

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

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

# 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).

**20% new  
HIV infections  
among women  
15 – 24 years**

# 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)*

**51% of  
adults**

**Living with HIV  
are women**

**In 2015  
2.3 million  
adolescent girls  
living with HIV**



# 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  
are twice  
more likely to  
acquire HIV  
compared to male**

**In East &  
Southern Africa  
young women  
will acquire HIV  
5 to 7 years  
earlier than male**

# 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”)

In West &  
Central Africa

**64% of new  
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young people occurred  
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**In Cameroon and Guinea  
adolescent girls  
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with HIV than  
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▶ ***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

*AidsFonds 2017)*

## I'm a young woman

I need to know my rights to make my own choices regarding my sexual health

## I need economic empowerment



My livelihood is not sustainable  
I'm involved in transactional sex  
I'm poor

## 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 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 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



International Community of Women  
Living with HIV & AIDS Eastern Africa

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

With support from AWID & Norad

ICWEA  
OCTOBER 2014



# Violation of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights of Women Living With HIV in Clinical and Community Settings in Uganda



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of Women Living with HIV  
Eastern Africa (ICWEA)

**ICWEA**  
June 2015

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STOP AIDS NOW!  
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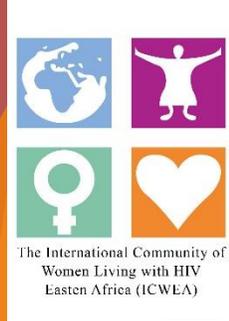
# SOCIAL-CULTURAL AND GENDER-RELATED BARRIERS THAT AFFECT THE ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS LIVING WITH HIV IN HIV PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND CARE SERVICES IN UGANDA



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