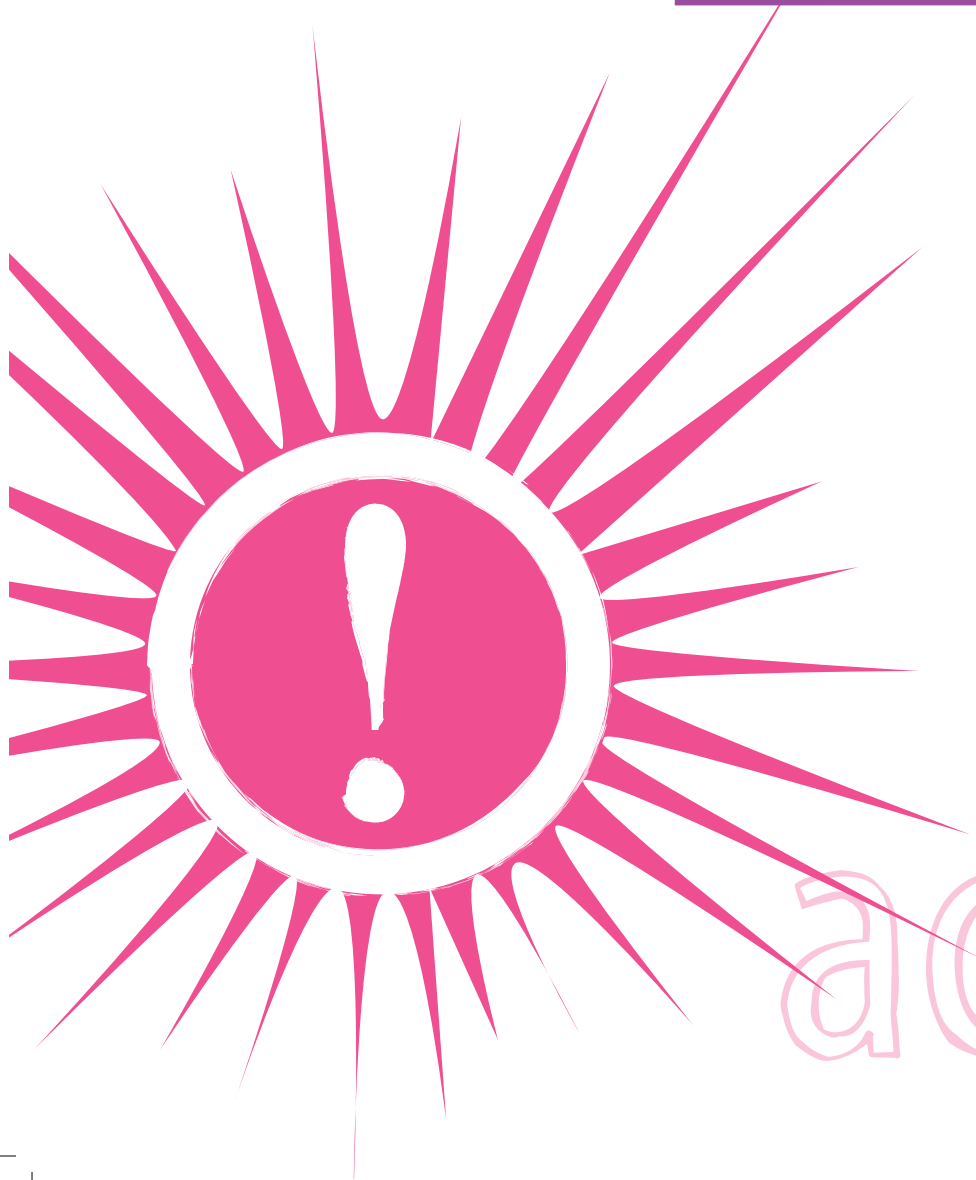


media & advocacy

story ideas



action

# Action Stories in the Media

Taking action to prevent violence and HIV means changing the way that we—as individuals and as a community—value and treat girls and women. Everyone has the power to take action, in small and big ways. The media and its journalists can also play a pivotal role in calling for action. Through media stories, journalists can call on governments and leaders, communities and organizations, and individual women and men to consider their role in creating change. Below are a few story ideas you could suggest to journalists—stories they could research and write about to generate momentum in the prevention of violence and HIV.

