

Firelight Newsflash! 4 May 2009 – Focus on Girls

Addressing the vulnerability of young women & girls to stop the HIV epidemic in Southern Africa: Report on a 2008 UNAIDS

Technical Meeting on young women in HIV hyper-endemic countries of Southern Africa

Issue briefs and recommendations in this document cover: reducing women's biomedical vulnerability to HIV; gender-based violence; economic empowerment; intergenerational sex; and education, aids, & vulnerability. Key conclusions from the meeting included:

- 1) Mobilise communities;
- 2) Expand access to high quality, well-integrated essential sexual and reproductive health and prevention services;
- 3) Address the structural drivers of vulnerability; and
- 4) Strengthen country capacities for epidemiological and behavioural surveillance, priority research, and monitoring coverage and impact of prevention responses – all of which can generate strategic information to improve decision-making for strategic planning.

To download the full publication, see: http://www.unaidsrstes.org/files/Young-women-and-girls_08.pdf

NGO Code of Good Practice Self-Assessment Checklist on Women, Girls and HIV

NGOs are increasingly responding to the various ways in which women and girls are affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. HIV interventions must consider the multitude of social and economic factors affecting the vulnerabilities of women and girls in order to have meaningful impact. The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS (the 'Code') along with CARE, has designed a self-assessment checklist on women, girls and HIV to help implementing organisations evaluate their approach and engagement with this important population.

The Code has identified addressing inequities between men and women as an integral part of reducing the spread and minimizing the impact of HIV and AIDS. The Code also recognizes that an essential element in addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic lies not only in programs themselves, but also in the way in which organisations implement them. This checklist is designed to help NGOs examine their interventions while also assessing their internal policies, practices and advocacy efforts which so often determine their overall impact. This tool focuses specifically on how organisations working on HIV and AIDS can strengthen their HIV and AIDS programmes with women

and girls based on the key principles below.

The Code identifies two key principles on women and girls:

- We advocate for the meaningful involvement of PLHIV and affected communities in all aspects of the HIV response.
- Our programmes are informed by evidence in order to respond to the needs of those most vulnerable to HIV and its consequences.

This self-assessment checklist will help you assess the degree to which your organisation is successfully implementing these principles. The questions are designed to be thinking points/guidelines to help you identify areas that are already at a 'good practice' level, and areas that need to be developed and strengthened.

To review and utilize the checklist, go to: <http://www.hivcode.org/silo/files/women-and-girls-.pdf>

To learn more about the NGO Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV and AIDS, see: <http://www.hivcode.org/>

Manuals and Activities for Girls

1) AIDS Awareness Game for Girls

This game is designed to be played by a group of young people, led by a facilitator, with the goal of understanding the challenges of preventing teenage girls from suffering HIV infection, pregnancy, family breakdown, or other adolescent risks. Players take charge of the risks and results of the behaviour of a fictional girl, while facilitators support the participants in the final goals of:

- * having good information about HIV/AIDS transmission; and
- * having a chance to discuss attitudes and choices with each other...

To download the game in Word or PDF,
see: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/279409/347>

2) Working with Young Women: Empowerment, Rights and Health

Although there has been a significant amount of work done to promote women's empowerment, most of it has been geared towards the experiences of adult women. This manual includes a series of group educational activities to promote young women's awareness about gender inequities, rights and health. It also seeks to develop their skills to feel more capable of acting in empowered ways in different spheres of their lives.

To download the manual, see: <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/health&id=42079&type=Document>

3) Doorways Training Manuals On School-Related Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response

Doorways is a set of three manuals designed for teachers, students and volunteer community counselors. Together these individuals can create a critical mass that brings about transformative, lasting change in both the classroom and larger community. Working at the community level is central to making schools safer and the Doorways program can be integrated into any comprehensive national or local plan to reduce gender-based violence.

To download the manuals, see: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/doorways.html

To read the overall report, "Are schools safe havens for children? Examining School-related Gender-based Violence (March 2009), see: <http://www.crin.org/docs/PNADM792.pdf>

4) Girls' Participatory Learning Activities in the Classroom Environment

This manual is a practical guide to empower classroom teachers to be able to see the gender interactions that occur in the classroom—to observe and be aware of events taking place, to reflect on the decisions they are making as well as on the exchanges between the boys and girls. This manual takes as its starting point the observation that changes for the better in the classroom environment for girls depend on teachers' roles as decisionmakers. Teachers are in a position to foster change for the girls in their classrooms.

