



HIV/AIDS — A Global Epidemic

The number of women living with HIV has risen in each region of the world. Women now make up half of the approximately 40 million adults living with HIV/AIDS worldwide.

Women, AIDS, and sub-Saharan Africa

More equal gender relations and the empowerment of women are vital to preventing the spread of HIV infection and helping people manage its impact.



- There is no one AIDS epidemic. Rates of infection vary greater in different African regions and countries. In Ghana, for every infected man there are nine infected women.
- In Zimbabwe and South Africa, 66% of women have one lifetime partner yet 40% of the young women are HIV-positive.
 - East Africa has several examples of gradual, modest declines in HIV prevalence among pregnant women in urban areas.
 - West and Central Africa prevalence levels are steady at 5% or lower

In Southern Africa:

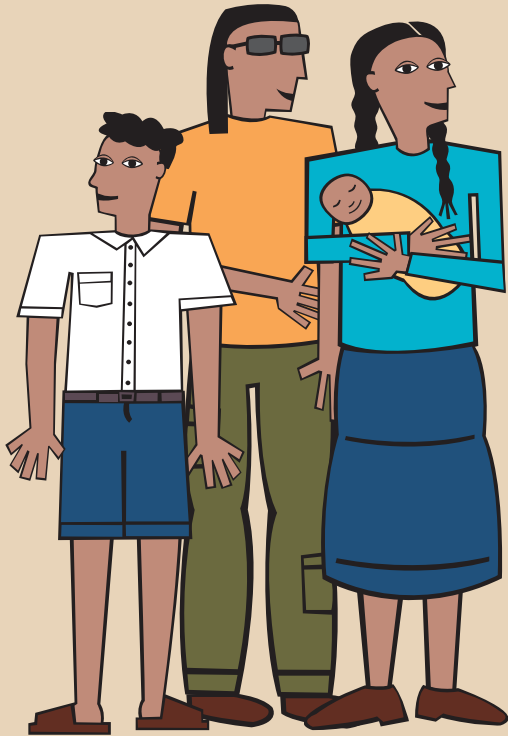
- Each country is experiencing national HIV prevalence of at least 10%
- 1.4 million people are living with HIV – almost 30% of the global number of people living with HIV in an area where only 2% of the world's total population reside.



The greater the gender discrimination in societies and the lower the position of women, the more negatively they are affected by HIV.

Sub-Saharan Africa

- 10% of the world's population; 60% of the global AIDS epidemic; 25.4 million living with HIV
- 2004: approx 3.1 million people in the region became newly infected, while 2.3 million died of AIDS
- 6.9% of all women and 2.2% of all men between 15 and 24 years of age live with HIV
- On average, there are 13 women living with HIV for every 10 infected men
- The gap between men and women's infection rates continues to grow
- In most countries, women are being infected with HIV at earlier ages than men
- The differences in infection levels between women and men are most pronounced among young people (aged 15–24 years)



ILLUSTRATIONS: ELLEN PARCIAK-ROSE

HIV/AIDS is the worst plague this world is facing; it wrecks havoc on women and girls... what we have here is the most ferocious assault ever made by a communicable disease on women's health.

STEPHEN LEWIS,
UN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA



ACEWH in conjunction with Commonwealth Secretariat and the Human Sciences Research Council created IIGHA: the International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS. The Institute was launched in South Africa in June 2004 and joint projects continue in both Canada and Africa as the partners continue to work together to raise awareness of the role of gender in HIV/AIDS and build capacity to integrate gender into HIV/AIDS research, policy and programmes.



THREE HANDS WORKING TOGETHER is the theme of IIGHA. The hands represent the strengthened connections between government sector, non-governmental organizations and researchers working to integrate gender into policies, programmes and advocacy.



Atlantic Centre of Excellence
for Women's Health

*Promoting social change
through policy-based research
in women's health*

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