NGO CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Globally, about half of all adults living with HIV are female. In most regions, women and girls make up an increasing proportion of the population living with HIV, and rates of female infection continue to rise due to a variety of biological, social, cultural and economic factors – particularly in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America[1].

As such, the meaningful involvement of women and girls living with HIV (MIWA) in the development, design and delivery of HIV programmes and services is key for ensuring that these are relevant, accessible and usable to women and girls around the world. The technical expertise and personal experiences of women and girls living with HIV can help organisations ensure that:

- the realities of HIV positive women and girls are reflected in prevention, care, treatment and support activities;

- services fit and work for women and girls (rather than women and girls to fit services), and;

- programmes include a focus on women and girls that are already living with HIV.

The Code identifies two key principles on the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV (MIPA), which can be taken a step further and applied to the specific context of women and girls:

- We advocate for the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and affected communities in all aspects of the HIV response.

- We foster active and meaningful involvement of PLHIV and affected communities in our work.

This self-assessment checklist will help you assess the degree to which your organisation is successfully implementing these principles. The questions are designed to be thinking points/guidelines to help you identify areas that are already at a 'good practice' level, and areas that need to be developed and strengthened.

author

This checklist was developed by the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW).

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1. 2007 Epidemic Update, UNAIDS

Self-Assessment Checklist:
MIWA

Self-Assessment Instructions

This checklist should be completed by a group of three to five staff members who are involved with MIPA at your organisation.

Please indicate your answer by marking the appropriate box.

Y   Yes, we undertake this work/activity

I   Insufficient, in preparation, or being considered

N   No, we've not yet tackled this work/activity

NR   Not relevant to our work

Please be honest in completing this checklist. It is expected that your scoring will vary between modules, depending on your area of expertise.

Action Plan

We challenge you to use this tool to identify areas that your organisation needs to strengthen in order to reach a 'good practice' level, and then develop a brief Action Plan that highlights examples of HOW you will improve your engagement and support of women and girls living with HIV over the next six months. You can use the Action Plan template provided at the end of this module or create your own.

There are four Key Questions highlighted in the checklist in red. These questions address fundamental issues that you need to consider first when assessing how well your organisation is meaningfully involving women and girls living with HIV. As you develop your Action Plan, keep these questions in mind and if you have answered 'no' to any of them, this would be a good starting point for improving your programmes.

How to save the Action Plan:

Complete the self-assessment module and Action Plan electronically, save the file and submit it to the Code Secretariat by email. The Secretariat will credit all NGOs that submit Action Plans as 'Implementing' NGOs and full signatories of the Code. After the period of six months, we will ask you to measure your progress against your Action Plan.

the Code

The Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS (the 'Code') was created by a broad consortium of NGOs to provide a shared vision of good practice to which NGOs can commit and be held accountable.
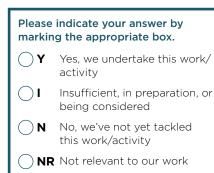
The Code outlines principles and practices that are informed by evidence and underscore successful NGO responses to HIV. It identifies a series of areas that are key to HIV programming and articulates fundamental principles that should be applied to HIV programmes in each of these areas.

These principles are aspirational, setting out examples of good practice that NGOs can work towards over time.

For more information on the Code, go to www.hivcode.org

Checklist

A

Ensuring the workplace is a safe environment for women living with HIV

Women make up more than 41% of the world's paid labour force. In addition to their role as bread winners, women are the backbone of families and communities worldwide. The impact of the HIV epidemic falls more heavily on women, who assume the bulk of caregiving responsibilities when their male partners, children, and parents fall ill.

Women living with HIV must be able to work in a safe and supportive environment, where managers are aware of and addresses their needs, and value their inputs and contributions. In an effort to ensure that there is institutional support of women living with HIV, organisations should ensure that their workplace policies incorporate issues specific to women and girls.

This section will help you assess how well your organisation has considered women living with HIV in the workplace.

Please indicate your answer by marking the appropriate box.

- **Y** Yes, we undertake this work/ activity
- **I** Insufficient, in preparation, or being considered
- **N** No, we've not yet tackled this work/activity
- **NR** Not relevant to our work

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR	1.	Does your organisation have a strategy for recruiting women living with HIV?	
◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR	2.	Does your organisation have a workplace policy on HIV and AIDS?	
◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR	3.	**Has your organisation included the employment and retention of women living with HIV as part of its workplace policy?**	

For example, does the workplace policy include:

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • providing training for all staff on gender and HIV, including living with HIV, and the meaningful involvement of women living with HIV (MIWA) in HIV work?

