delay sexual activity, practising safer sex (including consistent and correct condom use), and having a reduced number of sexual partners.

Providing information and training in social skills helps empower young people to protect themselves and others.

Research confirms that higher educational levels are associated with lower rates of condom use. Young people have the right to information and to education that is affordable, of good quality, promotes gender equality and is appropriate to their age.

Young people also need access to gender-sensitive, youth-friendly health services and supplies for sexually transmitted infections/HIV/AIDS prevention and care, including condoms and voluntary and confidential counselling and testing. In many cultures, however, societal norms are not receptive to the needs of young people in accessing reproductive health services.

Crucial to the whole process of challenging unequal gender norms and promoting positive gender relationships is the need to create an enabling environment that includes building resilience among young women and girls, young men and boys, ensuring an effective social support system in the family, school and community, and enhancing protective factors such as feeling valued in society, being exposed to positive role models and examples, and having a sense of hope in the future.

What role can communicators play?

Communicators are vital in the world’s fight against HIV/AIDS. Journalists and broadcasters are already doing impressive work, but much more remains to be done. We need to be aware of the right and monitoring the media for their coverage and impact is vital.

“We urge a critical examination of the role of the media, one that goes much further than portraying the media primarily as a vehicle for information dissemination. Information is crucial, but so too are the ways in which it is presented and on which voices are granted credibility. For HIV/AIDS, where stigma, gender and other forms of inequality play such key roles, the media ideally should provide a forum where a plurality of voices is heard, and discrimination based on prejudice or socioeconomic status is set aside.”

Communicators can highlight the fact that gender inequality is at the heart of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; promote gender-sensitive, youth-friendly messages, including broadcasting time to HIV/AIDS public service messages; support the development of AIDS storieslines in existing programming; make public service messages and original programming available to others on a rights-based basis; and generally amplify the voices of people living with HIV/AIDS.

This task requires vision, dedication and commitment. It requires creativity that truly engages audiences. Journalists and communicators can talk to listeners and viewers about HIV in a language they understand and find compelling. They can build partnerships and alliances. They can put pressure on the powerful to take the issue seriously and give the people the information they need, protect themselves and those they love.

All of these are things that the communicators and journalists are already doing. For gender activists, the questions are the same as they have always been:

Those questions revolve around the most basic issues of power and control, definitions and values, access and exclusion... Even though global political and communication systems and patterns have changed dramatically, patterns of gender inequality still await transformation."

Notes


2. Ibid., p. 51.


Acknowledgement

The above material draws on two UNAIDS publications: HIV and AIDS Fact Sheet Overview (UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS) and the Operational Guide on Gender and HIV/AIDS. It was prepared by the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender & HIV/AIDS (2005).

Resources


Photo credit: Sergio Rebolledo Manzanares (WACC Photo Collection 2004).

The No-Nonsense Guide to HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Communication

HIV/AIDS is a health and development issue and it is inextricably linked to gender inequality and violence against women. Women are prevented from gaining power to make decisions about their bodies, they lack legal protection and control over the reproduction of their children.

No-Nonsense Guide to HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Communication is a carefully researched and compiled reference that provides clear and useful guides for all those working on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. It is specifically designed for journalists, training and development professionals, researchers, UN agencies, faith-based organizations, and individuals involved in providing HIV/AIDS services.

Gender inequality is a key factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poorer, more patriarchal relations lye at the heart of a pandemic that disproportionately affects women around the world. Therefore, tackling gender inequality is central to tackling the pandemic itself.

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) promotes communication for social change. It believes that new and dynamic communication has the power to challenge existing gender norms and demonstrate the new paradigm that women and men have the right to decide on the use of a condom – is the mainstay of many HIV prevention programmes. But for too many women, this message is useless. Where rape and other forms of sexual violence are widespread, abstaining or insisting on the use of a condom is unrealistic.

Between one fifth and a half of all girls under the age of 20 and have higher rates of HIV transmission than their unmarried, sexually active peers. The age of 20 and have higher rates of HIV transmission than their unmarried, sexually active peers.

Gender inequality is a key factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poorer, more patriarchal relations lie at the heart of a pandemic that disproportionately affects women around the world. Therefore, tackling gender inequality is central to tackling the pandemic itself.

No-Nonsense Guide to HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Communication is a carefully researched and compiled reference that provides clear and useful guides for all those working on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. It is specifically designed for journalists, training and development professionals, researchers, UN agencies, faith-based organizations, and individuals involved in providing HIV/AIDS services.

Gender inequality is a key factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poorer, more patriarchal relations lie at the heart of a pandemic that disproportionately affects women around the world. Therefore, tackling gender inequality is central to tackling the pandemic itself.

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) promotes communication for social change. It believes that new and dynamic communication has the power to challenge existing gender norms and demonstrate the new paradigm that women and men have the right to decide on the use of a condom – is the mainstay of many HIV prevention programmes. But for too many women, this message is useless. Where rape and other forms of sexual violence are widespread, abstaining or insisting on the use of a condom is unrealistic.

Between one fifth and a half of all girls under the age of 20 and have higher rates of HIV transmission than their unmarried, sexually active peers. The age of 20 and have higher rates of HIV transmission than their unmarried, sexually active peers.

