

Understanding the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate All Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination

Gender inequality and HIV-related stigma and discrimination make it more difficult to prevent HIV transmission among women and girls, and for women and girls living with HIV, stigma and discrimination can impact their ability to live healthy and productive lives. These two challenges are among the main reasons why AIDS remains one of the leading causes of death among women aged 15–49. Adolescent girls and young women account for 1 in 4 new cases of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa and only 3 out of 10 adolescent girls and young women have accurate and comprehensive knowledge of HIV, including how to keep themselves safe. Globally, 1 in 3 women living with HIV experience at least one form of discrimination related to their sexual and reproductive health.

1. What the Global Partnership is and why women need to know about it

The [Global Partnership to Eliminate all forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination](#) (**The Global Partnership**) was established in 2018 in response to a call by the UNAIDS Programme Coordination Board (PCB) Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) delegation and UN partners for stronger efforts to address the negative effects of stigma and discrimination in the lives of people living with and vulnerable to HIV. By raising awareness about these barriers to health and well-being, the Global Partnership aims to inspire countries to take action to understand and confront them.

The **co-convenors** of the Global Partnership are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), the UNAIDS Secretariat, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund).

The Global Partnership recognises that the key to ending stigma is the work of communities and civil society leading interventions in **six different settings** and areas of people’s lives: **households, workplaces, education, justice systems, health settings, and emergency and humanitarian settings.**

W4GF opinion: *The needs and priorities of girls and women are central to the goals of the Global Partnership. Reducing and ending HIV-related stigma and discrimination is impossible without addressing gender-related stigma and discrimination. The facts below highlight the reality for women and explain why women remain vulnerable to HIV:*

- Only 55% of women who are married or in a relationship make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. [UNFPA](#)
- 40 countries have no legislation to address domestic violence and fewer than 40% of women globally who experience violence seek help of any sort. [UN WOMEN](#) Restrictions and disruptions related to COVID-19 were responsible for dramatic surges in rates of reported intimate partner violence, as seen by five-fold increases in calls to helplines in the

months after the pandemic swept the world in 2020. [Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: Report of the Secretary-General \(2020\)](#)

- *Women and girls do not have equal land and property rights in half of the countries in the world. [World Bank](#)*
- *Women are more likely than men to interact with health care systems and to be tested for HIV. Because they are more likely to know their HIV status, women are at higher risk for prosecution in countries where non-disclosure of HIV status is criminalized.*
- *In 2019, one in five women aged 20–24 years were married before the age of 18.*
- *Many age and spousal consent laws fail to prevent early marriages and to protect the rights of women and adolescent girls – exposing them to unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions and HIV. [UN WOMEN](#)*

2. Where and how action is taking place through the Global Partnership

As of October 2021, 28 countries have committed to take action on HIV-related stigma and discrimination across the six settings over the next five years. Most countries (listed in the box below) selected three settings where they feel they are able to have the most impact in addressing HIV-related stigma.

When countries join the Global Partnership, it takes time to determine the gaps and where efforts need to be concentrated. In some cases, consultations are currently taking place and others are finalising their focus settings.

In each country, it is the government together with civil society that select the three settings to focus on in the first year of joining the Global Partnership. This is also based on key national interventions using [guidance](#)¹ and drawing on the experience of successful programmes & services that create enabling environments.

Once a country has committed to action, national partners work closely with co-conveners on the ground to mobilize existing grants that are already supporting HIV-related work, including the Global Fund and PEPFAR to focus on agreed interventions.

W4GF Opinion: *To date, not enough work has been done across the countries to ensure that women and girls in all their diversity are central to the Global Partnership. Gender-transformative approaches that address inequities that lead to stigma and discrimination should be a top priority for all countries.*

Country	Focus settings
Latin American and the Caribbean	
Argentina	Health, Justice, Household
Costa Rica	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Ecuador	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Guyana	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Jamaica	Workplace, Health, Education (Year 1) Justice, Household (Year 2)
Asia and the Pacific	
Laos	Health, Justice, Household
Nepal	Household, Health, Justice
Papua New Guinea	Household, Health, Justice
Philippines	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Thailand	Health, Justice, Workplace
West and Central Africa	
Angola	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Central African Republic	Health, Household, Workplace
Côte d'Ivoire	Health, Household, Emergency/& humanitarian
Democratic Republic of Congo	Household, Health, Justice
Gambia	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Guinea	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Liberia	Household, Health, Justice
Senegal	Household, Health, Justice
East and Southern Africa	
Lesotho	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Mozambique	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
South Africa	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Uganda	Health, Justice, Education
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	
Kazakhstan	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Kyrgyzstan	Health, Education, Justice (tbc)
Moldova	Health, Justice, Household
Tajikistan	under consultation/awaiting confirmation
Ukraine	Health, household, emergency, justice
Middle East and North Africa	
Iran	Health, Housing, Emergency/ humanitarian

¹ In 2020, UNAIDS published this report on [Evidence for eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination](#) To highlight what works to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination and to increase access to justice in the six settings

In line with the new [Global AIDS Strategy](#) and the [Post-2022 Global Fund Strategy](#), the co-convenors must ensure that women and girls are meaningfully engaged in the Global Partnership, highlight the gaps that leave women vulnerable and disadvantaged, and move forward with a more intentional gender lens that addresses the rights of women and girls.

As a co-convener, the Global Fund has a responsibility to do more to ensure human rights programming explicitly supports countries to respond to the violence and other human rights-related barriers (including stigma and discrimination) that women and girls face in access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services. This responsibility is especially vital for the health

The Global Fund's work is guided by its strategy Investing to End Epidemics which includes strategic objective 3 (SO3) to *promote and protect human rights and gender equality*. Aligned to the Global Fund Strategic Initiatives there is a focus on 20 countries to remove human rights-related barriers to HIV, TB and malaria services as part of the [Breaking Down Barriers initiative](#). 11 of these 20 countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Ukraine) have also committed to the Global Partnership. In 2017 the Global Fund's human rights portfolio aligned to the [seven key programs to reduce stigma and discrimination and increase access to justice](#).

and well-being of women and girls from key affected populations. Read the Global Fund's most recent guidance on [ensuring that programs to remove human rights-related barriers to HIV, TB and malaria services are gender responsive and gender transformative](#).

3. How to connect to those leading this work in your region and country

As the Global Partnership is a community led initiative, GNP+ is a core member that has been working to [increase visibility](#) of the Global Partnership. As part of its effort to boost civil society engagement, GNP+ provides technical support (through regional and national coordinators) to ensure that civil society and communities in their diversity can fully participate in the implementation of the Global Partnership at national levels.

More information about GNP+'s work with the Global Partnership is [available on its website](#). You can also reach out to the contacts below to find out more about how women can engage in this work.

- . Project Coordinator: [Sasha Volgina](#)
- . Project Assistant & Focal Point African Anglophone region: [Consolata Opiyo](#)
- . Regional coordinators and support – Focal Points
 - Asia Pacific: [Harry Prabowo](#)
 - Africa (Francophone): [Ibrahima Ba](#)
 - Eastern Europe and Central Asia [Valeria Rachinskaya](#)
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: [Elena Reynaga](#)