

Trócaire

Women's Vulnerability to the HIV Epidemic

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Women's vulnerability to HIV: Infection



	Globally	In Sub-Saharan Africa
Women as a proportion of people living with HIV	50%	59%
Women as a proportion of 15-24 year olds living with HIV	60%	72%

Women's vulnerability to HIV: Impact



- Care
- Violence
- Barriers to accessing prevention, treatment, care and response
- Economic dependency: abandonment, disinheritance, poverty.



Methodology



- Desk review of international and national policy frameworks
- 21 partner questionnaires in 5 countries
- In-depth interviews with one representative from each country

El Salvador
Kenya
Ethiopia
Guatemala
Zimbabwe Malawi
Honduras

The Global Perspective



- “Thirty years into the HIV epidemic, physiological, sociocultural and structural factors continue to place women and girls at risk of HIV infections, and influence their ability to access health care and services, thereby having an impact on their ability to mitigate the consequences of HIV and AIDS.”
- - Ban Ki Moon, reporting to the 54th session of the CSW

Actions required to address the situation



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1. Tackle underlying social and cultural norms that drive gender inequality
 1. Promote effective implementation of existing policies from national to local levels
 1. Include women living with HIV in the decision making.

1. Tackle underlying social norms that drive gender inequality



- Power imbalances lead to specific barriers
- Twin epidemics of GBV and HIV – common driver
- Link Gender & HIV policies



2. Promote effective implementation of existing policies



- *“The HIV strategy lacks leadership and the gender strategy lacks funding” – partner, Honduras*
- Local government structures
- Funding. Impact of budget cuts



3. Include Women living with HIV in the Decision Making



Need to address barriers to women's participation

“I’m a woman, I’m black, I’m HIV positive, and I am going to make a difference.” – Benita, Honduras

Recommendations: Policies



- Promote a more holistic, context-specific response to HIV;
- Recognise and overcome barriers to women's participation;
- Improve the coherence between HIV & gender policies, and resource both adequately;
- Link GBV & HIV responses – beyond response to prevent transmission to prevention of violence;
- Tackle stigma and discrimination.

Recommendations: Practice



- Demonstrate political will to implement good policy frameworks and ensure accountability mechanisms are in place;
- Strengthen capacity of women's organisations;
- Build government capacity, especially at local level;
- Mobilise funds! Track commitments to gender equality and structural drivers of HIV within the response;
- Support development partners such as UNAIDS and the Global Fund.

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Trócaire is the overseas development agency
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