



Self-Assessment Checklist: Women, Girls and HIV

NGOs are increasingly responding to the various ways in which women and girls are affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. This response has been an attempt to stem alarming trends in the epidemic. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS states that: “Over the past two years, the number of women and girls infected with HIV has increased in every region of the world, with rates rising particularly rapidly in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America. In sub-Saharan Africa, 60% of adults living with HIV are women and girls.” While many programs focus on women and girls, many do not adequately address social and economic factors that shape women’s and girls’ vulnerability. An HIV+ woman may not be able to take full advantage of a nutrition program if the cost of transport to the service is beyond her means. A young wife upon testing may hide her positive status and defer treatment if she fears violent reprisal from her spouse. These are a few examples of how HIV interventions, must consider the multitude of social and economic factors affecting the vulnerabilities of women and girls in order to have meaningful impact. The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS (the ‘Code’) along with CARE, has designed a self-assessment checklist on women, girls and HIV to help implementing organisations evaluate their approach and engagement with this important population.

The Code has identified addressing inequities between men and women as an integral part of reducing the spread and minimizing the impact of HIV and AIDS. This requires a commitment to address the many vulnerabilities facing women and girls, especially those living with HIV. The Code recognizes that an essential element in addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic lies not only in programs themselves, but also in the way in which organisations implement them. This checklist is designed to help NGOs examine their interventions while also assessing their internal policies, practices and advocacy efforts which so often determine their overall impact. This tool focuses specifically on how organisations working on HIV and AIDS can strengthen their HIV and AIDS programmes with women and girls based on the key principles below.



The Code identifies two key principles on women and girls:

- We advocate for the meaningful involvement of PLHIV and affected communities in all aspects of the HIV response.
- Our programmes are informed by evidence in order to respond to the needs of those most vulnerable to HIV and its consequences.

This self-assessment checklist will help you assess the degree to which your organisation is successfully implementing these principles. The questions are designed to be thinking points/guidelines to help you identify areas that are already at a ‘good practice’ level, and areas that need to be developed and strengthened.

author

This checklist was developed by CARE USA



Self-Assessment Checklist: Women, Girls and HIV

This checklist should be completed by a group of three to five staff members who are involved with programming for women and girls at your organisation.

Please indicate your answer to each question by marking the appropriate box.

- Y** Yes, we undertake this work/activity
- I** Insufficient, in preparation, or is not followed in practice
- N** No, we've not yet tackled this work/activity
- NR** Not relevant to our work

Please be honest in completing this checklist. It is expected that your scoring will vary between modules, depending on your area of expertise.

There is no formalized scoring process for this assessment. Instead, we suggest that you look at the questions that you answered 'no' or 'insufficient' to, and then select areas that are most relevant for your organisation to improve upon in the short-term.

Action Plan

We challenge you to use this tool to identify areas that your organisation needs to strengthen in order to reach a 'good practice' level, and then develop a brief Action Plan that highlights examples of HOW you will improve your work on women and girls over the next six months. You can use the Action Plan template provided at the end of this module or create your own.

There are twelve Key Questions highlighted in the checklist in red. These questions address fundamental issues that you need to consider first when assessing your organisation's work to support women and girls. As you develop your Action Plan, keep these questions in mind. If you have answered 'no' to any of them, addressing these issues is a good starting point for improving your programmes.

How to save the Action Plan:

Complete the self-assessment module and Action Plan electronically, save the file and submit it to the Code Secretariat by email. The Secretariat will credit all NGOs that submit Action Plans as 'Implementing' NGOs and full signatories of the Code. After the period of six months, we will ask you to measure your progress against your Action Plan.

the Code

The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS (the 'Code') was created by a broad consortium of NGOs to provide a shared vision of good practice to which NGOs can commit and be held accountable.

The Code outlines principles and practices that are informed by evidence and underscore successful NGO responses to HIV. It identifies a series of areas that are key to HIV programming and articulates fundamental principles that should be applied to HIV programmes in each of these areas.

These principles are aspirational, setting out examples of good practice that NGOs can work towards over time.

For more information on the Code, go to www.hivcode.org



Checklist

Below you will find a number of questions on human rights. Please indicate your answer by marking the appropriate box.