Developed in Malawi, Girls' Participatory Learning Activities in the Classroom Environment (GirlsPLACE) offers a structured format to identify patterns of instructional interactions, motivation, management procedures, and student-to-student interactions. The observation guides are designed so that teachers may work in partnership with their school colleagues or supervisors to identify what takes place in their classrooms. The PLA activities allow teachers and students to compare perceptions and attitudes about classroom experiences and interactions, and to identify problems and alternate solutions to factors that influence the classroom participation of boys and girls.

To download the manual, see: [http://www.ineeserver.org/tt_resource_kit/Girls' Participatory Learning Activities in the Classroom.pdf](http://www.ineeserver.org/tt_resource_kit/Girls'Participatory_Learning_Activities_in_the_Classroom.pdf)

Advocacy Briefings on Issues Affecting Girls

1) Girls' Education and HIV Prevention

Advanced by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)' Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT), this 2-page advocacy briefing note addresses the centrality of educating girls to HIV prevention worldwide. In short, "education systems must be transformed to challenge gender stereotypes, train girls in skills to enhance their economic opportunities, reinforce girls' participation and empowerment and promote knowledge and skills related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights."

To read the full briefing,

see: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001586/158670E.pdf>

2) Girls, HIV/AIDS and Education

Providing good-quality basic education and skills-based prevention education is fundamental to reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly for girls. Girls are at greater risk of contracting the disease, bear a disproportionate share of its burden and comprise the majority of new infections globally. Yet, because of persistent gender disparity, they are often denied an education and thus protection against infection. This joint project with The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, provides graphic and tabular evidence that links sexual knowledge/behaviour and educational level among young people. It outlines three priorities that support schools in protecting girls and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS: getting and keeping girls in school; providing life skills-based education; and protecting girls from gender-based school violence.

To read more,

see: http://data.unaids.org/GCWA/GCWA_FS_GirlsEducation_Sep05_en.pdf

and http://data.unaids.org/GCWA/GCWA_BG_prevention_en.pdf

3) Plan International: Campaign for Girl Child Birth Registrations

Plan International, a 70-year-old international development agency, launched a campaign called Write Me Down in 2005 to increase the birth registration of children around the world. Today, up to half of all births in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are still unregistered, and 50 million children are born yearly without birth certificates. To learn more, visit the campaign's website, see: <http://www.writemedown.org/>

4) Keeping the Promise: The Agenda for Action on Women and AIDS (UNAIDS)

Publication)

AIDS is affecting women and girls in increasing numbers: globally women comprise almost 50% of people living with HIV. Nearly 25 years into the epidemic, gender inequality and the low status of women remain two of the principal drivers of HIV. Yet current AIDS responses do not, on the whole, tackle the social, cultural and economic factors that put women at risk of HIV, and that unduly burden them with the epidemic's consequences. Women and girls have less access to education and HIV information, tend not to enjoy equality in marriage and sexual relations, and remain the primary caretakers of family and community members suffering from AIDS-related illnesses.

To be more effective, AIDS responses must address the factors that continue to put women at risk. The world's governments have repeatedly declared their commitment to improve the status of women and acknowledged the linkage with HIV. In some areas, progress has been made. By and large, though, efforts have been small-scale, half-hearted and haphazard. Major opportunities to stem the global AIDS epidemic have been missed. It is time the world's leaders lived up to their promises. That's why the UNAIDS-led Global Coalition on Women and AIDS is calling for a massive scaling up of AIDS responses for women and girls.

To read the whole booklet,

see: http://data.unaids.org/pub/Booklet/2006/20060530_FS_Keeping_Promise_en.pdf

Indicators for Programs to Address Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence Against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators was developed for managers, organizations, and policy makers working in the field of VAW/G program implementation and evaluation in developing countries, as well as for people who provide technical assistance to these individuals and organizations.

To read more, see: <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/news/indicators-for-programs-to-address-violence-against-women-and-girls>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Monitoring, Evaluation and Technical Assistance (META) Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.htm>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.