Presentation by Marie Benjamin for Webinar on Gender and Challenging Operating Environments

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INTRODUCTION

• I am Marie Benjamin, Programme Coordinator of SWAA (Society for Women and AIDS in Africa) Sierra Leone Chapter

• Vision – Reducing the impact of HIV on Women and Girls and their families

• With the Global Fund – SWAA addresses HIV prevention for FSWs as a key population

• Chair of CARKAP – Advocating for the Right of Key affected populations as one of few women

• Representing KP interest on the CCM
• Based on EANNASO’S abridged version of the COES I am going to take the approach of basing my presentation on the 3 key areas:
  • Flexibility
  • Partnership
  • Innovation
FLEXIBILITY

• As implementing partner now part of the Global Fund Process from concept note to budget development
• Support of Global Fund for Consortium of Civil society organisations for advocacy and watchdog role
• Room for reprogramming activities to achieve the greatest impact, Catch-up plan
PARTNERSHIP

• Working with other organisations like UNAIDs, Legal Aid Board, health service providers
• Bringing in Private Sector a challenge for now despite work place policy in place
• Accessing technical assistance – not aware of availability of TAs and knowing needing the capacity (omen’s groups especially) to access them
Innovation

• The capacity on the how of ‘innovative thinking’ with the problems to handle in the already challenging operative environment

• Learning from the different ways other countries have similar overcome challenging situations

• For Sierra Leone innovation has been:
  • Establishing the Consortium of CSOs for advocacy and watchdog role
  • Strengthening of community engagement to increase access to services and reach more women and adolescents
Challenges

• Working in Sierra Leone with the recent history of Ebola and flood/mudslide
• Most women vulnerable due to factors from the war, ebola, mudslide in terms of how it has impacted women – more women and girl headed households, low level of education, access to health services
• Weak programs targeting women and adolescents
Recommendations /Conclusion

• Opportunities for experience sharing to integrate best practices observed into our programs
• Need for more robust advocacy for policies that support women in the context of accessing health services
• Dissemination of information on the Gf COE policy