

A Learning Session on HIV-affected Adolescent Mothers and their Children in Sub-Saharan Africa

13th December, 08.45am-4pm

WHO, D-Building (Room 46025), Avenue Appia 20, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, Geneva

AGENDA

Introduction

Whilst adolescents in general have received a lot of attention in the HIV response, the health and wellbeing of adolescent mothers and their children have been largely overlooked.¹ Stigma is at the heart of their exclusion. Many are shunned by their own societies and excluded from services, including being banned from school. The lack of priority given to adolescent mothers and their children by some of the largest global HIV stakeholders, including donors, in turn, perpetuates their exclusion.

In Sub-Saharan Africa this issue is of central importance both for the elimination of HIV and AIDS as well as the attainment of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Levels of both HIV and adolescent motherhood are very high. There are an estimated 11.4 million adolescent mothers in Sub-Saharan Africa,² predominantly living in adverse conditions, and around half of all women in the region have experienced pregnancy by age 18.³

These adolescent mothers and their children have poorer prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT) service outcomes and are less likely to receive or stay on treatment⁴. They are also at the epicentre of a multitude of broader vulnerabilities including those associated with gender inequality, poverty, violence, exclusion, poor education, which limit generations across a lifetime⁵. For both adolescent mother and their child, this is a violation of their child rights; puts at risk their health and wellbeing; and perpetuates a cycle of poverty and vulnerability, including HIV infection.

Whilst this has bearing on a wide range of HIV targets and SDGs, its impact on early childhood development (ECD) is especially acute. ECD has been identified as a corner stone underpinning several SDGs and is central to the *Global Strategy for Women's Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030*. Children born to HIV-affected adolescent mothers are more at risk of developmental delays and are, therefore, a priority for implementing the Nurturing Care Framework.

¹ Groves, A. *et al* (2018) 'Addressing the unique needs of adolescent mothers in the fight against HIV,' *JIAS* Jun; 21(6): e25155 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6024120/>

² UNPD (2015). World Fertility Patterns 2015 – Data Booklet (ST/ESA/SER.A/370). New York, United Nations Population Division

³ UNAIDS JUNP on H. At a Glance - HIV among Women and Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. 2019. https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/women_girls_hiv_sub_saharan_africa_en.pdf

⁴ Calahan, T. *et al* (2017) *JIAS* 2017; 20(1): 21858. 'Pregnant adolescents living with HIV: what we know, what we need to know, where we need to go' <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5577684/>

⁵ Groves, A. *et al* (2018) 'Addressing the unique needs of adolescent mothers in the fight against HIV,' *JIAS* Jun; 21(6): e25155 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6024120/>

WHO and The Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS (The Coalition) are committed to improving the health and development outcomes for these adolescents and their young children. We are inviting scientific and programmatic experts working with them to a Learning Session in order to consolidate the evidence on why HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children are being left behind and what can be done about it. The outcome of this Learning Session will form the basis of a policy brief including key advocacy recommendations.

We will look at the outcomes among HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children across a range of health, HIV, and broader development indicators; why they are not benefiting from interventions serving general populations; and what works to improve their outcomes. The focus will be on Sub-Saharan Africa, where the bulk of evidence exists. This Learning Session complements other recent meetings on related topics concerning adolescent mothers, in order to avoid duplication and build from evidence and innovations already identified. The Coalition has commissioned a background paper summarising the results of a global literature review, which participants can then build upon during the meeting.

The Coalition for Children affected by AIDS (The Coalition) is an independent group of 26 influential thought leaders from across UN, donor, NGO and academic communities (www.childrenandHIV.org). We work together to advocate for better funding, policies, research and practice for children and adolescents (aged 0-18 years) infected with HIV and AIDS; those at risk of infection; and affected by the social and economic impacts of others close to them having the disease.

Overall Objective

To define an evidence-informed advocacy agenda for HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children

Specific Objectives

- To identify gaps and consolidate key scientific and programmatic evidence on the scale and nature of the needs of HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children, and proven solutions to address them.
- To establish a set of advocacy recommendations informed by the evidence.
- To build a movement of experts that can advocate with one strong voice on HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children.

Outputs

A set of draft advocacy recommendations and a consensus Evidence Note to support them.

Participants

We have invited scientific and programmatic researchers and implementers with expertise in adolescent mothers and their children in areas of high HIV burden in Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes experts in adolescent HIV, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, early childhood development, adolescent mental health and other issues impacting on HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children. The focus is on Sub-Saharan African low and middle-income countries with a high burden of HIV and AIDS.