## Action Story Idea No. 1

### MEN MAKING “WOMEN’S ISSUES” EVERYONE’S ISSUES

There are more and more men in the community speaking out on the prevention of violence against women and its connection to women’s increasing rates of HIV infection. The male activist voice is seldom heard in the media, especially in relation to violence against women. This voice includes men who are local leaders and religious leaders to those who are local bar owners and barbers. A story about men speaking out on these issues would be of great interest to women and men alike, and would demonstrate the gradual changes in community norms.

### Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with men within a variety of community roles, to hear about the different ways, big and small, that they are speaking out on violence against women and its connection to HIV/AIDS.

## Action Story Idea No. 2

### EARLY MARRIAGE CHALLENGED AT LAST

Some parents consider early marriage as a strategy to safeguard their daughters from HIV infection, but it often has the opposite effect. Early marriage often increases a girl’s risk for contracting HIV. The bodies of girls and young women are more vulnerable to the virus and their older husbands have usually had substantial sexual experience and exposure to the virus. The risks for girls and young women in early marriages does not stop at HIV. Early marriage can also result in dangerous pregnancy and births, higher rates of STIs, and less access to education about sexual health. For these reasons, many parents are changing their habits, refusing early marriage for their daughters and spreading the word that early marriages should stop. Early marriage is a topic of growing interest and debate among community members. People would be interested in hearing a story about these parents and the reasons for their change in beliefs. Such a story would demonstrate that change is an option and would help other parents think about their choices.

### Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with parents who have decided not to marry their daughters too young, to hear about their reasons and the benefits.

## Action Story Idea No. 3

### MEDICAL REVOLUTION FOR HIV

Microbicides could revolutionize women's abilities to protect themselves from HIV, yet very few people know about them. Microbicides would provide women with an alternative to the male and female condom, with protection that they could control. Hundreds of organizations in Africa are actively advocating for the development of this promising method of HIV control. The African Microbicides Advocacy Group (AMAG, [www.global-campaign.org/amag.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/amag.htm)) is a coalition of microbicides advocates with more than 400 members from 30 countries across Africa. New science in HIV prevention makes an ideal media story, one that would peak community members awareness of HIV prevention efforts. The story can demonstrate how people are taking action develop new technologies that puts the power to protect themselves in women's own hands.

#### Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with members of AMAG in your community to learn more about their efforts and how others can get involved.
- Interviews with scientists knowledgeable about the development of microbicides to get their up-to-date information on this method of prevention.
- Interviews with policy makers and government officials to learn what they are doing (or should be doing!) to ensure that microbicides and the funding needed to develop them are their priority.

## Action Story Idea No. 4

### AN END TO ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

Young girls are often pressured to have sex in schools—by teachers, administrators or male classmates. Some schools are taking action and creating policies that protect students' health and sexual rights. Parents and teachers are taking action by talking with girls and boys about human rights, sharing power, sexual feelings and sexual health. A story about parents and teachers preventing violence in schools would provide ideas and inspiration for others wanting to prevent sexual abuse in the community.

#### Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with school administrators who have created policies against sexual abuse in their school, to hear tips on how to implement such measures within an institution.
- Interviews with teachers to hear their perspective on the benefits of the new policies.
- Interviews with parents about the importance of talking with children about power, violence, sexual feelings and sexual health and to learn how other parents can advocate for policies and sexual health education in their children's schools.



## Action Story Idea No. 5

### WHAT'S IN A PROTOCOL?

*The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* has been signed by 38 African countries and been ratified by 15 (at press time). The Protocol describes ways in which states must act to protect women and their rights to life, integrity and security. It protects their right to dignity, justice and peace, as well as education and reproductive health decisions. Community members would take interest in a story about whether or not their government has signed and/or ratified this protocol, and if not, about how they could advocate for action. These types of protocols can seem confusing and far removed from everyday problems. A media story could explain what this protocol means and how it can affect the country and its communities.

### Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with local leaders, policy makers, NGO staff and community members advocating for adherence to, signing of, or ratifying of the protocol.
- Interviews with activists from government and civil society who are advocating for the Protocol to learn why it is important and how it could be used as a tool to prevent violence against women and HIV infection.

## Action Story Idea No. 6

### EVERYDAY HEROS

Courageous women and men are taking action to create community norms that support non-violence, often with limited resources, often driven by compassion alone. They are taking brave steps in the prevention of violence and its connection to HIV/AIDS. Hearing these stories reminds people that you do not have to be a leader, a professional or political figure in the community to take action and create change. Hearing what inspires these local heroes and gives them courage can be an inspiration to all.

### Recommended interviews:

- Interviews with women, men and youth who have taken action in their community to promote community norms that support non-violence and balanced power between women and men.



[www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php)