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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Unified Budget Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) 2016-2021

Organizational report 2020

Contents

Key strategies and approaches to integrate HIV into broader agency mandate

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), responds to HIV is through transforming unequal power relations between women and men and influencing the governance of the HIV response to:

- ensure national HIV policies, strategies, budgets and monitoring and evaluation frameworks are informed by sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender analysis;
- support the leadership of women and girls in all their diversity, living with and affected by HIV, to meaningfully engage in decision-making at all levels; and
- scale up what works to tackle the root causes of gender inequality, including by mainstreaming HIV in efforts to end violence against women, promote women's economic and legal empowerment, and eliminate stigma and discrimination that deter women from seeking and accessing life-saving HIV services.

Contributing to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting the needs of women and girls. SGD 5, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, is fundamental to delivering on the promise of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and other SDGs. UN Women's work is fully aligned and anchored in the Agenda's principles and the SDGs framework. And while UN Women invests heavily in achieving SDG 5 and all its targets, achievement is intrinsically linked to progress towards all other SDGs, including the SDG target of ending AIDS by 2030, which reinforces the need for a multisectoral HIV response. While SDG 5 is a goal in its own right, it is also a vehicle for upholding a key principle of the Agenda 2030, which is to leave no one behind.

Both the *UNAIDS Strategy 2016–2021* and the new *Global AIDS strategy 2021–2026*, acknowledge SDG 5 as central to the HIV response and to ensuring that women and girls meaningfully engage and are empowered to prevent HIV and mitigate its impact. In its work on HIV, UN Women supports Member States in accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 5 as a critical enabler and contributor to achieving SDG 3—especially the target of ending AIDS by 2030—as well as other SDGs critical for the HIV response. Reaching those furthest behind first, particularly women living with HIV and young women and girls, is emphasized.

Ensuring gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS policies, strategies and programmes

UN Women supported Member States to set global standards for achieving gender equality in the context of HIV. Based on the review of the *2020 Secretary-General's report on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS*,[1] which was prepared by UN Women, Member States under the leadership of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), unanimously re-affirmed the *CSW 60/2 Resolution on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS*.[2] UN Women's policy support to SADC in implementing the resolution resulted in piloting of the gender responsive oversight model—a regional framework and programme of action to monitor and oversee the implementation of the Resolution. The model prioritizes tracking efforts to address the root causes that increase the vulnerability of adolescent girls and young women to HIV. To enhance government accountability, it was piloted and locally adapted in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

With UN Women's support in 2020, 13 AIDS coordinating bodies increased their knowledge and understanding of the gender dimensions of the HIV epidemic and implemented gender-responsive actions.[3] At the global level, UN Women launched a new toolkit based on award-winning feature film "Pili", about a woman living with HIV from the United Republic of Tanzania. The film was led by a female director, female producer, and predominantly female cast.[4] The toolkit is designed to enhance the knowledge of policy makers and programme implementers on issues faced by women living with HIV, existing HIV response gaps, and actions required to address the gaps and challenges.

©UN Women. Social media launch of the UN Women's Making the HIV response work for women through film: Toolkit for Action

In Zimbabwe, UN Women created and sustained a platform for dialogue between duty-bearers and rights-holders, which helped women living with HIV to influence the country's new *HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for 2021–2025*. Financing for gender issues within the HIV response was increased with an allocation of US$ 20 million being provided through the Government's grant from the Global Fund for programming to meet the needs of young women and girls in the context of HIV. UN Women also increased the capacity and expertise of the national AIDS council to implement *SASA!*, to prevent violence against women and HIV

1 https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2020/6
2 http://undocs.org/E/2016/27
3 Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.
4 https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/making-hiv-response-work-for-women-through-film.pdf?la=en&vs=2122

as part of the Global Fund grant.[5] Across 15 districts, more than 30 000 women and men were reached with information and services on preventing and responding to HIV and violence against women.

Promoting leadership of women, particularly young women and girls, living with HIV

UN Women promoted the leadership and empowerment of women living with HIV across 34 countries,[6] with more than 28 000 women living with HIV directly benefiting. This support resulted in increased advocacy skills and opportunities, expanded access to decision-making spaces, and improved uptake of HIV treatment and care services and livelihood support. In Indonesia, UN Women facilitated women's engagement with the Ministry of Health, which led to the new National AIDS Strategy prioritizing actions to end discrimination against women living with and affected by HIV. In Tajikistan, UN Women advocated for a woman living with HIV to chair a working group to develop the new National HIV Programme for 2021–2025. The Programme included actions to address the prevention of cervical cancer and violence against women living with HIV.