Format

This will be a dynamic, targeted and concise discussion. Section 1 provides an overview of the scale and nature of the challenges and the programming and policy landscape to address them. Section 2 analyses what works across multiple thematic areas. Each speaker will propose specific recommendations for what global donors, programmers,

and policy makers could do differently, and set out the evidence behind them. And Section 3 consolidates a set of advocacy recommendations. Participants will be provided in advance with a background paper summarising the results of a global literature review, commissioned by the Coalition for Children affected by AIDS. This will serve as a starting point for discussion, and will be built upon to create a consensus Evidence Note.

Evidence

We are interested in all kinds of cited evidence - academic research, programmatic evidence (e.g. impact evaluations) and personal testimonies from key stakeholders (e.g. from beneficiaries, practitioners, policy makers, funders etc.). Evidence can be sourced from HIV literature as well as from other sectors including violence, protection, poverty, equality and equity, gender, sexual and reproductive health rights, education, health, and hunger. All evidence must already exist in literature of some kind so that it can be cited later on, although not all must necessarily be published. We encourage all participants to bring along evidence and/or full details of where it can be accessed online.

Draft

Schedule

8.45	Registration and refreshments	
9.00	Welcome by co-chairs, The Coalition for Children affected by AIDS, WHO and PMNCH	Dr Meg Doherty, WHO; and Lisa Bohmer, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Chair of the Coalition for Children affected by AIDS
9.15	Section 1: Overview	Panel presentation followed by Q&A Chaired Dr Meg Doherty, WHO; and Lisa Bohmer, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Chair of the Coalition for Children affected by AIDS
	Comments from adolescent mothers	Video of adolescent mothers
	Why are HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children central to global strategies, frameworks and norms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regina Guthold, MNCH, WHO • Gretchen Bachman, US Government • Catherine Bilger, UNAIDS
	What is the evidence telling us? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read out from Stay Free evidence sharing on HIV prevention amongst adolescent mothers, hosted by EGPAF</i> • <i>Results of an evidence review by the University College London and the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch: What are the outcomes for adolescent mothers and their children across SDG and HIV indicators? And what are the implications for the attainment of development and HIV goals?</i> 	Chip Lyons, EGPAF & Lorraine Sherr, University College London
	The Programming Landscape: What is being done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What development programmes currently target HIV-affected adolescent mothers and their children?</i> • <i>To what extent are international donors and policy makers supporting work on the ground?</i> 	Chewe Luo, Unicef
10.30	Section 2: What Needs to Change - Tackling exclusion	'Fishbowl' Discussion Chaired by Wole Ameyan, WHO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improving the Human Rights and Legal Environment</i> 	Quarraisha Abdool Karim, UNAIDS Collaborating Centre for HIV Research & Policy (CAPRISA)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What role can men and boys play and how best to support them?</i> 	Lycias Zembe, UNAIDS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tackling poverty and inequality amongst HIV-affected Adolescent Mothers</i> 	Karen Austrian, The Population Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthening sexual and reproductive health rights amongst HIV-affected Adolescents</i> 	Dr. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, WHO
11.30	Photo and break	
11.45	Section 3: What Needs to Change – Supporting Nurturing Care	'Fishbowl' Discussion Chaired by Lynette Mudekunye, REPSSI

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mobilising governments, policy makers and civil society around Nurturing Care</i> 	Lynette Okengo, African Early Childhood Development Network
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Supporting HIV-affected adolescent mothers to provide nurturing care</i> 	Monica Ogutto, KMET
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Building mental resilience amongst HIV-affected adolescent mothers</i> 	Tarun Dua, WHO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>HIV exposed uninfected children – what can we say about those of adolescent mothers in particular?</i> 	Kate Powis, Harvard University
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Remarks on opportunities for integrating CHEU into the nurturing care framework</i> 	Martina Penazzato, WHO
1	Lunch	
2	Section 4: Consolidating Key Advocacy Recommendations	Small groups exercise chaired by Luann Hatane, PATA and Co-Chair of the Coalition for Children affected by AIDS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Participants break up into small groups to refine and rank their priority recommendations.</i> <i>Plenary reflection and consolidation</i> <i>Break incorporated</i>	All
3.30	Final Reflections	Quarraisha Abdool Karim, UNAIDS Collaborating Centre for HIV Research & Policy (CAPRISA)
3.45	Next Steps and Closing remarks	Dr Meg Doherty, WHO and Lisa Bohmer, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Chair of the Coalition for Children affected by AIDS
4	END	

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