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Representative FRSL+/RW-PAPWC Rwanda Chapter

ARC Learning Session II:

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GENDER

DEFINITION

GENDER

- A sociological concept which assigns social relations based on sex, and, concretely, the analysis of laws, social roles, and interactions between men and women.

GENDER «From the viewpoint of Public policy »

Gender analysis has an objective to promote equality between men and women while taking into consideration differences and socially-constructed hierarchies.

GENDER « As a CONCEPT »

A gender approach analyses relations of power between women and men which are based on socially-constructed roles based on sex.

GENDER «OBJECTIVE and METHODOLOGY »

As an **objective**, a gender approach promotes equal rights, as well as an equal distribution of resources and responsibilities between women and men.

As a **méthodology**, a gender approach develops a comparative analysis of the status of women and of men on economic, social, cultural and political levels.

GENDER AND EXPOSURE TO HIV and AIDS

- Sexual gender norms influence women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS as well as its impact.
- The increased risk to HIV/AIDS are due to numerous biological factors on one side, but also, social, cultural, economic, and legal, such as persistent inequality for women on the social and economic basis in the area of sexual relations and marriage.

- As a result women and girls often resort to sex work, and forced marriage with older men who are sometimes polygamous. This reality only deepens their susceptibility in the face of HIV and AIDS.
- Women and girls, including those who are HIV positive, must bear the physical and psychological burden of providing care to those who are living with AIDS.

- In these unequal relationships, women submit to unwanted sexual relations, which is another risk of HIV infection.
- They experience sexual violence, sexual exploitation, unplanned births.

- **Violence toward women and girls may include rape and forced sexual relations, physical aggression, emotional violence, humiliation or intimidation, and economic deprivations.**
- **These could increase tearing of vaginal tissue which facilitates the entry of HIV into the body.**

- Discrimination and stigma: In many contexts, social and cultural values related to female chastity leads to a stronger discrimination of women and girls living with HIV or AIDS than for men.

- There is the possibility of an increase in sexual and conjugal violence; rejection by families and communities; forced abortion or stérilisation; job layoffs ; the loss of survival income brought about by accusation of women as being the origin of HIV infection.

RISKS of HIV Exposure related to Social Status

At the personal individual level

Social risks include shame, dishonor, rejection, divorce, the break of social relations.

- Fear of being rejected, meaning not being accepted into the family, or being chased from home, denied by the family, or rejected by a partner.

- At the marital level
- HIV infection, which is related to the status and role of women, also plays a role in marital separation. These separations take place along with conflicts that break marital bonds, including with in-laws – relations which tied the existence of these women to a husband or partner.

- **At the family level « positive risk »**
- The quality of the relationship with women is an extension of the predominant social status within the family. Therefore, the more a woman is living positively, the more the woman is accepted and bonds can even be strengthened.

- Biological risks :
- For women, AIDS can be at the same time fatal, transmissible and bearing stigma. This can lead to the deterioration of the immune system, to a physical decay.

GENDER AND ACCESS TO TESTING AND TREATMENT

- Expand provision of services on HIV prevention, counseling and testing, and the use of male and female condoms.
- Strengthen prevention services for people living with HIV or AIDS
- Integrate a gender dimension and take into consideration the needs of youth as part of sexual and reproductive health services

CONT'N

- Apply comprehensive national laws intended to protect the rights of girls, young women and people living with HIV.
- Propose to key populations sexual and reproductive health services that are adapted, customized and non stigma-bearing.
- Link HIV prevention to policies and programs on sexual and reproductive health

EXPAND SOCIAL ECONOMIC EFFORTS FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

- Increase economic revenue particularly by working with innovative partners
- Promote approaches that fight gender inequality and propose a package of services on HIV prévention
- Reinforce leadership compétences, and participation in décision-making processes

BAN CHILD MARIAGE

- Ban child marriage through a law, apply the appropriate legislation and collaborate with influential persons in order to modify social norms

FRSL+/RW –PAPWC Rwanda Chapter

- FRSL+/RW is a non-governmental organisation named Rwandan HIV+ Women in the Fight Against HIV and AIDS
- The mission of FRSL+/RW is to: treat problems related to health at the community level and particularly, for women living with HIV or AIDS

Activitiés

- Undertake trainings and advocacy with the aim to fight HIV and AIDS among Rwandan women and also in families, in order to strengthen their ability to be self-sufficient.
- Work against all sorts of gender-based violence while promoting women's rights.

Activitiés

- Work against Community-level malnutrition but particularly among women, children and vulnerable people.
- Work to end contagious and non-contagious diseases in Rwandan families with the aim to promote social well-being.
- Work to end drug use and enstore a culture of environmental protection

PRINCIPAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Training on family planning, ARV adherence, anti-TB and malaria
- Sharing of knowledge and information on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
- Breast-feeding by HIV+ mothers and addressing cultural problems

CONT'N

- Awareness raising among youth via radio programs and workshops during Valentine's Day which have as a theme: All persons living with HIV OR AIDS have the right to love and to be loved while always protecting others by using a condom.

CONT'N

- Project to strengthen the socio-economic capacities of HIV+ women who are organized in coopératives, who are bénéficiaires via income-generating activities such as knitting in the following districts : KAMONYI, NYABIHU et GICUMBI
- Strengthen the socio-economic capacities of HIV+ women through a rotating goat-rearing program.

CONT'N

- Regular and sustainable distribution of male and female condoms in the districts of : HUYE, RUZISI, NGOMA, MUSANZE
- Increase the number of pregnant HIV+ women who utilize PMTCT services
- Increasing leadership of women living with HIV in the HIV response and GBV prevention strategy in Rwanda

CONT'N

- Listen to us -- Building a political voice for HIV positive women; Women and capacity building in sexual reproductive health and zero tolerance for gender based violence, Advocacy and Leadership in Rwanda
- Training on Leadership , Advocacy , Gender – based Violence and Reproductive health and management of Local NGOs from the districts

CONT,N

- Empowerment of vulnerable people and sensitization on male circumcision in Nyagatare District
- Supporting Gender Equality in the context of HIV and AIDs , which aims to strength HIV positive women's and Girl's participation in the national space
- Put in place FRSL+/RW PAPWC CHAPTER RWANDA STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

EXPERIENCE In FUNDRAISING, PARTERSHIPS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

FRSL+/RW has expérience in fundraising with
ICW Eastafrique / HIV Collaborative Fund,
AHCF, UNWOMEN, UNAIDS, ICWEA /ITPC,
UNFPA / CNLS « RBC »

RECOMMENDATION

- Engage HIV positive women in programs on the care of people living with HIV AIDS and also to play the role of peer educators
- **Include a représentation of HIV+ women in agencies of decision-making -- such as CCM**
- **Thank you**