Young Adolescents, Women and Girls: The Hidden Face of the Epidemic

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December 8th, 2017
Hidden or we do not see them?

- The hidden face of the epidemic..........?
  The face is not hidden but our eyes haven't been able to see it.

- I want to believe that from today, we shall be able to see the face of HIV
Where are women today?

In 2015, 20% of new HIV infections were among women aged 15-24 despite this group accounting for only 11% of the global adult population (UNAIDS 2016).
Global HIV and AIDS statistics

- Globally 51% of all adults living with HIV are women (UNAIDS, 2015);
- Women have been disproportionately affected by HIV in all regions of the world (amFAR 2015 – Statistics: Women and HIV and AIDS);
- AIDS-related illnesses are the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age;
- In 2015, there were 2.3 million adolescent girls and young women living with HIV globally which translates to 60% of all young people living with HIV aged 15-24 years;
- Of the total estimated 1.9 million new HIV infections among adults (15 and older), 47 per cent were among women;
- 58% of new HIV infections among young persons aged 15-24 in 2015 occurred among adolescent girls and young women.

(Facts and figures: HIV and AIDS – UN Women June 2016)
Adolescents, young people and HIV

► In 2016 alone, 610,000 young people between the ages of 15 to 24 were newly infected with HIV. Of these, 260,000 were adolescents 15 to 19 years.

► Only 13% percent of adolescent girls and 9 percent of adolescent boys aged 15-19 in sub-Saharan Africa have tested for HIV and received the test results in the past 12 months.

► AIDS-related deaths among adolescents have increased over the past decade while decreasing among all other age groups.

► Countries yet to develop programmes/mechanisms for supporting children born with HIV, grown into adolescents, adults and have to deal with their HIV positive status.
Young Women and HIV

- Adolescent girls (10-19 years) and young women (10-24 years) account for a disproportionate number of new HIV infections.

- Young women are twice as likely to acquire HIV as their male counterparts.

- In East & Southern Africa, young women will acquire HIV five to seven years earlier than their male peers.

- In 2015, there were on average 4,500 new HIV infections among young women every week, double the number in young men.
Young Women and HIV

- In West and Central Africa in 2015, 64% of new HIV infections among young people occurred among young women.

- The difference is striking in Cameroon and Guinea where adolescent girls aged 15–19 are five times more likely to be infected with HIV than boys of the same age (UNAIDS 2016 – GAP REPORT).

- In Europe where the epidemic affects more IDUs who are men, women make up a rising proportion of PLHIV.

- In Russia, for example, the number of young women living with HIV aged 15-24 is double that among men of the same age (UNAIDS 2015 “All in”).
So where is the hidden face?

Why don’t we see this?
Factors fueling HIV in Young Adolescents, Women and Girls

- Vulnerabilities created by unequal cultural, social and economic status
- Disproportionate allocation of programmes and Resources
- Restrictive and unfavorable laws and policies
- Poverty
- Violence against women (GBV, IPV & Institutional Violence)
- Lack/Limited access to Education
Factors (2)

• Lack of and/or limited female controlled HIV prevention methods & tools

• Limited participation in key decision making platforms

• Low investment (domestic financing) in the HIV response by countries most affected by the HIV epidemic

• Dwindling donor financing amidst low per capita expenditure on health services
“This epidemic unfortunately remains an epidemic of women”

Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS
Revolution by Men for Young Adolescents, Women and Girls
Revolution (2)

1) Political Will

2) Putting Resources to programmes that matter to Young Adolescents, Women and Girls

3) Implement evidence based & data-driven programmes

4) Invest more in research for women preventive tools

5) Placing AGYW not at the centre but in their right place and category
Needs of Adolescent Girls and Young Women

I’m a young woman
I need to know my rights to make my own choices regarding my sexual health

I need gender equality
- I’m not in control of my own body
- I can’t negotiate condom use
- I face abuse
- I lack skills and confidence
- I face violence
- I’m forced to marry
- I’m forced to have sex
- I’m discriminated

I need an enabling environment
- I’m a minor, I need consent from my parents to test for HIV & STIs
- I fear my test results
- It’s taboo to talk about sexuality
- My parents don’t support my sexual choices and preference
- My church does not support my sexual choices and preferences
- I fear female genital mutilation
- Policies do not translate into action

I need education
- I’m illiterate
- I drop out of school
- My education is of poor quality
- I lack knowledge about HIV & sexual health and rights
- I’m vulnerable for peer pressure

I need economic empowerment
- My livelihood is not sustainable
- I’m involved in transactional sex
- I’m poor

I need youth friendly health services
- I’m sent away from the health facility
- There is shortage of contraceptives
- I have no privacy
- I fear judgemental health staff
- Health facility has limited opening hours
- I lack support when I’m pregnant and give birth

AidsFonds 2017)
ARE WOMEN ORGANISATIONS ACCESSING FUNDING FOR HIV & AIDS?

A RAPID SITUATION ANALYSIS OF ACCESS TO FUNDING BY ORGANISATIONS OF WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV, GENDER AND WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA

ICWEA
OCTOBER 2014

With support from AWID & Norad
Violation of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights of Women Living With HIV in Clinical and Community Settings in Uganda
SOCIAL-CULTURAL AND GENDER-RELATED BARRIERS THAT AFFECT THE ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS LIVING WITH HIV IN HIV PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND CARE SERVICES IN UGANDA

International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA)

March 2017
Acknowledgement

- Women living with HIV
- AIDS Free World
- Aidsfonds
- AJWS
- ATHENA Network
- AVAC
- CHANGE
- Common Wealth Foundation

- Health Gap
- Norad
- OSIEA
- PATH
- Robert Carr Network Fund
- Stephen Lewis Foundation
- Global Fund/TASO
- UNAIDS
- UN Women