



LET'S GET TALKING ABOUT THE WORLD YWCA AND ICW'S
SECOND KEY CHALLENGE
AT THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT, KENYA 2007

The World YWCA and ICW say

Let's Talk About: 'Affordable Healthcare and Treatment'



World YWCA

We will hear these words many times in Nairobi. HIV positive women challenge us to think deeply about them.

For HIV positive women knowledge of and universal access to affordable healthcare and treatment are vital. However, knowledge and access are not enough!

We must all – from governments and organisations, to individuals - understand and take seriously the contexts in which people live. Realities such as poverty, inequality, male violence, and internalised feelings of inferiority affect all women. They also create barriers to HIV positive women taking control of their lives, accessing health care and adhering to treatment. Stigma and discrimination within and without the health care system creates an additional obstacle that can put health care out of our reach.

- *Most of us live far from clinics. We travel by foot because we lack transport or money to pay for transport, including bicycle services to town. (ICW member, Tanzania)*
- *I am afraid of taking ARVs because they require a life long commitment, and as an HIV positive woman in a very poor country like Nepal there is no guarantee of receiving a permanent supply. (ICW member, Nepal)*
- *Because of the poverty that exists among people that live with HIV in Mexico, people sell their ARVs to pay for water, electricity, rent and food and sometimes to pay for medical attention because it's not totally free in our country. (ICW member, Mexico)*
- *A huge number of girls had dropped out of school to take care of their parents or relatives and women were burdened by foregoing their own needs when caring for loved ones or the sick in the community. (ICW member Namibia)*
- *We have started a legal action against the government in order to achieve universal access to treatment for all PLWAs. (ICW member, Dominican Republic)*

We want policy makers, health professionals, government bodies, and grass roots organisations to take on the many different meanings of our lives. We want the International Women's Summit on HIV and AIDS to make a genuine and deep attempt to listen to us, learn from us, work with us. Let's get talking.

Talking Points

- What does universal access mean?
- How do we address the barriers such as gender inequalities, stigma and discrimination and economic disempowerment that HIV positive women face in accessing and using affordable treatments and health care?
- How much responsibility should HIV positive women take for their own health needs? How can women empower themselves and take their own health seriously?

The World YWCA and ICW challenge: Are young HIV positive women being included at every level in all discussions and planning around access to affordable healthcare and treatment?

To find out more visit our websites: www.icw.org and <http://www.worldywca.info>