

HIV, reproductive health & Millennium Development Goals: a tool to monitor progress

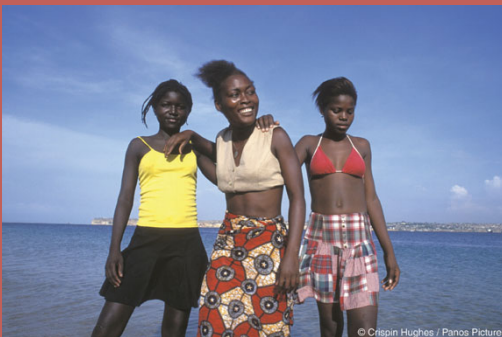
**Maria de Bruyn
Ipas, USA**

**AIDS Action Europe Seminar on Monitoring and
Evaluation
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
23–25 November 2006**



Fulfilling reproductive rights for women affected by HIV/AIDS A tool for monitoring progress toward three Millennium Development Goals

2006



Objectives

- Simple benchmarks & questions to collect information on fulfilling reproductive rights for HIV-positive women
- Link rights to Millennium Development Goals
 - MDG 3 on women's empowerment and gender equity
 - MDG 5 on improving maternal health
 - MDG 6 on combating HIV/AIDS
- Permit comparable data across countries and time to be collected



Key considerations

- Get NGOs to work on neglected issues if not already doing so
- Contribute to respondents' awareness and knowledge
- Focus on issues that are often neglected but not difficult to assess

"[We] need to read more, need to know more about these things — I wanted to do research on them." – female respondents in Lesotho

"...I learned a lot, not only on topics such as the laws on legal abortion and legal adoption, as well as information on emergency contraceptives..." – project coordinator, Mexico



Audience for the tool

- Associations of women living with HIV
- NGOs working on HIV/AIDS
- NGOs working on reproductive health
- NGOs working on health and human rights

“It was a good exercise because it made us feel like we need to learn more.” – women in Lesotho

“It was very long but touching on issues that pertained to our own needs; I felt Oh! I need to know about these.” – woman in Swaziland



Monitoring tool project partners 2005–2006

- Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland)
- Fundación de Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM, Argentina)
- Gender AIDS Forum (South Africa)
- International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia & Swaziland)
- Instituto de Educación y Salud (IES, Peru)
- Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria North–East Region (PPFN)
- Punto de Encuentro de la Comunidad, A.C. (PECAC, Mexico)
- Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK)



Methodologies used

- Literature review
- Document review (policies, laws, IEC materials)
- Self-completed survey questionnaires
- Questionnaire-based interviews
- Focus-group discussions
- Site visits (clinics, pharmacies, NGOs)



Sample benchmark and questions

All local organizations serving HIV-positive women address all legal options for dealing with unwanted pregnancy.

- ❏ How many organizations have created materials specifically for women living with HIV that discuss options for dealing with unwanted pregnancies, including emergency contraception, safe legal abortion and adoption? What kinds of materials are available?
- ❏ How many organizations, facilities or programs to prevent perinatal transmission discuss contraceptive failure, unwanted pregnancy and measures to deal with this with their clients?
- ❏ How many local health or other facilities (for example, pharmacies, NGOs) offer emergency contraception without a prescription or as a prophylactic measure?
- ❏ How many women known to be living with HIV have been able to access emergency contraception or safe, legal abortions within the last year?



Sample benchmark and questions

Sample survey questions for NGO/health facility

- Does your organization/program have available IEC materials that address use of emergency contraception?
- Does your program/facility offer emergency contraception without a prescription or as a prophylactic measure?
- If not, do you offer referrals on where women can get emergency contraception?
- Does your organization/program have available IEC or counseling materials specifically for women living with HIV that discuss safe legal abortion for unwanted pregnancies? If so, what kinds of materials are available?



Sample benchmark and questions

Sample survey questions for HIV-positive women

- Have you seen or received documents or information about the use of emergency contraception? If so, where did this take place?
- Have you or anyone you know been able to obtain emergency contraception and, if so, where and how?
- Have you seen or received any information or counseling that discussed safe legal abortion for unwanted pregnancies? If so, where did this take place and what kind of information were you given?
- Do you know any HIV-positive women who have had an abortion? If so, did they encounter any problems with this?



Major findings

- Disapproval from community members and the health-care sector when HIV-positive women are sexually active and become pregnant
- Information on contraception and HIV/AIDS is largely unavailable
- Domestic violence is common among HIV-positive women
- Some women who become pregnant after knowing their HIV status feel unwelcome at programs to prevent perinatal transmission
- Follow-up for HIV-positive women who have given birth can be very inadequate



Major findings

- Access to emergency contraception is highly variable & often limited
- Pregnancy termination is stigmatized and restricted; lack of knowledge about legal indications for abortion
- Discriminatory practices in the health-care sector: humiliation, breaches of confidentiality, refusal to provide medications & treatment, putting conditions on treatment, delaying treatment
- Reluctance to report rights violations – fear of endangering their future treatment
- Women living with HIV are rarely involved in policy and program formulation or M&E
- Health-care professionals, policy-makers and clients have heard of human rights but often don't see how rights are directly relevant to their daily work and lives



Use of the tool

- Use the data-collection exercise to educate respondents about various issues
- Use the data-collection exercise to disseminate information about rights
- Use collected data for advocacy and monitoring of government commitments
- Coordinate monitoring of various benchmarks among members of NGO networks
- Discuss findings with human rights commissions or ombudspersons



Benefits of the tool

- Women living with HIV can be involved in simple research and policy advocacy
- Information about reproductive rights enhanced among NGOs and respondents
- Findings can inform organizational policies and programs
- Findings can be used to help formulate projects and funding proposals

"We were...excited at the opportunity to learn new skills, and to expand our skills, and to take part in creating knowledge about our own experiences and those of women and girls in our community. The world of research was something that we previously thought of as being for 'academics' and not for ordinary women." – South Africa

"It has been a learning experience and an eye-opener for me as an individual and WOFAK as an organization. It is evident that a lot of us are ignorant on issues that affect us directly and we need to lobby and advocate for better policies on issues pertaining to sexual reproductive health." – Kenya

"I was also able to see more directly and clearly certain aspects of the problem of HIV/AIDS in my community that are not always evident. The results will help PECAC to reformulate its policies..." – Mexico



Where can you get it?

- *Fulfilling reproductive rights for women affected by HIV/AIDS. A tool for monitoring progress toward three Millennium Development Goals*

http://www.ipas.org/publications/en/MDGHIV_E06_en.pdf

- *“There’s nothing you could do if your rights were being violated.” Monitoring Millennium Development Goals in relation to HIV-positive women’s rights*

http://www.ipas.org/publications/en/MDGMON_E06_en.pdf

