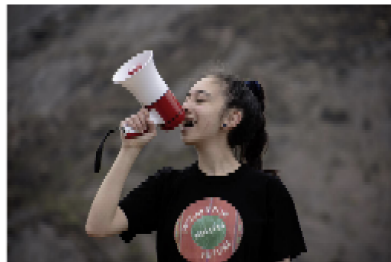




International Day of the Girl 2022: “Our time is now — our rights, our future”



UNICEF | October 2022

In 2022, we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Day of the Girl (IDG). In these last 10 years, there has been increased attention on issues that matter to girls amongst governments, policymakers and the general public, and more opportunities for girls to have their voices heard on the global stage. Yet, investments in girls' rights remain limited and girls continue to confront a myriad of challenges to fulfilling their potential; made worse by concurrent crises of climate change, COVID-19 and humanitarian conflict.

New STI guidelines zooms in on screening



Health E News | 7 October 2022

The latest guidelines on managing the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STI) focus on the importance of screening, a shift that has been welcomed by experts. Published by the South African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHIVSOC) last month, the guidelines reflect its mission to move toward “evidence-based and expert endorsed best practice in STI care in Southern Africa”. Over 10 000 health workers with an interest in HIV belong to the organisation. South Africa has a high burden of STIs. Dr Alex de Voux, from the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Cape Town, said that there is limited availability of statistics in the country. This is because infections are not counted as individual cases. As a surveillance system in the country, within the public health system, they diagnose syndromes instead. This limits the understanding of the true burden of STIs because the information is only available through certain settings and from certain key populations.

EQUALIZE

UNAIDS | 10 October 2022

The inequalities which perpetuate the AIDS pandemic are not inevitable; we can tackle them. This World AIDS Day, 1 December, UNAIDS is urging each of us to address the inequalities which are holding back progress in ending AIDS. The “Equalize” slogan is a call to action. It is a prompt for all of us to work for the proven practical actions needed to address inequalities and help end AIDS.

World Mental Health Day: Most kids don't get the help they need

Health E News | 10 October 2022

Almost two-thirds of South Africa's children are facing their mental health problems alone; avoiding help or treatment when they need it most. And experts believe the only way to address this worrying trend is to become more vigilant about their children's behaviour. Bongani Ndlovu, a 15-year-old from Soweto, knows what it's like to feel all alone. "What breaks me is the fact that no one in my family noticed that I wasn't okay. This means that I'm alone and have no one to turn to during this time," said the teen. He said he never healed after he was mugged and his cell phone taken away for months. Michel'le Donnelly, Project Leader for Advocacy & Awareness at the South African Federation for Mental Health (SAFMH), said that 10% of children and adolescents worldwide experience a mental disorder, but most don't seek help or the care that they require.

With new infections 1 million higher than the 2020 target, UNAIDS and partners convene emergency meeting on HIV prevention

UNAIDS | 10 October 2022

New HIV infections are rising in an alarming number of countries, regions and cities around the world. There were 1.5 million new HIV infections in 2021—1 million higher than the 2020 target of 500 000. To support countries in driving down new infections UNAIDS and partners have brought together HIV prevention experts and implementers from the 28 countries with the highest rates of new infections to establish why they are failing to decline at scale, to discuss solutions and to help countries set ambitious prevention targets.

'Investing in girls is investing in our common future': UN chief

United Nations | 10 October 2022

“When girls are supported to realize their human rights, they can reach their potential and create a better world for themselves, their communities and societies”, Secretary-General António Guterres said in his message. He pointed out that when they can be in school, “they are more likely to lead healthy, productive and fulfilling lives”. With the right access to healthcare, “they grow up with greater self-confidence and bodily autonomy”; and when girls understand their rights - including the right to live without the threat of violence - “they are more likely to stay safe and report abuse”.

Addressing girl's and women's mental health

Twitter | 10 October 2022

It will be impossible to significantly 'bend the curve' and end the #HIV epidemic without altering our approach to diagnosing and addressing comorbid mental health (including stigma and discrimination) issues among #women and #girls. #MentalHealthDay #IDG2022

Sierra Leone targets cervical cancer mortality by vaccinating girls

Who Africa | 11 October 2022

An age-old social belief that “what goes on under the cloth should remain under the cloth” is killing women in Sierra Leone. “People are dying in silence,” says Dr Desmond Maada Kangbai, the head of the country's immunization services. He explains that most women affected by cervical cancer are not willing to talk about their condition or even present themselves for screening and thus possibly get a diagnosis early enough to change the course of the disease and their life.

Oral vs injectable contraceptives: Do your homework!

Health-e News | 11 October 2022

As teenage pregnancies continue to rise, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) need to know which contraceptive – oral or injectable – is best for them. This is despite a shortage of injectable contraceptives in the country, as revealed in the latest Stop Stockouts Survey. In South Africa, two injectable contraceptives are on offer – Noristerat (a two-monthly regimen) and Depo-Provera (given every three months). These are the most widely used forms of birth control in the country.

In South Africa, girls join forces to overcome adversity and drive change

UN Women | 11 October 2022

Across South Africa, adolescent girls and young women account for 35 percent of all new HIV infections. Gender-based violence, too, remains a pervasive issue: In 2021, Statistics South Africa released a report indicating that one in five women (21 percent) had experienced physical violence by a partner. Enter the Young Women for Life movement. Structured through local “ward cell” groups that meet, share and strategize, the movement uses group dialogues to raise awareness around HIV and to discuss issues relating to gender dynamics and the pressures that lead to transactional sexual relationships. These dialogues have formed the foundation from which young women across South Africa have been able to support and encourage each other over the past two years, as well as to strategise about social change, advocacy and financial improvement initiatives.

Disturbing rise in teenage pregnancy, child marriage, gender-based violence and HIV infection in adolescent girls in East and Southern Africa – we need to act collectively and with urgency

ReliefWeb | 11 October 2022

Girls' sheer resilience in the face of adversity is cause for celebration this International Day of The Girl Child, 11 October 2022. While East and Southern Africa has seen significant progress in strengthening girls and young women's sexual and reproductive health, they remain vulnerable to child marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence and HIV infection.

Science champion wants to see more young women in STEM

University World News – South Africa | 13 October 2022

A 25-year-old student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in South Africa has been channelling her love for science into nearby communities where she is raising awareness about careers for women in science and providing information to girls about fields of study in the sciences. “I was uninformed about the various careers that existed in science. I completed [my first and second degrees] with good grades because I fell in love with lab work and my research project on HIV drugs and mutations. “I then applied for a pharmacy degree and enrolled in 2020. It has been the best decision of my academic career,” said Kunene.

Intimate partner violence impedes ARV treatment adherence among adolescents – study



City Press | 13 October 2022

Intimate partner violence and other forms of violence are said to impede adolescents and young adults living with HIV from accessing antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. This is according to award-winning research into ARV treatment adherence, led by the University of Cape Town's (UCT) PhD candidate Siyanai Zhou and Professor Lucie Cluver.



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