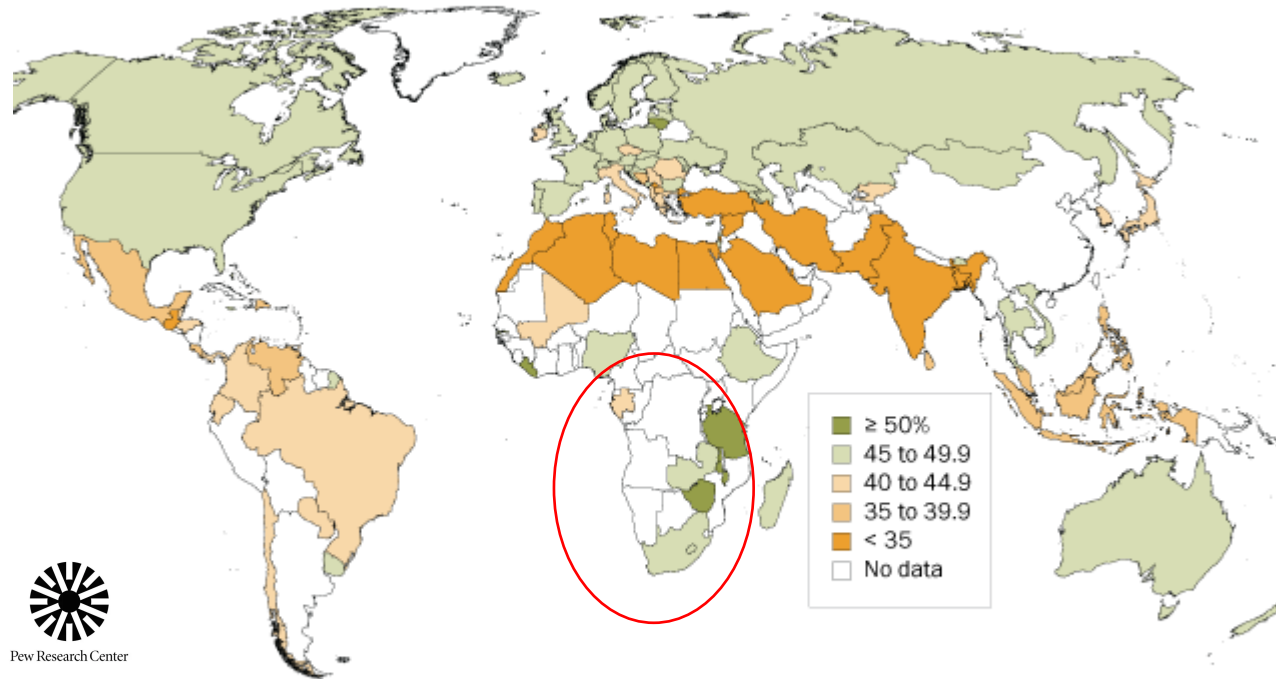


Role of women empowerment in prevention strategies



Global workforce share

Female share of the labor force (%)



| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Zimbabwe | 52.8% |
| Malawi | 52.2 |
| The Gambia | 50.8 |
| Liberia | 50.6 |
| Tanzania | 50.5 |
| Lithuania | 50.4 |
| Latvia | 49.8 |
| Barbados | 49.7 |
| Moldova | 49.5 |
| The Bahamas | 49.5 |
| U.S. | 46.8 |
| EU* | 46.5 |

Women make up at least 40% of the workforce in more than 80 countries, with a median female share of 45.4%. The five countries with the highest female shares are all in sub-Saharan Africa. However, women in this region are especially likely to be in **informal employment**, relative to men. Furthermore, **earn less** than men, even as they shoulder the enormous—and economically essential—burden of **unpaid care and domestic work**.

