

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING: Milestones in HIV/AIDS Programming

POLICY
BRIEF



Background

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a global phenomenon that has continued to constitute serious health, socio economic and developmental challenges. Consequently, many nations have placed HIV/AIDS on their priority agenda, committing to halting the spread of the virus through the signing of treaties.

With a population of over 170 million and an estimated 3.4 million living with HIV, Nigeria is estimated to have the third largest number of people living with HIV/AIDS globally. Women account for more than half of all adults living

with the Human Immune- deficiency Virus (HIV).

Strong evidence indicates that gender inequality is a major driving force of the epidemic, especially amongst women. In addition to key drivers such as socio-cultural, religious, economic, political, and environmental factors, gender norms and values often trigger behaviors that put girls/women and boys/men at risk of HIV infection.

Why Mainstream Gender and Human Rights in the HIV/AIDS Response?

Mainstreaming of gender into all policy-related and programming activities and structures ensure that all interventions and programs are gender-sensitive and gender-responsive, appropriately meeting the unique needs of females and males.

This guiding principle is a clear indication of due recognition of the place of gender equality in the national HIV response.

There is however, a clear gap between rhetoric and reality. Available data continues to point to the fact that women, girls, men and boys are disproportionately affected. Women and girls

vulnerability to HIV is deeply rooted in their biological make up and this is exacerbated by a complex mix of societal norms and value systems which not only affect women and girls but also men and boys. Similarly, gender inequality has been identified as a key driver influencing the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection. This is evident in the current HIV prevalence among the general population in Nigeria of which women constitute 58%. The rate among young women between the ages of 15 and 24 years is estimated to be three times higher than among men of the same age.



DATA

- As at **2015**, statistics revealed annual AIDS death of **174,253** in **2014** (GARPR 2015)
- About **33 million** people are living with HIV and **2.6 million** new HIV infections occur annually across the globe. (GARPR 2015)
- Of the **3.5 million** people living with HIV, **1.72 million** are females indicating that females are worst hit by the epidemic. (ANC 2014)
- It was observed that in **2012**, prevalence was higher amongst females in three geo-political zones except in the North West where prevalence is **3.5%** for males and **2.9%** for females North East prevalence is **3.8%** for males and **3.7%** for females and South-South prevalence is **6.1%** for males and **5.6%** females respectively. (NARHS 2012)
- In the same year **2012**, the HIV prevalence was consistently higher for females than males in the urban (F: {U: 3.6. %; R: 2.8%}) and (M: {U: 3.6%; R: 3.9%}).
- Females in the reproductive age bracket have the highest prevalence. Among young people aged **20–24**, the infection rate of females (3.7%) is more than double that of their male counterparts (**2.9%**). (NARHS 2012)

Benefits of Gender Responsive Budgeting in HIV/AIDS Programming

The benefits of addressing gender inequality in the national HIV/AIDS response has been grounded in systems overtime, therefore requiring systemic approaches to change the status quo through specific interventions backed by adequate resources.

- It is central to reducing infection rates amongst the vulnerable and different social groups as well as to improve quality of life of those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- It has been found to be useful in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Gender responsive budgeting is a very important tool in human development processes as it helps to ensure that development reach women as much as men.
- It helps to draw attention to key economic and social matters that are often overlooked or obscured in conventional budget and policy analysis, and decision making.
- It strengthens budgetary and planning process by making constant focus on a gender perspective in policy/programme formulations, its implementation and review.
- It can ensure that government budgets assess gender differential impacts of programs/plans and
- That gender related concerns and priorities are translated into budgetary commitments.

Policy Option



The National Policy on HIV and the National Strategic Framework and Plan over the years elucidate the strong commitment of the national response to promoting gender equality and upholding human rights of all Nigerians.

Within the ambits of the policies and legal frameworks, participation and involvement of women, girls, men, boys and the

marginalized groups including key populations is encouraged. The federal nature of the country also allows each State to enact its own laws and develop its own policies.

Gaps however exist both in implementation and provision of some of the laws that mitigate its efficiency. Punitive laws may reverse the gains in the HIV prevention achieved over the years especially among key vulnerable populations. Efforts are however being scaled up to make gender equality and human rights response a reality. Such efforts include the following;

- Development of a 5-year Strategic Plan on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV & AIDS
- Creation of a Gender and Human Rights Unit in NACA
- Popularization of the 2014 HIV Anti-Discrimination Act

- Institutionalization of the Gender and Human Rights Technical Committee (GHRTC)
- Continuous technical efforts of the committee in ensuring gender and human rights responsiveness of the national HIV/AIDS response.

Other gender focused efforts of the national HIV response includes the input of NACA in the ongoing review of the National Gender Policy; conduct of gender assessment, legal and human rights assessment of the national HIV response, development of Plan of Action for HIV/GBV intersection, plan of action to remove legal and human rights barriers in the HIV response, the inclusion of gender expert in the development of all policy documents and guidelines in the national HIV response. However, there are still some gaps between policy and implementation.



Challenges

A further exploration of the funding process revealed that gender was treated as a cross cutting issue with no direct line budget to address gender equality focused interventions. Budgets are lumped in thematic areas where program data is disaggregated by gender either for general or key populations.

In the breakdown of HIV/AIDS program by population beneficiaries, budget for gender under general population is at most 1.00% of the total expenditure. For key populations, the total budget allocation for 2009 is 0.09% and 0.11% in 2010.

In the National AIDS Spending Assessment (NASA) report, gender issues related to the various thematic areas are addressed under the specific thematic activities as well as in the indicators. While the NSP identifies specific actions to address the needs and rights of women and girls, it does not include a specific budget to address its gender related activities

Untimely release or non-release of approved budget for gender related activities.



Actions Required

HIV/AIDS and Other Sector Policy Makers need to:

- Invest a good proportion of the HIV/AIDS budget in gender based programming to address specific gender and human rights related issues in order to halt the spread of HIV.
- Build capacity of gender desk officers in the administration of gender tools for gender and human rights based programming and gender responsive budgeting.
- Support whole site orientation as capacity building for staff in gender and human rights responsive programming.
- Support comprehensive programmes including an effectual budget that addresses gender inequality in a holistic way.
- Support the development a gender responsive costed state and national plans detailing specific strategies and interventions critical for provision of gender and human rights sensitive interventions.

Ensure resource allocation/budgetary provision, approval and timely release for specific gender sensitive interventions.

Monitor and track resources to ensure that gender and human rights specific interventions have budget lines and are executed appropriately.

This 'Policy Brief' was developed using evidence-based data to support policy dialogues and advocacy to influence Gender and Human Rights Responsive Budgeting in the HIV/AIDS response at national/state/local levels.

