



ICW Fact Sheet

Nothing for women living with HIV without women living with HIV and their networks. We must increase support for women living with HIV as they carry a disproportionate burden of the epidemic.

Facts about ICW as a network

- ICW stands for The International Community of Women Living with HIV
- ICW was established in 1992 (over 22 years ago) as a response to the women's agenda being ignored
- ICW is the ONLY global network for and by women living with HIV
- There are 10 regions – Asian Pacific, Caribbean, Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa. Within the regions there are numerous country networks
- Each region has representatives that sit on the International Steering Committee. These elected women guide the strategic direction and advocacy agenda of ICW at the global level
- The global office is located in Nairobi, Kenya
- ICW represents all self identifying women living with HIV (inclusive of transgender women, sex workers, women who use drugs, prisoners, migrants, lesbian and bisexual women and all and any other woman living with HIV)
- Our Global movement building campaign is being launched at AIDS 2014 – *I AM ICW*

Vision: ICW envisions a world where all women living with HIV live free of gender oppression, realizing and claiming our full rights inclusive of sexual, reproductive, legal, social, economic and health rights.

Mission: We exist to lead efforts towards securing and improving the quality of life for women living with HIV. We do this by mobilizing, organizing, advocating, mentoring and raising consciousness on the issues that directly impact our lives.

Core Values: Accountability; Self Determination and Emancipation; Integrity and Critical Reflection; Feminism and Gender Equality; Commitment to Advocacy; Self-care



Facts about women and HIV:

- 35.3 million people living with HIV
- 75 million since the beginning of the epidemic
- 2.3 million new infections per year (6500 each day)
- Over 50% (over 18,000 million) of people living with HIV are women– this number increases in many developing regions
- 17.8 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS
- Science shown that if pregnant women living with HIV have access to antiretroviral medicines the risk of transmitting the virus to their child can be reduced to less than 1%
- 10% are children under the age of 15
- Disproportionate amount of people living with HIV are women and children
- The key affected populations that are often ignored, marginalized, persecuted and criminalized are drug users, sex workers, transgender and homosexual and bisexual men

ICW advocacy priorities in our Global Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2016:

ICW is a truly global network and our global agenda is defined in partnership with our national, regional networks and ICW's grassroots leadership, to reflect the specific needs of women living with HIV in diverse contexts. Using this approach we strive for global awareness and policy reform and remain responsive to pressing issues rising from the grassroots. To focus our efforts ICW has prioritized 5 key areas at the global level, where we believe our advocacy efforts can achieve the greatest impact:

1. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights:

ICW works to ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of women living with HIV and enable women to make informed decisions on matters related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

ICW promotes the full realization of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls living with HIV, including the right to have fulfilling sexual lives and express their sexual identities, including; the right to make autonomous decisions about whether they will marry and whether they will have children, freedom from all forms of violence and the right to make those decisions with access



to comprehensive information about their bodies, sexuality, and the full range of reproductive choices.

Women living with HIV must have access to appropriate and safe contraceptives, abortion and pregnancy support services for women living with HIV; the reduction of maternal mortality among women living with HIV must be prioritized. As a part of a full spectrum of care, ICW seek the increased availability of voluntary HIV testing, treatment and counseling for all women and girls. ICW seeks an immediate and universal end to forced and coerced sterilization and forced and coerced abortion. ICW demands respect by healthcare workers, families, and community members for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The risk of cervical cancer is higher among women living with HIV and will erode gains made by treatment access.

2. Criminalization:

ICW advocates for an end to the criminalization of HIV transmission and exposure and other forms of criminalization that oppress women living with HIV.

ICW seeks the repeal of laws that criminalize non-intentional HIV exposure or transmission, and an end to laws that single out women living with HIV or people living with HIV for prosecution or increased punishment solely related to their HIV status. In addition, criminal laws should only be used in extraordinary cases of intentional exposure or transmission. Overly broad use of the criminal law results in unjust prosecutions and incarceration of people living with HIV. Criminal justice systems must ensure that similar risks and harms are treated alike.

ICW believes that criminalization is counterproductive. It discourages women living with HIV from accessing care, undermines the goals of counseling and the service provider relationship to their patients, increases the risk of violence against women living with HIV and can discourage people who know they have HIV from disclosing that fact to potential sexual partners and others. ICW advocates for key populations who face unjust criminalization based on their lifestyles and identities, including but not limited to lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, women who use drugs, sex workers, and migrant and undocumented workers, which in turn increases their vulnerability to HIV acquisition.



3. Access to Treatment, Care and Support:

ICW aims to ensure comprehensive, quality and dignified health care for women living with HIV.

ICW promotes the universal right of all people living with HIV to access reliable, comprehensive and sustainable care, treatment, and support. Women living with HIV must be able to make informed decisions about their own treatment and care. Stigma, discrimination and other barriers to treatment and care must be eliminated in order to ensure that women living with HIV and other marginalized populations can receive the care they need and are entitled to.

We demand an end to policies and practices that create barriers to accessing services for women, young women, adolescents and girls living with HIV. Importantly, we advocate the development of research and clinical trials that address the key overlooked aspects of living with HIV that uniquely impact women.

4. Violence Against Women:

ICW demands an end to all forms of violence against women as defined and experienced by women living with HIV.

Institutional, systemic and intimate partner violence against women living with HIV/AIDS is endemic and largely underreported. Women living with HIV must be free from violence, coercion, stigma and discrimination. ICW demands an end to all forms of violence against women and a recognition of how violence against women and other forms of gender based violence impact the health and lives of women living with HIV.

ICW demands freedom from violence for all marginalized and vulnerable populations within communities living with HIV including but not limited to sex workers, members of the lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer communities, those who are internally and externally displaced, women living in conflict zones, women in prison, migrant women and women living with disabilities. Violence against women must be accounted for and addressed in all efforts to respond to HIV.



4. Economic Justice:

ICW seeks to ensure economic justice for women living with HIV.

ICW works to ensure that women living with HIV have adequate resources and support to provide for their basic economic and social human rights: including the right to sustainable livelihoods, housing, sanitation and adequate and clean food and water. ICW wants the recognition of the right of women living with HIV to full property, insurance and inheritance rights, including the right to enter into and sign contracts in their own name, the right to own and inherit property and to access credit. Additionally, ICW promotes the right of women living with HIV to self-determination in terms of education, and training.

ICW seeks increased recognition of the disparate impact poverty has on women living with HIV and an end to discriminatory policies and requirements in employment, education, marriage, insurance, bank loans, travel and immigration.