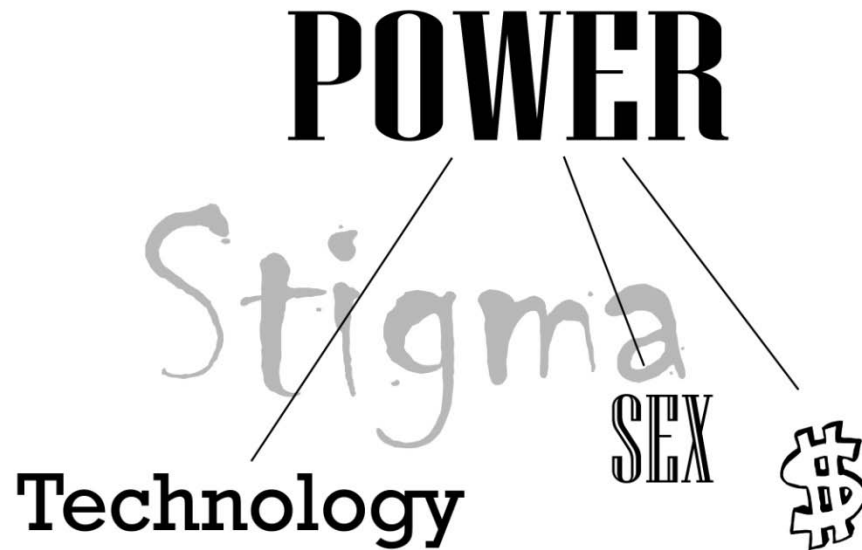


HIV + Women in Southern Africa



Lisa VeneKlasen, JASS
AWID Forum, Power of Movements, November 2008

What's the problem with the current HIV/AIDS agenda?

- **Medicalization of HIV/AIDS:** no attention to underlying (REAL) causes of inequality; corporate & magic bullet solutions sideline practical social justice ones
- **Dominant powers exclude women's perspectives** about prevention & treatment & thus, policy fails to reach or serve women
- **Poverty, collapsed public health systems**
- **Conservative political/religious agendas** control policy - negative impacts on women, LGBT, sexworkers esp.

Alternatives?

- How can women continue to re-politicize + reclaim the HIV/AIDS agenda with allies?
(Remember: African women were the pioneers on AIDS responses in the 1980s!)
- How do we re-energize and strengthen feminist movements & agendas to integrate HIV/AIDS, sex and sexuality into broader, holistic agendas?

The “opportunity” of HIV/AIDS for women’s movements

- Magnifying glass to understand interconnected ways gender injustice operates within, between and outside us (class, race, sexuality, location, etc)
- Strategies & issues it brings together – from service to awareness to mobilization - hold all the elements of movement-building process
- Opportunities for new alliances & chance to take on taboos (sex) undermining basic freedoms for many

Reclaiming HIV/AIDS: power

Solutions must be grounded in an understanding of power dynamics shaping women's experience with HIV/AIDS and possibilities for action and change

Power over

vs. Power to, within, with

Power over –how does it operate?

Visible power: making & enforcing rules (laws, policies, budgets that fail to take women into account; decisionmaking where women are not represented)

Hidden power: setting the agenda (political forces that use resources to control decisionmaking + prevent women's agendas from reaching the table)

Invisible power: shaping meaning, values & “what's normal”; our internalized roles; oppression (stigma; shame; denial; sexual taboos that confuse)

Our political actions vs exclusionary tactics

Visible power: lobbying, research, policy engagement

Exclusion – cooptation of our time & agendas, controlling policy spaces to use our “participation” without dealing with our issues

Hidden power: organizing, mobilizing, leadership dev, alliances;
communications-media: name and shame using power of numbers

Exclusion -- undermining our message / delegitimizing leaders & views

Invisible power: questioning, awareness, reflection, confidence, political analysis, hope, love; understanding privilege-difference;

Exclusion -- controlling beliefs & information; causing social isolation; fundamentalist religious beliefs; consumerism; individualism vs. collective; divide & conquer

HIV/AIDS Technology: current & women's additions

Visible power:

Condoms, ARVs, male
circumcision

ABCs

Hidden:

Big pharma, conservative
religious groups

Even potential allies (INGOs
doing HIV/AIDS, etc.)

Invisible:

Reinforces women's shame/
lack of control over sex
& reproductive rights

Women's agendas:

Microbicides, female condom
Research on new treatments

Mobilize to name & shame:
e.g. TAC; visibility

Persuade-link with funders &
strong LGBT groups who
are natural allies

Raising our awareness of our
bodies; confronting taboos
about sex; educating the
public; feeling & exercising
our rights

HIV/AIDS & Money

Visible power:

Global Fund, G-8, govts
Healthcare privatization
Home based care (HBC) that exploits women's unpaid labor & roles

Hidden:

pharma, conservative religious groups,
international financials (aid & trade)
Big NGOs

Invisible:

Reinforces women's "lack of control over sexuality" & lack of voice;
sense of powerlessness

Women's: Funding for women's rights-based programs for ARVs & technol; change macro-econ policy / IFIs to resource public health, livelihoods & land; anti-violence; ensure HBC women are paid/ supported & recognized

Mobilize to demand & influence donors, INGOs

Alliances with land, debt groups; with donors/ LGBT/ sex workers/ unions

Research & action to track the money (budgets, etc.)

Women's to learn to track budgets, demand \$\$, rights education confidence-building, organizing; media; messages

HIV/AIDS, Sex & Stigma

Where feminist perspectives make a big difference & voice of +women essential:

- Power within: Awareness-raising strategies on sexuality, sexual & repro rights – taking on taboos; privilege
- Power to: Leadership, organizing around addressing needs, voice
- Creative media strategies using real life stories & making roles & demands visible

HIV/AIDS: a global women's movement-building agenda

- Addressing practical needs & rights
- Multiple actors & strategies at all levels of decisionmaking
- Linked Local & Global action: GLOCAL
- Integrated agenda: economic-political-social
- Alliances with LGBT, sexworkers, labor unions...
- Most affected at the heart of the movement
- Vision: hope, justice, power & love

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November 16th, 2008

AWID Forum, Cape Town

South Africa