- Y** Yes, we undertake this work/activity
- I** Insufficient, in preparation, or being considered
- N** No, we've not yet tackled this work/activity
- NR** Not relevant to our work

A

Organisational Principles

Organisations striving to address the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls should not only employ sound programming practices but also ensure that their organisational policies reflect a commitment to meeting the needs of women and girls. This means promoting women's participation and leadership within the organisation and protecting the rights of female employees, including those living with HIV.

A.1 Organisational Mission and Management

These questions are designed to help you assess if your organisation has the structures and policies in place to effectively address the rights, concerns and unique needs of women and girls in your organisation and its programmes.

<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>1. Does your organisation mention women and girls in its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mission statement? • strategic objectives? • management/operational plan?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>2. Does your organisation ensure that there are adequate human and financial resources available for the implementation of its work with women and girls?</p>
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>3. Does your organisation have equal representation of women and men in leadership positions, especially at the highest levels (for example, boards and committees)?</p>
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>4. Does your organisation include women and girls living with and affected by HIV in its decision-making processes?</p>
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>5. Does your organisation work with partner organisations to assess their capacity to undertake gender-sensitive work?</p>
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>6. Does your organisation foster dialogue around staff's own behaviours, attitudes and beliefs, and the impact these may have on their ability to provide non-judgmental, gender-inclusive processes and programmes?</p>



Checklist

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

7. Does your organisation have staff policies for the workplace that:

- demonstrate a clear commitment to gender equity and diversity?
- mandate basic training for all staff on gender equity, diversity, and dealing with conflict?
- promote HIV awareness and training?
- promote and respect confidentiality?
- facilitate and support women and girls' access to prevention (VCT), treatment, care and support services?
- actively recruit and promote women and under-represented groups, including those living with HIV?
- provide a safe workplace, flexible working hours, job sharing, childcare, maternity leave, lactation rooms and compassionate leave?
- address power imbalances in the workplace that expose staff to the threat of sexual harassment?
- require non-discriminatory hiring and compensation decision processes?
- include an effective complaints and investigation process to address any form of harassment or discrimination in the workplace (with explicit mention of attempting to be discrete for the protection of the plaintiff)?
- promote compliance to staff policies and establish clear accountabilities and consequences for non-compliance?

Actions needed to support Section A.1:



Checklist

A.2 Programme Design, Monitoring and Evaluation

Women and girls face institutional, cultural, social, economic, psychological and legal barriers to accessing and benefiting from HIV prevention, care and treatment, and support interventions. These barriers are often distinct from those faced by men and boys. Organisations addressing HIV will most effectively serve women and girls if their programmes are designed to take into account these barriers faced by women and girls in a way that is participatory.

Organisations should ensure that programmes are designed so that they are non-discriminatory, accessible and equitable. This must also be accompanied by monitoring and evaluation processes that enable organisations to measure the effect of their programmes and modify as needed.

The questions below are designed to help you assess how well your organisation designs, monitors and evaluates its HIV programmes in a way that considers the rights, needs and concerns of women and girls.

Y I N NR

1. Are women and girls vital players and decision makers in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?

Y I N NR

2. Does your organisation assess the special needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls when conducting community assessments?

For example, women living with HIV, orphaned girls, widows, sex workers, women from ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, women care providers and others based on the context.

Y I N NR

3. Does your organisation promote minimum standards of do no harm, and analyze how programmes may create adverse consequences that unintentionally increase women and girls' vulnerability to HIV?

This can include, for example, reinforcing negative stereotypes, exposing women and girls to potential violence, stigma, abandonment, etc.

Y I N NR

4. Does your organisation examine the structures, power dynamics and social positions affecting women and the impact this has on their ability to access prevention, treatment, care and support services?

For example, through strategies such as women's empowerment or group solidarity.

Y I N NR

5. Do your organisation's programmes educate women and girls on their legal, sexual and reproductive rights?

Y I N NR

6. Does your organisation seek to involve men and boys to be agents of change in positively influencing the social environment?

This includes changing social norms, gender stereotypes and inequalities.



Checklist

Y I N NR

7. Does your organisation disaggregate the data it collects through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) by age, sex and sub-groups?

Y I N NR

8. Do your organisation's M&E indicators assess a range of factors and strategies to address women's vulnerabilities including:

- women's health and well-being (including access to quality health services)
- agency (for example, self-esteem, knowledge of rights)
- access and control of resources (for example, land, labour, productive assets, homeownership)
- equal exercise of citizenship rights (for example, voting, public office, judicial process)
- attitudes and preferences regarding gender roles and norms

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

Y I N NR

9. Does your organisation cultivate and engage in multi-sectoral partnerships to maximize the impact of your programme on women and girls?

