmission of HIV, including of partners and children.
- Protect the health and life of the woman, and the full enjoyment of a healthy sexual life - irrespective of HIV status, age, marital status, sexual orientation, life style choices, occupation, migratory status, drug use, or other types of status.
- Demand that National AIDS programs and strategies include programming and sufficient resources that attend to the sexual and reproductive health needs of women, girls and young women, including adolescents, as well as the prevention, treatment and care of violence against women and girls-
- Call upon all National AIDS programs and strategies to develop strong linkages between sexual and reproductive health and HIV services, as evidenced in the recent Cochrane Review¹ and reaffirmed at the 42nd session of UN Commission on Population and Development, which follows implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development - ICPD.
- Promote and support continued investment into research on new prevention technologies (NPTs) controlled by women, including microbicides.
- Ensure investment in women-focused models of clinical and socio-economic research.

¹http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2008/linkages_evidence.PDF

Linking HIV/AIDS and community development

- Access to basic services, clean water, sanitation, transportation and food security are vital for achieving universal access. People who do not have food cannot adhere to antiretroviral treatment; people with no access to transportation cannot get to hospitals to seek treatment, counseling or testing.
Responses to this include support for women's livelihood initiatives in AIDS funding and programming. Women are less likely to engage in risky practices if they have access to income and secure livelihoods.
- Empower communities to conduct research and collect data on the HIV and AIDS pandemic in their communities. It is important for data on the epidemic to be collected by the people who are in communities, so that they can own and fully understand the data, and use it to help them understand and effectively participate in community, country and global planning and dialogue processes on HIV and AIDS.

Leadership and Accountability

- Reaffirm and implement all international commitments acquired in relation to women and girls and HIV, including the Cairo Program of Action of 1994 and its further actions in 1999, the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 and 2000, the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration of 2006, the Millennium Development Goals, and achieve Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.
- Recognize that women's leadership is vital to achieving these commitments.
- Ensure that all women and young women leading responses to HIV and AIDS in their communities and countries, especially women living with HIV and home-based caregivers, participate in all decision-making processes, mechanisms and in the allocation of resources such as on the Country Coordinating Mechanisms and National AIDS Programs and strategies.
- Uphold the GIPA Principle. The leadership of positive women is not negotiable. Women and girls with HIV must be included in all decision-making processes that affect their/our lives².
- It is essential that the international community, including donor countries, international financial institutions, and multi-lateral organizations, be held to account for ensuring that their funds effectively promote gendered programmes and practices, especially ensuring that women, young women, and girls programming is sufficiently funded in the AIDS and human rights responses, including through strengthening sexual and reproductive health programmes and integrating them with HIV/AIDS.

The following networks and organizations developed and sponsor this initiative:

AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)

Aids Hilfe Wien

Amanitare

Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+)

Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW)

ASTRA -Central and Eastern Europe Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Athena Network

Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

² <http://www.worldywca.org/World-YWCA/Communications/Resources/Nothing-About-us-Without-Us>

Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN)
Foundation for Studies and Research on women (FEIM)
GESTOS
GSSG, Sexuality and Health Foundation
Huairou Commission
International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI)
International AIDS Women's Caucus (IAWC)
ICW Asia Pacific
ICW Europe
ICW Germany
ICW Namibia
ILGA -International Lesbian and Gay Association
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Western Hemisphere
International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC)
Ipas
Latin American Council of AIDS Service Organizations (LACCASO)
Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)
Pan African Treatment Access Movement (PATAM)
PulsHIV
Salamander Trust
SANGRAM
World AIDS Campaign (WAC)
Women Won't Wait Campaign (WWW)
World YWCA
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Women ARISE

International AIDS Conference in Vienna 2010

<http://www.aidswomencaucus.org/womenarise/>