Gender inequality is a key factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poorer, more patriarchal relations lie at the heart of a pandemic that disproportionately affects women around the world. Therefore, tackling gender inequality is central to tackling the pandemic itself.

No-Nonsense Guide to HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Communication is a carefully researched and compiled reference that provides clear and useful guides for all those working on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. It is specifically designed for journalists, training and development professionals, researchers, UN agencies, faith-based organizations, and individuals involved in providing HIV/AIDS services.

Gender inequality is a key factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poorer, more patriarchal relations lie at the heart of a pandemic that disproportionately affects women around the world. Therefore, tackling gender inequality is central to tackling the pandemic itself.

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) promotes communication for social change. It believes that new and dynamic communication has the power to challenge existing gender norms and demonstrate the new paradigm that women and men have the right to decide on the use of a condom – is the mainstay of many HIV prevention programmes. But for too many women, this message is useless. Where rape and other forms of sexual violence are widespread, abstaining or insisting on the use of a condom is unrealistic.
Communication for behaviour change

Communication is considered one of the most important activities in HIV/AIDS programming. It can play a critical role in empowering people to tackle HIV/AIDS and in overcoming HIV/AIDS-related stigma and prejudice. It is critical for effective communication that:

- information is accurate, simple and appropriately targeted;
- information takes into consideration the local context;
- by building culturally sensitive messages, local context;
- information takes into consideration the social capital and undermines attempts to achieve.

For example, written material is how best to reach them and what the need also to take into account the large impact on people and communities around the world. The spread of HIV also undermines progress in realising women’s rights (which are human rights law and they are vital to address. The finding that most people who are planning to use contraception are interested in the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact on people and communities around the world. The spread of HIV also undermines progress in realising women’s rights (which are basic human rights) since the pandemic strangles a country’s resources, drains social capital and undermines attempts to provide a full complement of services to all its citizens. The disproportionate incidence of HIV/AIDS among certain groups, including in every country women and girls, those living in poverty, and specific groups such as disabled people, illustrates the need for a rights-based approach to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Equality and non-discrimination are cornerstone principles of international human rights law. They require overcoming stereotypical gender norms – are defined in a series of international human rights – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.

How do women’s rights relate to HIV/AIDS?

Lack of respect for women’s rights increases the prevalence and worsens the impact of HIV/AIDS. For those denied or with poor access to information and health care services, the risk of contracting HIV is increased and the impact of the virus felt more keenly. The ability of any individual to access their human rights (outlined in the table below) is thus closely linked with the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact on people and communities around the world. The spread of HIV also undermines progress in realising women’s rights (which are basic human rights) since the pandemic strangles a country’s resources, drains social capital and undermines attempts to provide a full complement of services to all its citizens. The disproportionate incidence of HIV/AIDS among certain groups, including in every country women and girls, those living in poverty, and specific groups such as disabled people, illustrates the need for a rights-based approach.

International human rights law guarantees the right to the equal protection of people and freedom from discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. States’ obligations in relation to equality and non-discrimination – and to the promotion and protection of all human rights – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Equality and non-discrimination are cornerstone principles of international human rights law. They require overcoming stereotypical gender norms – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.

How do women’s rights relate to HIV/AIDS?

Lack of respect for women’s rights increases the prevalence and worsens the impact of HIV/AIDS. For those denied or with poor access to information and health care services, the risk of contracting HIV is increased and the impact of the virus felt more keenly. The ability of any individual to access their human rights (outlined in the table below) is thus closely linked with the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact on people and communities around the world. The spread of HIV also undermines progress in realising women’s rights (which are basic human rights) since the pandemic strangles a country’s resources, drains social capital and undermines attempts to provide a full complement of services to all its citizens. The disproportionate incidence of HIV/AIDS among certain groups, including in every country women and girls, those living in poverty, and specific groups such as disabled people, illustrates the need for a rights-based approach.

International human rights law guarantees the right to the equal protection of people and freedom from discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. States’ obligations in relation to equality and non-discrimination – and to the promotion and protection of all human rights – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Equality and non-discrimination are cornerstone principles of international human rights law. They require overcoming stereotypical gender norms – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.

How do women’s rights relate to HIV/AIDS?

Lack of respect for women’s rights increases the prevalence and worsens the impact of HIV/AIDS. For those denied or with poor access to information and health care services, the risk of contracting HIV is increased and the impact of the virus felt more keenly. The ability of any individual to access their human rights (outlined in the table below) is thus closely linked with the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact on people and communities around the world. The spread of HIV also undermines progress in realising women’s rights (which are basic human rights) since the pandemic strangles a country’s resources, drains social capital and undermines attempts to provide a full complement of services to all its citizens. The disproportionate incidence of HIV/AIDS among certain groups, including in every country women and girls, those living in poverty, and specific groups such as disabled people, illustrates the need for a rights-based approach.

International human rights law guarantees the right to the equal protection of people and freedom from discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. States’ obligations in relation to equality and non-discrimination – and to the promotion and protection of all human rights – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Equality and non-discrimination are cornerstone principles of international human rights law. They require overcoming stereotypical gender norms – are defined in a series of international agreements, such as the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Such treaties establish legal frameworks for a rights-based approach in relation to HIV/AIDS.