



How to Make Friends and Influence People:

Tracking the impact of the Framework for Women, Girls and Gender Equality in National Strategic Plans in Southern and Eastern Africa



December 2012

Developing the Framework (June October 2010)

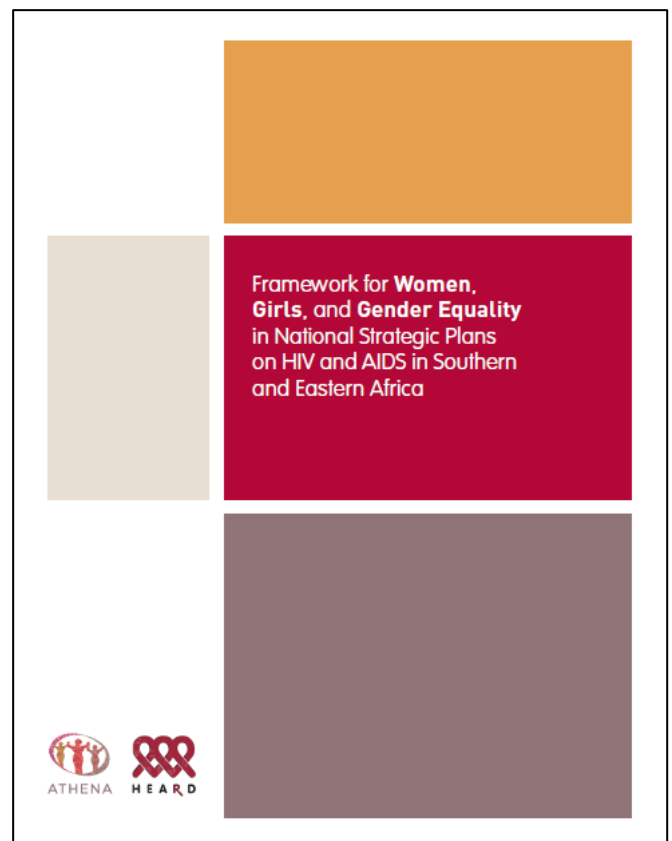
In southern and eastern Africa and globally, women and girls are differently and disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS, and national strategic plans (NSPs) on HIV and AIDS have been identified as a critical platform for addressing this impact. The Framework for Women, Girls and Gender Equality in National Strategic Plans on HIV and AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa (the Framework) was developed by the ATHENA Network and the Gender Equality and HIV Prevention Programme at HEARD in collaboration with 19 organisations and networks working to advance gender equality and women's rights in the context of HIV.¹

In addition to providing a concise, user-friendly tool to support strengthening efforts to address gender equality within NSPs, the Framework also sought to support critical on-going processes to strengthen the HIV response for women, girls and gender equality more generally, such as the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV.

The Framework consists of nine sections that together comprise a "minimum package" for a gender responsive NSP. It utilises rights-based language that reflects the evidence base and good practice for women, girls and gender equality in the context of the broader HIV response. Recognising the potential distance and challenges between policy and implementation, the Framework attempts to provide an essential first step – that of getting the policy language right – while offering evidence informed practical strategies for implementation:

¹ The partners are: HEARD, ATHENA Network, AIDS Legal Network, Her Rights Initiative, OSISA, Sonke Gender Justice Network, SWEAT, GEMSA, Salamander Trust, ARASA, Caregivers Action Network, Children's Rights Centre, POWA, VSO, World AIDS Campaign, Help Age International and Raising Voices

"The persistent concern throughout the workshop was how this framework might bridge the policy-implementation divide."²



The development of the Framework was from the beginning embedded in a longer-term vision of bridge-building, analysis and consultation through a women's rights lens, as well as supporting on-going and parallel processes. Some of the ways that vision has been realised to date are described here.

² HEARD & ATHENA (2010) Consultative Workshop to Reflect on Gender and National Strategic Plans, October 2010, p.10, see: <http://www.athenanetwork.org/assets/files/Gendering%20NSPs%20Workshop%20Report.pdf>

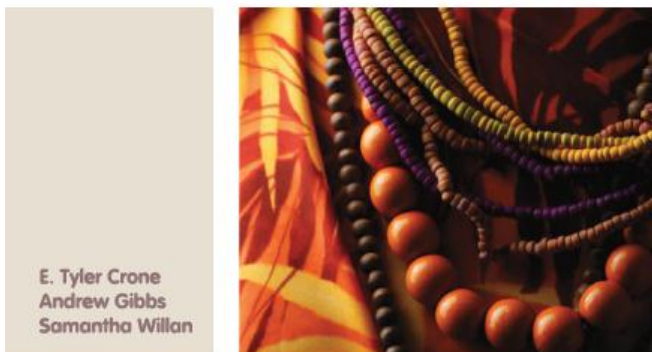
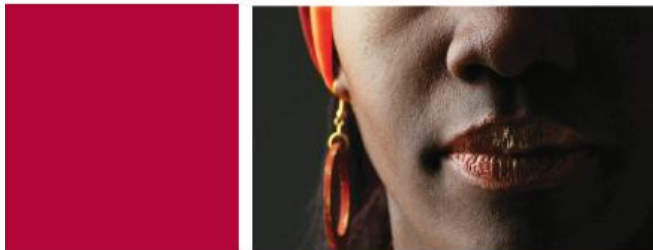
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From Talk to Action