To address the HIV crisis among young women and adolescent girls, UN Women supported the engagement and empowerment of young women and girls as an HIV prevention strategy and to support their abilities to mitigate its impact. In South Africa, with UN Women's support, young women organized themselves into the Young Women for Life Movement,[7] which has grown to 2,035 members and reached thousands of other young women with information about HIV prevention, treatment and care services.

At the global and regional level, together with UNAIDS Secretariat, UNFPA, UNESCO and UNICEF, UN Women co-convenes the "Education Plus" joint initiative.[8] The initiative, an intergenerational dialogue with young women that is co-hosted by the co-conveners, helped shape the collaboration and developed a set of policy recommendations by young feminists for a mechanism for young women's engagement in the initiative's design.

Shifting unequal gender norms to improve access to HIV services for all

UN Women scaled up evidence-based interventions to transform unequal gender norms across 15 countries[9], supporting the prevention of violence against women, as well as

[5] *SASA!* is a community mobilization approach developed by Raising Voices to prevent violence against women and HIV by addressing imbalance of power between men and women, boys and girls.

[6] Argentina, Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

[7] https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/11/feature-south-africa-young-women-lead-hiv-and-violence-prevention

[8] https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/10/op-ed-joint-support-african-girl-leaders-to-beat-aids

[9] Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

enhancing women and men's access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care services, and reducing gender-based stigma and discrimination. UN Women's "HeForShe" community-based initiative engaged 115 000 women and men in South Africa in dialogues around unequal gender norms, violence against women, and HIV prevention. In two years, 62% of those who were engaged in the dialogues opted for HIV testing and were linked to HIV treatment and care as needed. SASA! Faith[10], which was piloted in Kenya with support from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, led to improved women and men's access to HIV testing and couples counselling, access to HIV treatment and care, and a 59% reduction in HIV-related stigma and discrimination towards women living with HIV. In Tajikistan and Uganda, UN Women developed digital apps together with, and for, women living with and affected by HIV. In Uganda, a new app[11] helps young women and girls access accurate information to help them make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health, including HIV prevention and accessing HIV testing and treatment services.

As a co-convener of the Global Partnership for action to eliminate all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, UN Women partnered with the International Community of Women Living with HIV-Eastern Africa. Approaches to addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination against women within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic were piloted in Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. As a member of the Government technical working group on human rights in Uganda, ICW-EA influenced the development of the national plan on human rights, including a strong focus on reducing gender-based stigma and discrimination. Actions prioritized in the national plan have informed Uganda's funding request to the Global Fund and the U.S. Government's PEPFAR Regional Planning meeting. ICW-EA piloted a community-led scorecard in 56 districts in Uganda, and the findings have been relayed to district leaders to accelerate elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination against women.

Contribution to the COVID-19 response

Due to the rise of violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19, UN Women has been advocating for domestic violence services and shelters to be regarded as 'essential' to ensure safe passage for women survivors of violence to access such services. In Côte D'Ivoire, UN Women's partnership with the national network of women living with HIV ensured that female sex workers could access gender-based violence services, with links to HIV testing, treatment and care services. In Sierra Leone, UN Women helped the Ministry of Health to establish five additional district-level "One Stop Centres" where survivors can access health, legal and psychosocial counselling, including HIV testing and post-exposure prophylaxis.

[10] *SASA! Faith*, developed jointly by Troicare and Raising Voices, is an adaptation of the *SASA!* community-based initiative for use by religious communities.

[11] https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ESolutionsUG.UNYPA.quiz

UN Women empowered women living with HIV across 26 countries to access and disseminate personal protective equipment and reliable and accurate information about COVID-19. Through the initiative, 10 000 women living with HIV and members of their households in Mozambique benefited from safety kits. Women living with HIV in Tajikistan responded to the COVID-19 crisis and absence of basic personal protective equipment by manufacturing face masks and managed to supply more than 23 000 masks in a short period of time.[12]

In the context of continuous disruption to HIV prevention and treatment services due to COVID-19, together with other UN partners, UN Women advocated for uninterrupted access to HIV treatment for women living with HIV. As a result, in Thailand, safer access to ART was achieved through dispensing three-to-six-month doses, reducing the need to visit health facilities. In Malawi and Uganda, people living with HIV in many marginalized communities could not adhere to their treatment due to fear of stigma. UN Women procured bicycles for networks of women living with HIV and young people living with HIV, to deliver life-saving HIV treatment to the remote communities.