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • maintaining the confidentiality of staff members who are living with HIV?

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • providing flexi-time, job shares, childcare, maternity leave and compassionate leave?

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • ensuring that female staff members that are living with HIV, and their dependants, have access to appropriate health care (including treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV)?

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • supporting internship / mentoring schemes for women living with HIV?

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • providing an effective, confidential complaints process?

◯ Y ◯ I ◯ N ◯ NR • addressing power imbalances in the workplace that expose women to the threat of sexual harassment?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**	4.	Has your organisation involved women living with HIV in the development of the workplace policy?
○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**	5.	Does your organisation's induction process for new employees include an introduction to the workplace policy and information on how it is implemented?
○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**	6.	Has your organisation ensured that the measures needed to support the implementation of the workplace policy are funded and sustainable?
○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**	7.	Does your organisation implement and monitor its workplace policy?

Actions needed to support Section A:

B

Supporting advocacy by networks of women and girls living with HIV

One of the Code's guiding principles is the meaningful involvement of PLHIV and affected communities in all aspects of the HIV response. The Code states that MIPA is a 'specific expression of the right to active, free and meaningful participation. In emphasising MIPA and the right to participation, we recognise that the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV...makes a powerful contribution by enabling individuals and communities to draw on their lived experiences in responding to HIV.'

This section will help you assess how well your organisation engages women and girls living with HIV, and their networks, in the development of local and national HIV-related policies and programmes.

◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	1. Does your organisation advocate for the meaningful involvement of women and girls living with HIV, and their networks, in decision-making processes and programme development?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	2. Does your organisation take specific steps to ensure that women living with HIV are able to contribute to advocacy and programming in a meaningful way, and their contributions are valued? For example, do you:
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	• build the capacity of women living with HIV?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	• provide support for family responsibilities so that women are able to be involved?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	• ensure safe spaces so that women can voice their concerns without fear of judgment?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	• adapt work norms to suit women living with HIV (for example, modifying the location and times of meetings)?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	3. Does your organisation advocate for and/or support networks of women and girls living with HIV to engage their members in consultative processes both before and after decisions are taken?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	4. Does your organisation advocate for the availability of sufficient resources to ensure that the involvement of networks is truly meaningful?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	5. Does your organisation advocate for the provision of resources directly to support groups rather than going through a third party, where possible?

Checklist

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**	**6.** **Does your organisation advocate for the involvement of women and girls living with HIV, their networks and support groups, in the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes?**
◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**	7. Does your organisation advocate for and/or provide support (financial or in-kind) to help your partner organisations to consider the impact of their own programmes on women and girls living with HIV?

Actions needed to support Section B:

C

Involving women and girls living with HIV in programme development, monitoring and evaluation

This section will help you to consider how effectively your organisation's programme development, monitoring and evaluation respond to the issues faced by women and girls living with HIV, and how effectively you are involving women and girls (and their networks) in these processes.

1. Does your organisation consider how your policies and programmes in the following sectoral areas affect the lives of women and girls living with HIV:

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • HIV prevention, treatment, care (including palliative care) and support services?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • sexual and reproductive health services (including the prevention of mother to child transmission)?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • drug and alcohol services?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • general health services?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • violence against women?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • harm reduction services?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • savings and credit?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • water and sanitation?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • food and agriculture?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • humanitarian relief/emergency response?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • education?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • economic justice and trade?

○ **Y** ○ **I** ○ **N** ○ **NR**   • infrastructure?

2. For each of your programmes/services, has your organisation considered such issues as:

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • the impact of gender, HIV and age-related stigma and discrimination on access to the service?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • the impact of service delivery and design on gender, HIV and age-related stigma and discrimination?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • maintaining confidentiality of HIV status?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • violence against women and girls?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • access to economic opportunities for women and girls?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • gender inequality?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR 3. Does your organisation consider and address constraints that may limit women's access to your services?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR 4. Does your organisation consider the specific needs of, and barriers faced by, women living by HIV who are further marginalised in society (such as injecting drug users and sex workers, lesbians, bisexual women, prisoners, migrants, women with disabilities, displaced persons, girls, young women and older women)?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR 5. **Has your organisation involved women living with HIV (and their networks and support groups, where possible) in identifying project needs and in designing implementation strategies for all programmes/services?**

○Y ○I ○N ○NR 6. Does your organisation involve women living with HIV in monitoring and evaluating the impact of your organisation's programmes/services?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR 7. For questions 5 and 6, has your organisation provided sufficient time and support for women living with HIV to consult with their networks to ensure that a broad range of views are represented?

