Addressing gender inequality & violence as a critical enabler in the HIV response

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Globally 34 million living with HIV

Adults and children estimated to be living with HIV | 2011

- North America: 1.4 million (1.1 million – 2.0 million)
  - Caribbean: 230,000 (200,000 – 250,000)
  - Latin America: 1.4 million (1.1 million – 1.7 million)
- Western & Central Europe: 900,000 (830,000 – 1.0 million)
- Eastern Europe & Central Asia: 1.4 million (1.1 million – 1.8 million)
- Middle East & North Africa: 300,000 (250,000 – 360,000)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 23.5 million (22.1 million – 24.5 million)
- South & South-East Asia: 4.0 million (3.1 million – 5.2 million)
- East Asia: 830,000 (590,000 – 1.2 million)
- Oceania: 53,000 (47,000 – 60,000)

Total: 34.0 million (31.4 million – 35.9 million)
Every minute, a young woman is newly infected with HIV.

As a result of their lower economic, socio-cultural status in many countries, women and girls are disadvantaged when it comes to negotiating safe sex, accessing HIV prevention information and services.

- HIV is the leading cause of death of women of reproductive age.  
- 11-45% between 11% and 45% of adolescent girls report that their first sexual experience was forced.  
- Women living with HIV are more likely to experience violations of their sexual and reproductive rights, for example forced sterilization.  
- Globally, young women aged 15-24 are more vulnerable to HIV with infection rates twice as high as in young men, and accounting for 29% of all new HIV infections.  
- Only one female condom is available for every 30 women in Sub-Saharan Africa.  
- More than one-third of women aged 20-24 years in the developing world marry before they are 18 years old.  
- Approximately 40% of pregnancies worldwide are unintended, increasing risk of women’s ill-health and maternal death.  
- Globally, less than 30% of young women have comprehensive and correct knowledge on HIV.  
- Two thirds of the world’s 794 million illiterate adults are women.  
- In many countries customary practices on property and inheritance rights further increase women’s vulnerability to AIDS and reduce their ability to cope with the disease and its impact.  
- 32/94 Women living with HIV are not regularly involved in formal processes to plan and review the national HIV response to HIV in 32 out of 94 countries.

Source: UNAIDS 2012
How do these factors increase women’s & girl’s HIV vulnerability?

- **Poverty & transactional sex:**
  - young girls have sex with older men to access resources. This seeds HIV into younger age groups

- **Gender inequality & violence:**
  - women have difficulty negotiating sex or condom use when economically dependent on partner & fear violence

- **Limited livelihood opportunities:**
  - Women’s economic dependence on partner
  - Labour migration, separation of families

- **Stigma & discrimination:**
  - prevents those most vulnerable to HIV from accessing or supporting HIV programmes
Multiple levels of intervention

Source: UNAIDS/WHO 2010
Example 1
Zomba cash transfer program, Malawi: Paying girls to stay in school
Impacts both on HIV & other outcomes

Investment

Cash transfer scheme to keep girls in school – Zomba, Malawi

$10/month provided to in and out-of-school girls (13-22 yrs)

(Baird et al., 2010 & 2012)

Outcomes

35% reduction school drop-out rate

40% reduction early marriages

76% reduction in HSV-2 risk

30% reduction in teen pregnancies

64% reduction in HIV risk
Ex 2: The Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS & Gender Equity (IMAGE Study)

Paul Pronyk, Julia Kim, Tanya Abramsky, Godfrey Phetla, James Hargreaves, Linda Morison, Charlotte Watts, Joanna Busza, John Porter

SEF
Small Enterprise Foundation
Intervention combined Microfinance with participatory training on gender, violence & HIV
Significant impacts on violence & HIV risk behaviours over 2 years

Among participants:
• Past year experience of IPV reduced by 55%
• Households less poor
• Improved HIV communication

Among younger women:
• 64% higher uptake HIV testing
• 25% less unprotected sex

No wider community impacts

Building an effective response for women & girls

Information & social power

Effective prevention

HIV prevention technologies that work for girls & women

Money, economic skills & opportunities

Adapted from: Brady, Martha. Population Council, 2005
Many thanks

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