

Poverty and HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a disease that affects the health, social, and economic status of women. Women now account for almost half of all cases of HIV/ AIDS. In countries with high prevalence rates, young women are at higher risk of contracting HIV than young men.

Research shows that limited access to information and low income levels dramatically increase the risk of HIV infection, particularly among women.

The West African nation of Niger is the second poorest country in the world, according to UN Human Development Indicators. More than 50 percent of the population lives in absolute poverty, on less than US 40 cents per day. The majority of women's labor in the home and fields is unpaid, and the rural poor have little access to banking or credit facilities. Because only 4 percent of Niger's land is arable, men seek work in neighboring countries for a portion of each year; then return home for a portion of each year often with HIV/AIDS. In the Bouza District of the Tahoua Department (state) in Southern Niger more than 80 percent of households take part in this massive migration. The impact of HIV/AIDS is so devastating here, the district is known as "the Valley of the Widows" because of the high number of young married men who have died in recent years.

Women of Niger



We see our husbands with wives of men who have died of AIDS. What can we do? If we say no to sex, they'll say pack and go. If we do, where do we go to?

[Read stories from the women of Niger.](#)



Zonta International's Response

CARE International Mata Masu Dubara (Women on the Move):

Microcredit and Health Education for HIV/AIDS -Affected Women in Niger

Recognizing that HIV/AIDS and poverty are inextricably linked, CARE International is working to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS while providing care and support for those affected, and to find lasting solutions to wider social and economic problems that exacerbate the AIDS crisis.

Through financial support from the Zonta International Foundation, the CARE project in the Bouza District of Niger will focus on reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS and its physical, social, and economic consequences for at least 5,100 women and their families in the Bouza District of Niger by the year 2008. The project will provide HIV/AIDS education, self-esteem and negotiation skills training, and support networks of female peers, centered on the establishment of all-female savings groups.

Until there is a cure, strategies such as increasing women's income, status and decision-making power are the most powerful weapons in the fight against AIDS.

2006-2008 Project Description

[Fact Sheet: HIV/AIDS and MicroCredit](#)

[Women Helping Women Their Stories](#)

Links

[The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS](#)

[Year of MicroCredit](#)

[Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS](#)

[2004-2006 Project Archives](#)