○Y ○I ○N ○NR 8. Does your organisation provide support for building the capacity of networks and support groups for women living with HIV?

This includes providing information and training in such areas as:

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • advocacy

○Y ○I ○N ○NR • research

◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**				• data analysis
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**				• monitoring and evaluation
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**				• project management
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**				• financial management
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**				• governance
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	9.	Does your organisation recognise through remuneration the importance of the contributions of women and girls living with HIV to programming?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	10.	Does your organisation ensure that women living with HIV and their support groups are the direct beneficiaries of programme funding?
◯ **Y** ◯ **I** ◯ **N** ◯ **NR**	11.	Does your organisation provide sufficient funds specifically to engage and empower women living with HIV and their networks and support groups?

Actions needed to support Section C:

Checklist

D

Working with girls living with HIV

Girls are at even greater risk of exposure to HIV than women. For example, in addition to their biological vulnerability, they are less able to reject sexual advances than adults, and are more likely to be taken out of school than boys.

Whereas gender inequalities are pervasive in youth and childhood, too often HIV and youth programmes do not differentiate between the needs of young women / girls, and young men / boys. This section will help you consider how well your organisation addresses the issues faced by girls living with HIV in its programmes and policies.

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　1.　Does your organisation support the education (formal and informal) of girls living with HIV?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　2.　Does your organisation ensure that HIV education at schools does not focus on prevention only but also on the rights and health of people living with HIV, including girls and young women?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　3.　Does your organisation support sexual and reproductive health and rights education for girls and boys living with HIV?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　4.　Does your organisation consider the impact of the burden of care as an obstacle to girls accessing and benefiting from programmes and policies?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　5.　Does your organisation consider the impact of HIV, age and gender discrimination as an obstacle to girls living with HIV accessing and benefiting from programmes and policies?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　6.　**Does your organisation consider the specific experiences, needs and concerns of girls that are orphaned and living with HIV in your programming?**

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　7.　Does your organisation advocate for, provide or refer girls and boys to youth-friendly health services and education?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　8.　Does your organisation consider the specific treatment issues that girls living with HIV face as a result of their physiology, socialization, and economic and social surroundings?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　9.　Does your organisation consider the ways in which stigma and discrimination affect the lives of girls at the level of the household, the community, school and the broader society?

For example, its effect on education, housing, employment, friends and relatives, social networks, political participation, health and ability to access health care, and vulnerability to violence.

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　10. Does your organisation support mentoring programmes for girls living with HIV?

◯ **Y**　◯ **I**　◯ **N**　◯ **NR**　　11. Does your organisation support the provision of confidential and non-judgmental counselling and support services for girls living with HIV?

Actions needed to support Section D:

Action Plan:
MIWA

In completing this self-assessment checklist, you are likely to have identified some areas that are in need of improvement and some that are already at a 'good practice' level.

Please complete the Action Plan table on the next page and highlight examples of how you will improve your organisation's work on MIWA over the next six months, thinking first about the Key Questions below. If you answer 'no' to any of these questions, it would be important for you to start here in improving your work!

Key Questions

1. Has your organisation included the employment and retention of women living with HIV as part of its workplace policy?

2. Does your organisation advocate for the involvement of women and girls living with HIV, their networks and support groups, in the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes?

3. Has your organisation involved women living with HIV (and their networks and support groups, where possible) in identifying project needs and in designing implementation strategies for all programmes/ services?

4. Does your organisation consider the specific experiences, needs and concerns of girls that are orphaned and living with HIV in your programming?

Please remember to save your completed action plan and email it to **info@hivcode.org** or send it to **PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.**

Name of Organisation	Contact Person	Email Address

Signed		Date

Expected Outcomes (What do we want to achieve?)	Key Activities (What do we need to do?)	Action Points (How do we do it?)	Resources (What kind of support do we need to do it?)	Timeframe (When will we do it?)