Y I N NR

10. Do your organisation's mechanisms to assess and adjust programmes capture and address unforeseen benefits or unintended harms, and ensure this feeds into your programme design?

Unintended harms can include reinforcing negative stereotypes, exposing women and girls to potential violence, stigma, abandonment, etc.

Y I N NR

11. Does your organisation use monitoring and evaluation tools that capture the beneficiary voice and feed this back into programme design and implementation?

Y I N NR

12. Does your organisation promote women and girls as rights holders, activists and leaders of change?

Actions needed to support Section A.2:



Checklist

A.3 Research and Advocacy

This section is designed to ensure that research¹ and advocacy on women and girls complement your programmatic interventions. Women and girls, especially those living with HIV, should be an integral part of your organisation's research and advocacy efforts.

<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	1. Are women and girls involved in setting your organisation's research agenda and design, data collection, and analysis?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	2. Does your organisation follow a clear ethical review processes to protect participants' safety and promote their rights of refusal and confidentiality?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	3. Do your organisation's research protocols include adequate referrals to legal, health, psychosocial and protection services for research participants who report violence or who request such services during the research process?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	4. Does your organisation actively share and widely disseminate findings and lessons learned from your work on women and girls?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	5. Does your organisation conduct evidence-based advocacy on women, girls and HIV?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	6. Do women and girls from the communities your organisation serves participate in your advocacy efforts?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	7. Does your organisation actively support or train women and girls to be effective leaders and advocates in the HIV response at all levels?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	8. Does your organisation advocate for changes in structures and systems to protect and promote the rights of women and girls including:
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	• right to own or inherit property?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	• right to attend school?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	• right to sexual and reproductive choices?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	• freedom from stigma and discrimination (for example, through norms and policies) related to people living with HIV?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	• freedom from violence?

1. "Research" and "evaluation" may share similar methods, tools and research. The basic distinction between the two is that program evaluation has an explicit purpose of assessing the merit of a project, and research has an explicit purpose of producing generalized knowledge based on inference from a sample population.



Checklist

Y I N NR

9. Does your organisation have strategic partnerships with organisations, institutions, enforcement officers and networks that can strengthen advocacy efforts to cultivate structures and systems that protect and promote the rights of women and girls particularly those living with HIV?

Y I N NR

10. Does your organisation ensure that any advocacy work you participate in does not have unintended negative consequences on women and girls?

Actions needed to support Section A.3:



Checklist

B

Prevention and Vulnerability Reduction

HIV prevention efforts need to address underlying causes of vulnerability to HIV infection and consider the unique contexts and conditions in which women and girls live. In the interest of meeting the long-term HIV prevention needs of women and girls, organisations are encouraged to look beyond the consequences of gender inequalities and also address the root causes of this inequality. In this way, organisations can contribute to a process of social change which provides women, girls, men and boys a better foundation to protect themselves against HIV, and cope with the impact of HIV and AIDS.

The questions below are specific to HIV prevention interventions, and aim to help you assess your organisation's effectiveness in its HIV prevention programming on women and girls.

Y I N NR

1. **Are your organisations HIV prevention programmes multi-sectoral in nature, addressing the broad range of factors that hinder women and girls' ability to protect themselves from HIV (including economic, social, biological factors)?**

Y I N NR

2. Does your organisation support the integration of HIV and sexual reproductive health services for most vulnerable groups?

Y I N NR

3. **Do your organisation's programmes integrate activities or link services that address issues relating to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, coercion, harmful traditional practices, abuse, rape, and trafficking in women and girls?**

Y I N NR

4. Do your programmes support access to and information on consistent and correct use of HIV prevention commodities such as:

- condoms (male and female) & lubricant?

Y I N NR

- sterile injecting instruments and safe disposal?

Y I N NR

5. Do your organisation's programmes facilitate access and utilization of sexually transmitted infection (STI) services?

Y I N NR

6. Do your organisation's programmes seek to strengthen women's ability to negotiate safe sex, especially related to condom-use?

Y I N NR

7. Do your organisation's communication strategies address information and knowledge gaps that may exist between men and women on ways to protect themselves from HIV?

