



Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria



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Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for Communicable Diseases

Policy brief

Gender relations have a major impact on the spread and control of communicable diseases. A set of gender mainstreaming guidelines would help countries translate their commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment into concrete actions.

The Background

Communicable diseases disproportionately affect women and girls in the SADC region. High poverty levels and various other socio-economic disparities put them at special risk. They also continue to have limited access to affordable and quality health services and information. Burdens of disease—and care—deny many women the right to health and to full participation in the economic and social life of their societies. Efforts are underway to address some of the gender dimensions of communicable diseases in SADC. Generally, however, progress has been stronger in relation to HIV than in tuberculosis and malaria programmes.

The Rationale

SADC Member States' efforts to improve gender equality and health outcomes for women and girls would benefit from Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines that present guidance for improving the health status and prospects of women and girls, and that enable the health sector to apply a gender perspective in policy development and implementation. The Guidelines are anchored in regional and global commitments on women's empowerment and gender equality, including the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the United Nations Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Principles

The Guidelines are based on a set of interlocking principles that include the need for gender-sensitive strategies and programmes, the primacy of a rights- and community-based approach, and the need to promote multi-sectoral collaboration at regional

and national levels. Other principles include the need to expand the involvement of men and boys in communicable disease programmes, strengthen Member State accountability, and allocate adequate resources for gender mainstreaming in communicable diseases.

The Scope

The Guidelines provide a framework for gender-sensitive policy and strategic development, programming, research, as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E). They also serve as reference materials for capacity building initiatives and advocacy work on gender mainstreaming in public health. The principles that give rise to the Guidelines apply also to the general health response.

Key Points

The Guidelines use disease focus areas as entry points for gender mainstreaming. They identify shortcomings and propose improvements in a range of areas—including policy and strategic framework review and development, research, M&E, and service delivery. They also address improvements in relation to institutional coordination mechanisms and capacity development for gender mainstreaming, advocacy and social mobilisation, and decentralisation and financing of gender mainstreaming.

Implementation

Successful implementation of the SADC Gender Guidelines requires the involvement of all key stakeholders at national and regional levels.

The SADC Secretariat will coordinate and monitor overall implementation on behalf of the Ministers of Health. Specific responsibilities will include advocating for implementation, facilitating skills transfers, coordinating partners for resource mobilisation and technical support, and sharing good practices. Member States will play a lead role ensuring that the Guidelines are integrated into the annual work plans of their national communicable diseases programmes, and that all relevant stakeholders are involved in those programmes. Member States will also identify specific hindrances and opportunities for implementing each

guideline, as well as develop detailed financial plans and provide resources to support implementation.

More Information

The Guidelines are based on the findings of an assessment that was conducted in 2010 in Member States. Those findings have been compiled in the Assessment Report on the Status of Gender Mainstreaming in HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Programmes in the SADC Region (2012).

The full Guidelines are available in the publication, *SADC Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for Communicable Diseases* (2012). A self-assessment tool for verifying implementation is available in the publication, *Checklists for Measuring Implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Programmes* (2012).

All three publications are available from the Communicable Diseases Project of the SADC Secretariat (Private Bag 0095, Gaborone, Botswana).