

# Grassroots Experiences with Local AIDS Responses in Africa





A Global Network of Grassroots Women's Organizations from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern and Western Europe and North America aiming:

- To strengthen women's participation in community development
- To help urban and rural grassroots women's groups identify and share successful development approaches through peer exchange
- To focus international attention on grassroots women's needs and capabilities
- To increase opportunities for local women's groups and leaders to network directly across national boundaries





# Huairou Commission

*Forges Strategic Partnerships to Advance the Capacity of  
Grassroots Women Worldwide to Strengthen and Create  
Sustainable Communities*

## Member Networks

### Thematic Campaigns:

AIDS

Disaster

Land and Secure Tenure

Post-Conflict

Governance (Cross-  
Cutting)

- GROOTS International

- ICIWF (Information  
Center of the Independent  
Women's Forum—Russia)

- FEMUM (Federation of  
Women Local Authorities—  
Latin America and  
Caribbean)

- Habitat International  
Coalition: Women and  
Shelter

- Asian Women and  
Shelter Network

- International  
Council of Women

- Women and Shelter  
Network: Latin  
America and  
Caribbean

- Women and Cities  
International

# GROOTS International Members in Africa

- *Cameroon*: Common Initiative Group of the Women Farmers of Bogso and Ntankah Village Women Common Initiative Group
- *Kenya*: GROOTS Kenya
- *Nigeria*: International Women's Communication Center
- *Rwanda*: Rwanda Women's Network
- *Uganda*: Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC)
- Also network with groups in *Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa and Ghana*



# Grassroots Responses to AIDS

**Women are holding together their communities by...**

## ORGANIZING THROUGH:

### Home- Based Care:

- Train families to care for the sick
- Psychosocial Counseling
- Physical Care
- Bring food and medicine
- Nutritional Counseling and Food Security
- Care for Orphans

### Stigma Reduction

### Awareness Raising

### Support Groups:

- Widows
- Home-Based Caregivers
- People with AIDS
- Orphans and other Vulnerable Children

### Peer Learning

Partnerships with Local Leaders, Churches, Mayors

### Advocacy

Federating Affected Grassroots Communities

Income-Generation

# Grassroots Networking and Peer Learning

- Through peer learning and exchange, grassroots women are able to share experiences, practices, and innovative solutions to the challenges they confront.
- Peer learning takes place through:
  - Regional, In-Country Exchanges
  - At meetings and Events such as Grassroots Women's International Academies



# Grassroots Peer Learning continued

- Grassroots women in Africa are now forming a Home-Based Care Alliance, in order to bring recognition to home-based caregivers' contribution, to create a platform for advocacy, to broaden opportunities for practice sharing, and to establish collective livelihoods to mitigate the economic drain of the AIDS pandemic
- The ability for grassroots women in Africa to connect regionally and globally through GROOTS international and Huairou Commission is instrumental for successful advocacy

# Successful Advocacy and Resource Access Practices

In addition to providing palliative care and support to AIDS-affected communities, Grassroots Women—Home-Based Caregivers—are acting as advocates and monitors of Local AIDS Councils and are, in some places, able to access their funds. Successful practices include:

GROOTS Kenya has initiated what is emerging to be a successful partnership with local authorities, grassroots communities and members of the Constituency AIDS Control Council to form a team to map and monitor the flow of funds into communities



# Successful Advocacy Practices continued

- In Rwanda, the Rwanda Women's Network was able to access MAP funds directly because the World Bank elected to establish guidelines and mandate a National Program Management Unit to identify local partners—a process overseen by a WB Technical Advisory Board
- In Uganda, UCOBAC has established a role for its members—volunteer Community Health Workers—to sit on District Health Committees, facilitating the flow of resources and information to the grassroots level. While IWCC in Nigeria ensures that local HIV/AIDS Committee allows space for a community care givers.



# Challenges to Be Overcome

- While Grassroots Women's Self-Help Groups provide a major response to AIDS at the Local Level, they face exclusionary challenges in accessing funding and decision-making structures such as:
  - Politicized Planning, Implementation and Funding Mechanisms foster Corruption, Nepotism and Opportunism
  - National structures do not provide for horizontal participation and accountability.
  - Information flows from the Government to the Grassroots Level are irregular
  - Monitoring and Evaluation of National AIDS funding structures/mechanisms don't ensure participation of affected communities
  - Grassroots groups' voices are subordinated within the "civil society" mandate
  - Proposal requirements favor "established" NGOs and exclude grassroots organizations who often have limited capacity for writing

# Recommendations

Broadly, we are calling for actions that ensure the increased involvement of women's self-help groups and affected communities by changing norms and procedures of funding and decision-making processes at the local, national and global level. Our recommendations establish a dual role for communities and specifically women's self-help groups as both Implementers and Monitors of Local AIDS Responses.

# Specific Recommendations

- Allow a formal role for grassroots women's organizations (care givers) as Monitors and Evaluators of National AIDS Responses
- Ensure Democratic Processes for selecting grassroots/community representative to National and Local AIDS Authorities and formally ensure networking and consultation between groups
- Earmark and monitor a fixed minimum percentage of money to go directly to grassroots organizations
- Recognize caregivers as valued stakeholders through giving them a formal place in decision-making bodies



**Huairou Commission**



**Thank You!**