

media & advocacy

fact sheet



action

Take Action

All of us have the power to take action to prevent violence against women and HIV. We all have the power to change the way we think about girls and women. We all have the ability to use our skills, knowledge and self-confidence to help women and men, girls and boys have happier and healthier relationships. No matter what our personal circumstances, once we become aware of the connection between violence against women and HIV/AIDS, we have the responsibility to reach out to others and take action. Use these fast facts and quotes in your presentations, articles, papers or speeches to inform, educate, provoke and inspire!

Take action through education:

Evidence from Zimbabwe shows that among girls 15 to 18 years old, those who are enrolled in school are more than five times less likely to have HIV than those who have dropped out.¹

Recent household surveys in 11 countries show that women with some schooling were nearly five times more likely than uneducated women to have used a condom the last time they had sex.²

In many studies, high educational attainment of women was associated with low levels of violence. Education helps prevent violence, because it gives women power by providing them with social connections, self-confidence and access to information and resources.³


Take action by stopping early marriages:

Parents may consider early marriage as a strategy to safeguard their daughters from HIV infection, but it often has the opposite effect. Studies in parts of Kenya and Zambia show that teenage brides are contracting HIV at a faster rate than sexually active single girls in the same locales.⁴

Women who marry younger are more likely to be beaten or threatened, and more likely to believe that a husband might sometimes be justified in beating his wife.⁵

In one study on Kenya and Zambia, the risk for young women marrying a much older man was clear. None of the young women with a husband 0-4 years older had HIV, while an average of 36 percent of young women with a husband 5 or more years older had HIV.⁶

Because many married adolescents are pulled out of school at an early age, they may be unfamiliar with basic reproductive health issues, including the risk of HIV. Despite the large number of married girls, existing policies and programs often fail to address this population's vulnerability to HIV as well as their other reproductive health needs.⁷



Take action by economically empowering women:

An innovative project in South Africa called IMAGE combined small loans from a micro-financing group with training on gender and HIV/AIDS. Ninety percent of the women participating said the intervention had a major effect on their lives, and experience of intimate partner violence was reduced by 55 percent in their relationships.⁸

A study in Malawi revealed that women who have control of their own economic situation are far less likely to be abused.⁹ Women who have respect and power outside the home through community activities, including participation in micro-credit schemes, are less likely to be abused than those who do not.¹⁰

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa has been signed by 43 African countries and ratified by 21. The Protocol sets out ways in which states must act to protect women and their rights to life, integrity and security. It enshrines their right to dignity, justice and peace, as well as education and reproductive health decisions.¹¹

Take action through advocacy:

Eighty-nine countries around the world have some legislative provisions that specifically address domestic violence. Marital rape may be prosecuted in at least 104 countries, and 90 countries have some form of legislative provision against sexual harassment.¹²

Rwanda, which is one of the world's least developed countries, is ranked third in the world on the Gender Equity Index. This means that it registers the least inequality between women and men, as measured by economic activity, empowerment and education. This ranking proves that the key to gender equity lies not in economic power, but in a government's will.¹³

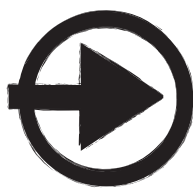
Microbicides are products currently under development that women could use vaginally to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. They would be the most important innovation in reproductive health since the birth control pill. Hundreds of organizations from Africa are actively advocating for the development of this promising method of infection control. The African Microbicides Advocacy Group (AMAG) is a coalition of microbicides advocates with more than 400 members from 30 countries across Africa. Get involved today! www.global-campaign.org ¹⁴



Take action with SASA!

As a community, we urgently need to work together to prevent the interconnected issues of violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Starting *NOW!*

Sasa is not only the Kiswahili word for *now*. It is also an acronym for the urgent steps we can take to prevent violence against women and HIV. It is a process that can guide our efforts as activists. And you can take part in this process!



Start

Start thinking about violence against women and HIV/AIDS as interconnected issues and foster *power within* yourself to address these issues.



Awareness

Raise awareness about how our communities accept men's use of *power over* women, fueling the dual pandemics of violence against women and HIV/AIDS.



Support

Support the women, men and activists directly affected by or involved in these interconnected issues, by joining your *power with others*'.



Action

Take action. Use your *power to* prevent violence against women and HIV.

You can take part by joining the *SASA!* movement. Everyone has a role to play. Communities, individuals, institutions and organizations are coming together to prevent violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Even the smallest and simplest contributions make a difference. You can be part of positive change in your community!

Voices for Change

Quotes about taking action to prevent violence against women and HIV

Activists and leaders all over the world are calling for action—demanding an end to violence against women by promoting equality in relationships between women and men. They are challenging individuals, communities and nations to stand up and speak out. The following words from around the world express the necessity to harness the most important power we have—the power to act.

“What is needed is real, positive change that will give more power and confidence to women and girls, and transform relations between women and men at all levels of society. Change that will strengthen legal protection of women's property and inheritance rights, and ensure they have full access to prevention options -- including microbicides and female condoms. Change that makes men assume their responsibility -- in ensuring an education for their daughters; abstaining from sexual behavior that puts others at risk; forgoing relations with girls and very young women; and understanding that when it comes to violence against women, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses.”