Y I N NR

8. Do your HIV and education programmes promote girls' leadership, explore gender stereotypes and include age-appropriate information on sexual and reproductive health including family planning?



Checklist

Y I N NR

9. Does your organisation take proactive measures to create safe environments where women and girls are present?

This includes for example, schools, agricultural settings, streets where girls walk, etc.

Y I N NR

10. Does your organisation make post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) available as part of a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health service or know how to refer an individual to a PEP provider?

Y I N NR

11. Does your organisation promote comprehensive, gender-sensitive, evidence-based HIV prevention information and services that go beyond the ABC approach?

Y I N NR

12. Do your programmes place emphasis on the delivery of specific prevention messages that are tailored to the context setting?

Y I N NR

13. Do your programmes seek to address the gap between the receipt of accurate prevention information and the power women and girls have to use this information?

Actions needed to support Section B:



Checklist

C

Access to Services – VCT, Treatment, Care and Other Support Services

It is important to ensure that women and girls have equitable access to and benefit from the full continuum of HIV prevention, care, treatment, and support services. Linking or integrating HIV services with sexual and reproductive health services and other social services expands the reach of essential types of care to more women, and reinforces the synergies among them.

Women, especially those living with HIV, are highly stigmatized and discriminated against, and need access to non-judgmental and supportive healthcare services. Organisations are also urged to adopt rigorous and comprehensive approaches related to informed consent and privacy, to ensure that women and girls do not suffer adverse consequences from their participation in HIV services.

The questions below help your organisation assess if its policies and programmes provide comprehensive access to HIV care and services in ways that do not harm women and girls. The questions focus mostly on HIV-related services but organisations should also consider how support services may also be improved to strengthen our response to women and girls affected by HIV.

General

Y I N NR

1. Do your programmes identify and address ways in which women and girls may be excluded or discouraged from accessing and benefitting from HIV care and services?

This may include a lack of privacy or fear of violence or abandonment?

Y I N NR

2. Are health and support services provided at hours and locations that are convenient for women?

Y I N NR

3. Are clinics or programme sites amenable to mothers or caregivers bringing their children?

Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT)

Y I N NR

4. Are your organisation's HIV testing and counselling and prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) services provided in a way that is confidential and voluntary?

Y I N NR

5. Are your organisation's VCT and PMTCT services affordable and accessible to women and girls?

Y I N NR

6. Do your organisation's counselling strategies address potential risks linked to learning one's HIV status (for example, abuse, violence or abandonment)?



Checklist

Y I N NR

7. Does your programme engage men and boys in testing, including couples counselling and testing?

Y I N NR

8. If involved in PMTCT services, does your programme encourage the involvement of male partners in all stages of pregnancy, delivery and care?

Y I N NR

9. Does your organisation's programme provide women and girls with accessible information to make informed decisions as to whether or not they opt for testing?

Y I N NR

10. Does your organisation's programme refer positively diagnosed women and girls to a full range of gender sensitive services including positive prevention?

Addressing Confidentiality and Discrimination

Y I N NR

11. Do your organisation's programme strategies take measures to reduce vulnerabilities related to sero-disclosure (for example, violence, abandonment, stigma, discrimination)?

Y I N NR

12. Is the informed consent and confidentiality of women and girls in VCT, PMTCT and other clinical settings ensured in your organisation's programmes?

Y I N NR

13. Do your organisation's programmes train service providers to provide a supportive, confidential and non-stigmatizing environment for women and girls?

Y I N NR

14. Do your organisation's programmes build the capacity of health providers and community care providers to respect women living with HIV's reproductive health care needs and rights, including their right to be sexually active and bear children?

Y I N NR

15. Do your programmes address discrimination faced by women and girls living with HIV in accessing healthcare settings, schools, public service, religious settings, etc.?

Treatment

Y I N NR

17. Does your organisation monitor women's and girls' access to, and sustained uptake of HIV treatment services?

Y I N NR

18. Does your organisation ensure that women and girls living with HIV have adequate nutrition and access to food services when needed?



Checklist

Y I N NR

19. Does your organisation assess whether same sex service providers need to be recruited to fit cultural contexts where women are more comfortable interacting with female providers?

Y I N NR

20. Do your home-based care programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls living with HIV, including:

- psychosocial needs
- socio-economic needs
- treatment literacy gap
- household chores

Y I N NR

21. Does your organisation assess the social, economic, legal and food security needs of women and girls living with HIV and help to create linkages to those services?