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Gender-based rights inequality



Higher HIV vulnerability

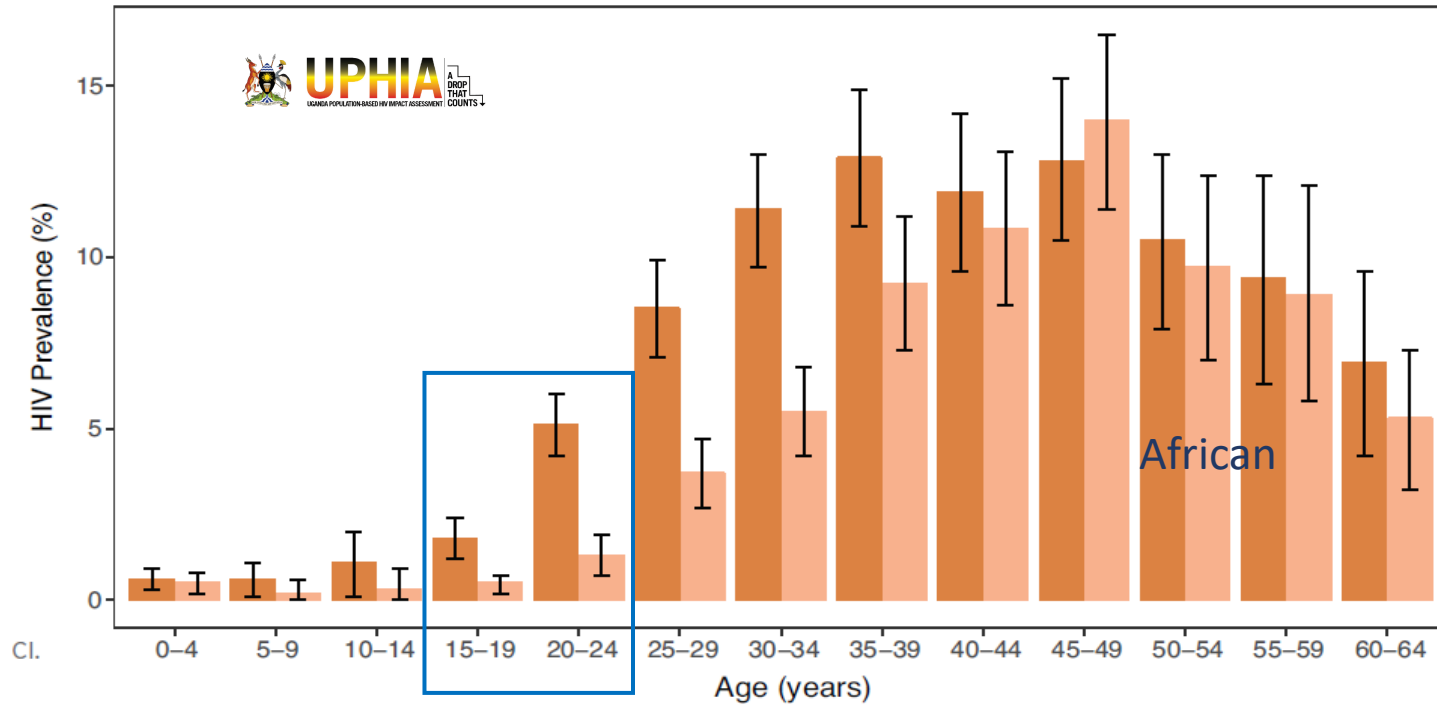
In Sub-Saharan Africa, women are still being left behind and denied their full rights in terms of:

- Access to secondary education
- Formal paid employment under decent conditions
- Violence: the threat is pervasive, especially (but not only) in conflict and post-conflict situations
- Child, early and forced marriages
- Low personal agency: poor decision making about their own health and well-being
- Transactional and unprotected age-disparate sex



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HIV vulnerability among young african women



In Uganda, females among 15 to 24 years old, prevalence rates are almost four times higher than males of the same age.

74%

Percentage of new HIV infections among adolescents in Africa in 2013 that occurred in adolescent girls

HIV

Leading cause of death among adolescents in Africa

15%

Percentage of young women aged 15 to 24 in sub-Saharan Africa who are aware of their HIV Status

UNAIDS and The African Union - 2015



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HIV vulnerability among young african women

Educational and sociological aspects

- ▶ School drop out: fewer than 1/3 girls access to secondary education
- ▶ Child, early and forced marriage: 41% of girls in western and central africa are married as children.
- ▶ Poor personal agency: women are unable to make choices and take action on matters of their own health and well-being.

Economical factors

- ▶ Transactional, paid and unprotected age-disparate sex (an elder partner is more likely to be at risk for HIV) is often a result of poverty and lack of opportunity.

- ▶ Urban poverty and location Girls living in slums are 23% more likely to be living with HIV

Violence

- ▶ Intimate partner violence: relates with reduced ability to negotiate safe and consensual sex or to seek protection. Both men and women who experience IPV have a clustering of factors that increase the risk of HIV.
- ▶ Violence in conflict and post conflict settings.