- *Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General*

“For young women who never imagined that they could be infected by their husbands...for the women who are terrified of negotiating condom use... and for the girls who do not have the “right to abstain”, we must work harder to make education, economic opportunity and healthcare realities rather than dreams.”


- *Kathleen Cravero, Chair, Leadership Council of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS and former Deputy Executive Director, UNAIDS*

“We can do better and we must do better. By working together in partnership, we can maximize our impact and resources to redress gross injustices perpetrated against women and girls. We can build institutions, knowledge, skills and capacity to address gender-based violence in all its forms. We can make a difference for women and girls. It is not enough to talk. We must take action.”

- *Rima Salah, former Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF*

“We will never put a stop to violence against women until men are made partners and both girls and boys are raised in a culture of mutual respect and responsibility, and equal opportunity.”

- *Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations*



“By encouraging their daughters to stay in school, fathers can give girls a better chance of a life without AIDS. By ensuring female members of the family have access to AIDS treatment and prevention programs mothers will have a better chance of seeing their children grow-up. And by taking a stand against violence, men of all ages can make the world a safer place for women and girls.”

- *Graca Machel, President of the Foundation for Community Development and former Minister of Education in Mozambique*

“As a man, I know men’s behavior must change, that we must raise boys differently, to have any hope of eradicating HIV and preventing the emergence of another such scourge.... To change fundamentally how girls and boys learn to relate to each other and how men treat girls and women is slow, painstaking work. But surely our children’s lives are worth the effort.”

- *Pascoal Mocumbi, former Prime Minister, Mozambique and Commissioner, Commission on Social Determinants of Health, World Health Organization*

“As a human rights issue, the effort to end violence against women becomes a government’s obligation, not just a good idea.”

- *Charlotte Bunch, Founder and Executive Director, Center for Women’s Global Leadership*

“I pledge to expose, oppose and combat all violence against women and children wherever I encounter it.”

- *Thabo Mbeki, South African President*

“Equity in all fields – health, education, environment, the economy – are essential if women are to act to protect themselves when it comes to HIV and AIDS.”

- *Peter Piot, Executive Director, UNAIDS and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations*

“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

- *Mother Theresa*

“Strategies for survival are pioneered every day on the ground by women living with HIV/AIDS. The limitations are elsewhere: in the painful shortage of resources – especially for women and women’s issues – and in the shameful lack of political will to meet international commitments.”

- *Noeleen Heyzer, former Executive Director, UNIFEM*

“I strongly believe that early interventions with young men and boys constitute a great opportunity for promoting gender equity and reducing risk behaviors. It is essential to empower boys and young men with negotiation skills, supportive role models and networks, positive notions about sexuality and gender relations in schools and through community-based approaches.”

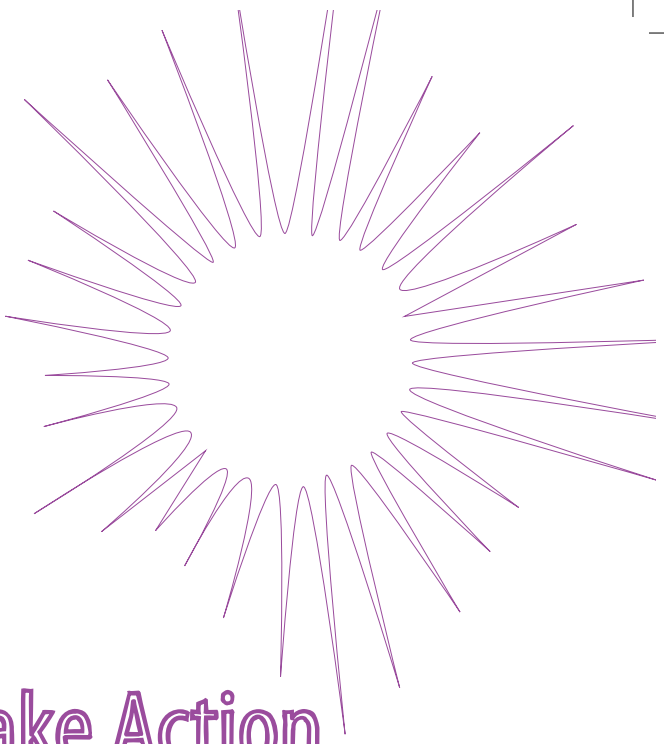
- *Nafis Sadik, Special Adviser to the Secretary General and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia*

"Framing violence against women as a human rights issue is a powerful shift that adds to our tools for change, but it is not a short-cut for the hard political/cultural struggle that such a profound challenge to patriarchal power requires."

- Charlotte Bunch, Founder and Executive Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership

"Equality is a practice. It is an action. It is a way of life. It is a social practice. It is an economic practice. It is a sexual practice. It can't exist in a vacuum."

- Andrea Dworkin, Activist, Writer



Take Action
Be the change
You have the
power – use it!

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