Y I N NR

22. Does your organisation provide preventative counselling and information as part of your treatment programmes?

Actions needed to support Section C:



Checklist

D

Impact Mitigation and Coping Support

As women and girls are disproportionately responsible for the care of PLHIV, organisations are urged to support women and girls with access to appropriate financial, psychosocial, and technical assistance. Protection from discriminatory acts and violations of women and girls' human rights are also salient to affected women and girls. Organisations can help ensure that women and girls are aware of their rights, and provide or refer to legal support when those rights have been infringed. Organisations can also advocate for appropriate policy reform in areas related to property, inheritance, marriage, family, and rape/assault, among others.

This section aims to provide an assessment of your organisation's support to women and girls to better cope with and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS.

<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	<p>1. Do your programmes include mobilization strategies to support women and girls affected by HIV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financially: for example, through access to credit, income generating projects, village savings and loan groups, school fees for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)? • emotionally: for example, through counselling or peer support groups? • technically: for example, through business or leadership skills-building, lifeskills trainings?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	2. Does your organisation acknowledge and compensate for the additional burden of care that many women and girls face in households affected by HIV?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	3. Are men engaged in and encouraged to provide support to women and girls affected by HIV through your programmes?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	4. Does your organisation assist or provide referrals to PLHIV for succession planning services, especially with regard to inheritance and property?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	5. Does your programme provide access or referrals to legal support for widows or OVC affected by the epidemic (for example, access to property, inheritance)?
<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> NR	6. Do your programmes work to strengthen public health systems in order to reduce the burden of care placed upon women in communities?

Actions needed to support Section D:



Action Plan: Women, Girls and HIV

In completing this self-assessment checklist, you are likely to have identified some areas that are in need of improvement and some that are already at a 'good practice' level. Please complete this Action Plan and highlight examples of how your organisation will improve its efforts to engage women and girls and address their needs, in order to strengthen

your response to HIV and AIDS over the next six months.

We recommend that you focus first on the twelve key Questions below for developing an Action Plan. If you answer 'no' or 'Insufficient, in preparation, or being considered' to any of these twelve questions, this would be the best place to start in order to improve your work.



Key Questions

- Does your organisation mention women and girls in its:
 - mission statement?
 - strategic objectives?
 - management/operational plan?
- Are women and girls vital players and decision makers in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- Does your organisation assess the special needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls when conducting community assessments?
For example, women living with HIV, orphaned girls, widows, sex workers, women from ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, women care providers and others based on the context.
- Does your organisation examine the structures, power dynamics and social positions affecting women and the impact this has on their ability to access prevention, treatment, care and support services?
For example, through strategies such as women's empowerment or group solidarity.
- Does your organisation seek to involve men and boys to be agents of change in positively influencing the social environment? This includes changing social norms, gender stereotypes and inequalities.
- Does your organisation conduct evidence-based advocacy on women, girls and HIV?
- Are your organisations HIV prevention programmes multi-sectoral in nature, addressing the broad range of factors that hinder women and girls' ability to protect themselves from HIV (including economic, social, biological factors)?
- Do your organisation's programmes integrate activities or link services that address issues relating to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, coercion, harmful traditional practices, abuse, rape, and trafficking in women and girls?
- Do your programmes identify and address ways in which women and girls may be excluded or discouraged from accessing and benefitting from HIV care and services? This may include a lack of privacy or fear of violence or abandonment?
- Do your programmes address discrimination faced by women and girls living with HIV in accessing healthcare settings, schools, public service, religious settings, etc.?
- Does your organisation assess the social, economic, legal and food security needs of women and girls living with HIV and help to create linkages to those services?
- Do your programmes include mobilization strategies to support women and girls affected by HIV:
 - financially: for example, through access to credit, income generating projects, village savings and loan groups, school fees for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)?
 - emotionally: for example, through counselling or peer support groups?
 - technically: for example, through business or leadership skills-building, lifeskills trainings?

Please remember to save your completed action plan and email it to info@hivcode.org or send it to **PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.**

Name of Organisation	Contact Person	Email Address
Signed		Date



Action Plan: Women, Girls and HIV

Expected Outcomes
(What do we want to achieve?)

Key Activities
(What do we need to do?)

Action Points
(How do we do it?)

Resources
(What kind of support do we need to do it?)

Timeframe
(When will we do it?)