Access to reproductive health information

- ▶ Inadequate and unequal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information

Empowerment strategies

The 2011 UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS pledged to eliminate gender inequalities through key recommendations:

1. Women's agency, participation and leadership

- Even though women are critical to reconciliation and reconstruction efforts, they have been underrepresented in peace processes and poorly involved in the establishment of post-conflict frameworks.
- The meaningful engagement and leadership of women living with and affected by HIV, in the HIV response, are critical elements to ensuring an effective and sustainable response.
- Young women should be recognized and included as decision-makers and not considered only as victims or recipients of assistance.



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Empowerment strategies

2. Strategies to reduce intimate partner violence and vulnerability to HIV.

Recently, two randomized controlled trials conducted in Uganda shown positive outcomes:

- Raising Voices “**SASA!**”: activists spearheaded a wide range of activities in their own neighbourhoods designed to decrease the social acceptability of violence by influencing knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours on gender, power and violence. In Kampala, it was associated with significantly lower social acceptance of intimate partner violence among both men and women.
- **SHARE** project (Rakai): community-based mobilization to change attitudes and social norms that contribute to intimate partner violence and HIV risk, and a screening and brief intervention to reduce HIV disclosure-related violence and sexual risk in women seeking HIV counselling and testing



Empowerment strategies

2. Strategies to reduce intimate partner violence and vulnerability to HIV.





<http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/download-sasa/>

THE LANCET
Global Health

ARTICLES | [VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1, PE23-E33, JANUARY 01, 2015](#)

PDF
[33]

Effectiveness of an integrated intimate partner violence and HIV prevention intervention in Rakai, Uganda: analysis of an intervention in an existing cluster randomised cohort

Dr Jennifer A Wagman, PhD   • Prof Ronald H Gray, MD • Prof Jacquelyn C Campbell, PhD • Marie Thoma, PhD • Anthony Ndyababo, MSc • Joseph Ssekasanvu, BSc • et al. [Show all authors](#)

In both cases, **engaging men and boys** has been essential to tackle harmful masculinities and redress power imbalances in the private and public spheres.

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Empowerment strategies

3. Cash transfers to reduce poverty and girls' vulnerability to HIV

Girls in families affected by HIV are more likely to drop out of school to care for sick parents or generate income for the family. Cash transfer programmes have been implemented in several sub-saharian countries, including Uganda.

They showed to be able to achieve multiple outcomes:

- Declines in early sexual activity
- Reduction of transactional sex
- Keeping girls in school
- Decreasing the number of sexual partners

But they require explicit objectives (with measurable indicators) and they need to be implemented with broader socio-cultural interventions.

Economic empowerment as part of a multidimensional strategy for HIV prevention



Empowerment strategies

4. Strategies to keep girls in school and comprehensive sexuality education

Some of the most powerful structural interventions for HIV risk reduction among adolescent girls across Africa are those that aim to keep girls in school. Appropriate sexuality education is also known to increase young girls' condom use, increase voluntary HIV testing among young women, and reduce adolescent pregnancy. These interventions include:

- making education free of charge for girls
- supporting orphans and other vulnerable children to stay in school
- conditional cash transfers that reward parents for keeping their daughters in school



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Empowerment strategies

5. Scaling up and integrating HIV with sexual and reproductive health services

Condom programming designed to reach young people, such as through schools, can increase accessibility and confidence among those who are sexually active. In addition, removing barriers such as parental and spousal consent, which further institutionalizes sexual and reproductive rights violations, is critical for scaling services and ensuring access.

These services are particularly useful when focused on urban areas and when targeted on poor urban women and girls.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Interventions to address unequal gender and power relations and improve self-efficacy and empowerment for sexual and reproductive health decision-making for women living with HIV: A systematic review

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Global benefits of women empowerment

Empowering women in the spheres of economics, education, human rights, and politics can play a key role in:

- ✓ Economic growth and eradication of hunger and poverty
- ✓ Realizing women's rights and gender equality
- ✓ Global access to primary and secondary education
- ✓ Social and political stability
- ✓ Better health and nutrition outcomes
- ✓ Substantial impact on HIV epidemics and STI prevention.



«Empowerment is the ability to make strategic choices where that ability did not previously exist»

Kabeer - 1999