A review against the Framework of 20 NSPs in southern and eastern Africa was undertaken by HEARD and ATHENA in 2010. The review, *From Talk to Action*³, provided a 'snapshot' of current NSPs strengths, weaknesses and gaps and included an analysis identifying key priorities and recommendations. The review also established a baseline for comparison to third generation NSPs.



Key findings of *From Talk to Action* were that NSPs frequently included 'headlines' for women, girls, and gender equality, but failed to follow through with interventions and policies; most focus on women in the context of prevention of vertical transmission only; and, most NSPs focus on providing 'technical' solutions, rather than addressing structural drivers of HIV. Major gaps include failure to recognise and meaningfully programme for gender-based violence;⁴ and failure to address strengthening care and support programmes. In addition, there is frequently a lack of meaningful

³ Download the report at: www.heard.org.za/gender/nsp

⁴ 12 out of 20 NSPs in the region do not address the elimination of gender-based violence and discrimination

involvement of women living with HIV and attention to their sexual and reproductive health rights⁵; and a lack of accountability to women through costed and budgeted interventions, and gender sensitive indicators. Many NSPs do not gather sex-disaggregated data or set sex-specific targets.

Expanding our reach: from regional to international workshops - and back again (2010 – 2012)

A series of 10 policy analysis tools were developed drawing from the Framework.⁶ In conjunction with the Framework, these tools were used in a number of multi-country and multi-stakeholder consultative workshops and trainings from November 2010 to date with delegates spanning representatives of National AIDS Commissions (NACs), Ministries of Health, Ministries of Gender and Women Affairs, the UN family, networks of women living with HIV, women's rights organisations, organisations engaging men and boys for gender equality, entities with expertise in addressing gender-based violence and with specific emphasis on the meaningful involvement of young women and women living with and affected by HIV.

Nairobi, December 2010 – Integrating Strategies to Prevent Gender-Based Violence and Engage Men and Boys to Achieve Gender Equality through National Strategic Plans on HIV and AIDS

Johannesburg, September 2011 – Integrating a Human-Rights-Based and Gender Equality Approach into National Strategic Plans on HIV

Istanbul, November 2011 - Integrating Strategies to Address Gender-based Violence and Engage Men and Boys to Advance Gender Equality through National Strategic Plans on HIV and AIDS

Addis Ababa, December 2011 – Putting Women, Girls, and Gender Equality at the Heart of the HIV Response

Johannesburg, October 2012 - Regional Consultation on Women, Girls, Gender Equality, and HIV: Reviewing the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Action to Address Gender-Based Violence and Engage Men and Boys for Gender Equality

Johannesburg, December 2012 - Integrating Strategies to Address Gender-Based Violence and

⁵ Only three of the regions' NSPs specifically 'affirm the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV'

⁶ Download these at: www.heard.org.za/gender/nsp

Engage Men and Boys to Advance Gender Equality through National HIV Plans and Strategies: Regional Eastern and Southern Africa Consultation to Strengthen Attention to Gender-Based Violence in National HIV and AIDS Plans and Other Critical Policies

Through these processes, representatives from over 45 countries across southern and eastern Africa and globally have been exposed to, and applied, the Framework and related policy analysis tools

In-country pilot: Zimbabwe (March – July, 2012)

In 2012, HEARD and ATHENA continued to build on the global and regional roll-out of the Framework by focusing on sustained country level engagement by conducting a two-phase pilot project in Zimbabwe to support in-country efforts to integrate women, girls and gender equality into national policies and plans on HIV and AIDS. This work comprised:

- Establishment of a strategic partnership with relevant Zimbabwe government departments, the Zimbabwe National AIDS Council (ZANAC) and NGOs. This partnership formed the basis on which to carry out in-country support to Zimbabwe stakeholders on relevant issues, and to unpack the NSP and gender and human rights issues to inform the workshop planning process;
- Convened a workshop in collaboration with ZANAC, SAFAIDS, Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV and Zimbabwe AIDS Network, with strategic partners and other relevant stakeholders to promote the potential for NSP to be utilised to advance, promote and protect women, girls and gender equality in and through the HIV response.

