



Foto: Swiss Red Cross

AIDS and Livelihoods – Securing property and inheritance rights

Children who lose their parents, widows and grandmothers left to take care of children and grandchildren often face serious challenges in securing their livelihoods. The reasons for this have socio-economic and cultural dimensions, with traditional, customary and formal inheritance arrangements often favouring men and excluding women and minors. Women can find themselves stripped of assets upon the dissolution of a marriage or the death of a spouse. Lack of access to, and use of, property such as land, leaves many extremely vulnerable and trapped in an ever-deepening cycle of poverty and powerlessness.

“Widows are frequently victims of land grabbing and generally live in poverty, which affects their ability and time to look after their children and to feed them, both in quantity and in quality.”

The laws and customs of inheritance and control of resources magnify underlying societal and gender inequalities. HIV/AIDS is exacerbating the situation by placing many more women and children in this position than ever before. Furthermore, stigma and discrimination compound the marginalisation of entire households when a family member dies of AIDS. Human Rights Agencies working to mitigate this situation identify three groups which are disproportionately affected – children, women and the elderly.

At community level partner organisations of aidsfocus.ch are faced with these issues and are developing innovative strategies to enable women affected by HIV to exercise their rights and challenge existing power structures and cultural norms. The recent Technical Consultation on Gender, Property Rights and Livelihoods in the Era of AIDS moderated by the Food and Agriculture Organisation FAO (November 2007) demonstrates the urgency of the issue for all organizations working in the field of development cooperation.

We invite partners of aidsfocus.ch and representatives of Swiss NGOs working in international cooperation as well as of any other interested institution to attend. The conference will be held in English.

Program

9.00	Arrival, coffee and tea
9.15	Welcome and Introduction by Helena Zweifel, coordinator aidsfocus.ch
	Dr. Kaori Izumi, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Rome Property grabbing from women and children in the context of AIDS - a symptom of deepening poverty and changing cultural norms
	Mercy Wahome, Society of Women and AIDS in Kenya (SWAK), Kenya Securing property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. Action and advocacy – community and national level
10.45	Coffee break
11.15	Maimuna Kanyamala, Kivulini Women's Rights Organization, Tanzania "SASA!" Women, violence and HIV/AIDS. Innovative strategies from grassroots activism (with film)
	Frank Mischo, Kindernothilfe Deutschland, Germany A doubled traumatic experience: Children loose their parents and homes. Field experiences from an HIV/AIDS-Project with an holistic approach in Uganda
12.30	Lunch
13.45	Working Groups on key issues 1. AIDS and livelihoods: Progress and directions in international policy 2. Formal versus traditional law: Choices and chances for women 3. Integrating health and livelihoods with the focus on children: Challenges and opportunities
15.00	Coffee break
15.30– 16.45	Where to go from here: key messages Evaluation and farewell

Further information: www.aidsfocus.ch

Venue: Kornhausforum, Kornhausplatz 18, 3011 Bern, <http://www.kornhausforum.ch>

Conference fee: For partners of aidsfocus.ch: CHF 50.-. Others: CHF 80.-

Coordination: Helena Zweifel, aidsfocus.ch/ Medicus Mundi Switzerland

Advisory group: Monika Kaempf (Swiss Red Cross), Helen Prytherch (Swiss Tropical Institute), Rao Satapati (CO-OPERAID) and Barbara Schär.

The conference is financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Registration for the aidsfocus.ch conference 2008

Name

Organisation

Address

E-mail

I would like to participate in the following working group:

Please send back your registration by 1 April 2008, by mail or by e-mail to: aidsfocus.ch, Medicus Mundi Switzerland, Murbacherstrasse 34, 4013 Basel, or: info@aidsfocus.ch. Your participation will be confirmed.