Case study: Young women leading HIV and violence prevention

Almost one-fifth of people living with HIV globally, reside in South Africa. In 2019, women accounted for the majority of new HIV infections in the country, with adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 comprising 78% of all new HIV infections among young people. Unequal gender norms, discrimination, and violence against women and girls, undermine efforts to prevent HIV and access HIV services.

©UN Women. Sarah Baloyi, one of the leaders of the Young Women for Life Movement group in Mamelodi Township

Karabo Chabalala (28) and Sarah Baloyi (26), two young women from a township in Gauteng, South Africa—became involved in UN Women's "HeforShe" community-based initiative in 2019. The initiative aims to improve attitudes and behaviours around gender-based violence and HIV, and through their involvement, they became "changemakers" in their community.

[12] https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/feature-tajik-businesses-run-by-women-living-with-hiv-supply-key-protective-gear

Led by the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops Conference, in partnership with UN Women, the “HeforShe” dialogues have engaged 115 000 men and women across seven districts of five South African provinces since 2018. The dialogues are coordinated by 151 trained women and men “changemakers”, including young women. They are equipped with knowledge on HIV and violence prevention, the importance of HIV testing and adhering to treatment, responsible sexual behaviour, and on how socioeconomic factors drive HIV infections among men and women.

To increase the uptake of HIV testing, the changemakers partnered with 20 local HIV counselling and testing clinics across participating districts. They also facilitated outreach for HIV testing at community and church events and developed a referral system. In two years, the “HeforShe” dialogues have resulted in 62% of those engaged getting an HIV test (47% women and 53% men), and all who needed treatment were linked to HIV treatment and care.

Due to COVID-19, people living with HIV and people at higher risk of HIV infection are facing life-threatening disruptions to health services. Inspired by the positive impact of UN Women initiative in communities, young women like Chabalala and Baloyi founded the national Young Women for Life Movement. With more than 2 000 members, and support from the SACBC, the group monitoring the proceedings of 30 cases of sexual and gender-based violence and 17 cases of femicide in the justice system, as well as supporting the families of survivors. The group also play a crucial role in organizing food supply drives and delivery of ARVs to the most vulnerable households in their communities during COVID-19 lockdown periods.

Knowledge products

	UN Women continues to update its **Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS web-portal.** The web portal contains cutting-edge research, training materials, advocacy tools, current news, personal stories, and campaign actions on the gender equality dimensions of the HIV epidemic.
	UN Women partnered with the producer of the feature film ‘Pili’ to develop **A Toolkit for Action: Making the HIV response work for women through film**. Based on the film, which is about a woman living with HIV from The United Republic of Tanzania, the Toolkit aims to support national efforts in identifying key issues women living with and affected by HIV face and actions that are required to address these challenges and existing gaps in the HIV response.

	UN Women supported the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in its **Review of the UN system's support for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The report showcases key actions systematically undertaken by 51 UN entities in support of the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, identifying entities' priority areas for the next five years, and providing recommendations for the way forward, including in the context of HIV/AIDS.
	UN Women's **Spotlight on gender, COVID-19 and the SDGs** brings together the evidence on the gendered impact of the pandemic, highlights potential and emerging trends, and reflects on the long-term impact of the crisis on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including in relation to the SDG 3 and its target on ending AIDS.
	UN Women's **Voices of Women's Organizations on COVID-19** highlights the specific risks and challenges that women and girls, including those living with and affected by HIV, face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe and Central Asia, and offers the solutions to adjust COVID-19 measures in a gender-responsive manner to reflect women's differentiated experience.
	UN Women and the UNAIDS Secretariat supported the Tanzania Commission for AIDS in conducting the **Gender Assessment of the National HIV/AIDS Response** that provides a solid basis for designing solutions to address the HIV epidemic using a gender lens in order to achieve epidemic control with zero discrimination, zero new HIV infections and zero AIDS-related deaths.

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