“This workshop has given participants a tool on how to address issues that have been dismissed in certain policies and challenged them to push further for such issues, including the long needed drive for advocacy strategies.” (Participant feedback, Zimbabwe 2012).

Results from multi-country and in-country work (2010 – 2013...and beyond!)

The HEARD-ATHENA tools have been at the heart of all these processes, and frequently cited as among the most useful elements of them. In a follow-up impact

assessment to the workshops held in Nairobi (2010) and Istanbul (2011), over half the respondents (27 out of 43) named the tools⁷ as one of the three most useful elements of the workshops.⁸ While the different countries involved differ in the type of epidemic they experience, and the ‘stage’ of their response, some of the results that have been catalysed across participating countries include:

Identifying gaps and priorities in national policies and plans on HIV and AIDS

“The meeting was important. It’s good for understanding trends and to appreciate priorities and policy at implementation level. This meeting helped me to appreciate the need for evidence and identification of positive and creative strategies and approaches to dealing with gender-based violence in the context of HIV and AIDS.” (Participant feedback, Johannesburg, 2012)

“As Zimbabwe is engaging in review of the declaration on MDG targets, the workshop assisted me in engaging meaningfully and contributing to the report. The process has required continuously looking at policies and plans, and helping to identify gaps and advocacy points and opportunities.” (Participant feedback, Zimbabwe, 2012)

Strengthening language around gender equality and gender-based violence integrated into national policies, including in accountability structures

“A new Specific Goal number 5 was added to the NSP that extends the amount and type of emergency response offered to survivors of sexual violence based on the recommended five layers of support that was discussed at the Istanbul meeting – and a new principal strategy has been added which calls for implementation of socialisation programmes to mitigate negative cultural norms that increase the risk of HIV transmission such as those that facilitate gender-based violence.” (Participant feedback, Belize – Istanbul case study)

“In terms of policy analysis, the tools disseminated at the Istanbul workshop were extremely helpful. The Moldovan policies are actually quite strong, but implementation and monitoring is a problem at the

⁷ These included the Framework and Policy Analysis Tools. Participants at Istanbul were also introduced to the draft UNDP Gender Roadmap.

⁸ These findings are drawn from: ATHENA (2012) Integrating strategies to reduce gender-based violence and engage men and boys to advance gender equality through National Strategic Plans for HIV and AIDS

local authority level.” (Participant, Moldova – Istanbul case study)

Promoting increased engagement and leadership of women living with HIV and other key affected women

“After the Istanbul meeting, we have managed for the first time, to have an open face HIV positive women talking about HIV, gender-based violence issues, at conferences, TV shows, awareness events. After the meeting, we started to think more intensive on creation on a HIV positive women network and their greater involvement in decision making and planning. At the moment we started by organising monthly women club meetings and self-support groups.” (Participant, Moldova - Istanbul case study)

“The tools have helped in deeper engagement with policy-makers and implementers. As I was invited just after the training to be a member of the Technical Review Committee of the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe, the tools have greatly enhanced my contribution in the way I review clinical and social research proposals.” (Representative of a network of women living with HIV, Zimbabwe 2012)

Empowering the grassroots

“Tools to review NSP were perfect for informed advocacy...I learned that NSPs are missing several concepts for example, we looked for some words about sexual violence and care for it, but we couldn't find them. I actually could notice some important issues are really missing.” (Participant feedback, Addis Ababa, 2011)

“Empowering and educational especially to young women who are the key to the next generation.” (Participant feedback, Zimbabwe, 2012)

Catalysing for the engagement of men and boys as agents to halt gender-based violence and advance gender equality

“When it came to developing programmes...we forgot that being a patriarchal society we need to get men involved if we want to stop the issues. It hadn't been something we even thought about.” (Participant, Swaziland - Istanbul case study)

Encouraging partnership and cooperation between NAC and civil society

“The partnership with the Woman's Affairs Bureau came about as a direct result of this meeting as it was

the first time the MOH/NHP had sat with that Bureau and shared what activities and areas for collaboration.” (Participant, Jamaica - Nairobi case study)

“This [partnership] was a clear outcome of the meeting. NAC was not working with The Rwanda Men's Resource Centre before the meeting. Immediately afterwards a formal collaboration mechanism was drafted.” (Participant, Rwanda - Nairobi case study)

Conclusion

Collectively these processes have brought together key stakeholders across the HIV response, strengthened the engagement of those most affected by HIV in policy analysis and setting, and generated a broad global audience for the tools and products than that originally conceived. It quickly became apparent that our approach and tools had application beyond the southern and eastern African region with demonstrated reach and impact in countries and epidemics as diverse as Belize, Ecuador, Jamaica, Uganda, Malawi, Russia and Moldova.