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)
- East Asia: 830,000 (590,000 – 1.2 million)
- Middle East & North Africa: 300,000 (250,000 – 360,000)
- South & South-East Asia: 4.0 million (3.1 million – 5.2 million)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 23.5 million (22.1 million – 24.8 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 sterilisations.

- **2x**
  - Globally, young women aged 15-24 are most vulnerable to HIV with infection rates twice as high as young men, and accounting for 25% of all new HIV infections.

- **Only one female condom is available for every 20 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.**

- **40%**
  - Approximately 40 percent of pregnancies worldwide are unintended, increasing risks of women’s ill-health and maternal death.

- **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
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)

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

Impacts both on HIV & other outcomes
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

Effective prevention

Information & social power

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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