

Justification: to support the inclusion of a disability perspective in the HIV/AIDS sector



From a statistical, legal, and political perspective

While persons with disabilities are more exposed to every risk factor for HIV/AIDS, they are often excluded from prevention and treatment programmes. There is a lack of information provided in accessible format for people with sensory impairments or intellectual disabilities and it is wrongly assumed that persons with disabilities are not sexually active at all¹. It is often reported by persons with disabilities that they are either turned away or dealt with as a last priority when frequenting testing centres of AIDS clinics. Women with disabilities face further barriers in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Thus, a gender perspective must be taken alongside a disability perspective. Acknowledging that gender based violence is not restricted solely to women, gender based violence, access to appropriate reproductive health care, and lack of agency to negotiate condom use makes women with disabilities some of those with the highest risk of infection.²

<p>Statistical</p>	<p>1 in 10 of the world's population is estimated to have some form of disability; the World Bank estimates that in the poorest communities this figure is as high as 20%. It is also known that people with disabilities are more at risk than the general population of contracting HIV and less likely to have access to treatment³. This means, that if we ignore disability in the fight against HIV and AIDS, we effectively exclude 10% of the population.</p> <p>Persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence and rape and have less access to the justice system for redress, and also to health care systems to be able to obtain post exposure prophylaxes⁴</p> <p>Literacy rates among people experiencing disability are as low as 3%⁵ and persons with disabilities often lack information on reproductive health. In a study done among 204 adolescents with hearing impairments and who were deaf, 62% of them believed that people who were married were not susceptible to HIV⁶</p> <p>For more facts and figures on HIV/AIDS and disability, please visit http://globalsurvey.med.yale.edu/facts.html</p>
	<p>According to Article 25 of the recently adopted UN Convention</p>

¹ The Africa Campaign for HIV AIDs and Disability. 2008. <http://www.africacampaign.info/>

² Zewdie, Heumann, Groce: The Global Survey of Disability, HIV and AIDS. <http://globalsurvey.med.yale.edu/>

³ Zewdie, Heumann, Groce, (op.cit.)

⁴ Groce, N., Trasi, R.: Rape of Individuals with Disability: AIDS and the Folk Belief of Virgin Cleansing. The Lancet, 2004;363(9422):1664.

⁵ Helander E :Prejudice and dignity—an introduction to community based rehabilitation, 2nd Edition. New York: UNDP. 1998

⁶ Luckner, J., Gonzales, B. R.: What Deaf And Hard-Of-Hearing Adolescents Know And Think. American Annals of the Deaf, v138 n4 p338-42 Oct 1993

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Legal	<p>on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UNCRPD), all individuals living with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the same range of free or affordable healthcare and programmes as provided for any other person. This will include access to all preventative and treatment programmes for HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) (18.12.2006)</p> <p>The DCI calls for involvement of all sections of society, including people with disabilities and requires EC financial support for measures which increase access to and provision of health services for persons with disabilities⁷.</p>
Political	<p>HIV/AIDS is recognised by the EC Guidance Note on Disability and Development⁸ as a key issue for persons with disabilities. Their particular vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and their systematic exclusion from information, prevention and treatment programmes is noted.</p>

⁷ EC: The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), 2006,
<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lyb/l14173.htm>

⁸ EC: EC Guidance Note on Disability and Development. 2004.

http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/publications/docs/Disability_en.pdf