

Welcome to

**Ask the experts:  
Young leaders showcase  
gender perspectives in  
the HIV response**

# Introductions



**Sanele Ngulube**  
Zimbabwe



**Guncha Annageldiyeva**  
Turkmenistan



**Goodness Ogeyi Odey**  
Nigeria

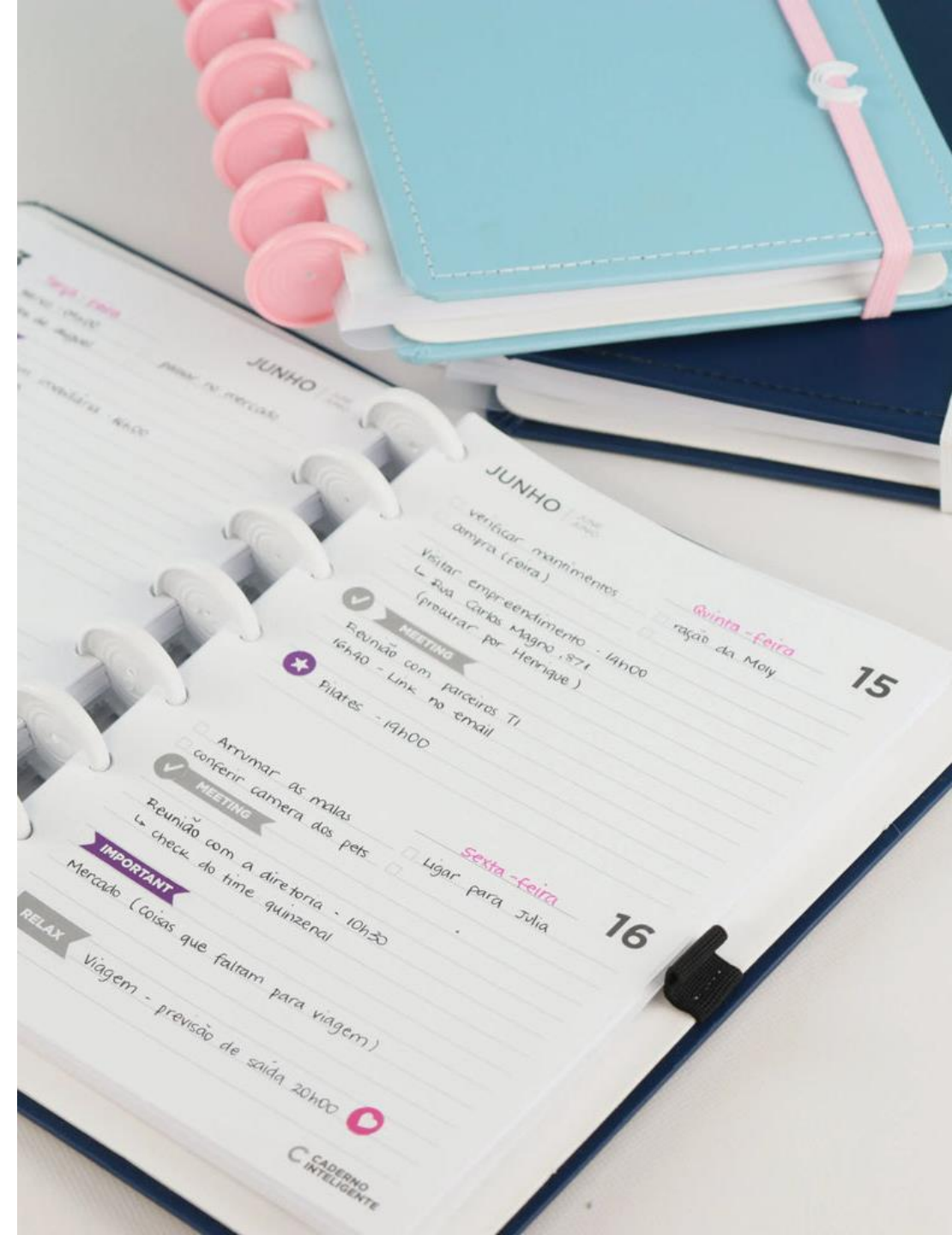
Friday, 14 March 2025



**Daria Besting**  
Switzerland

## Agenda

- First things first: Housekeeping
- Share your experience with us!
- Get to know our speakers
- Ask our panel your questions



# The global HIV landscape

- 40 million people living with HIV worldwide
- 1.3 million new acquisitions in 2023
- Gender disparities in acquisition rates and access to care



# Women and girls: disproportionately affected

- 78% of new HIV acquisitions among adolescent girls and young women occurs in western, central, eastern and southern Africa
- New acquisitions are 3x higher compared to boys and young men
- Factors: biological vulnerability, gender inequality, limited access to education



# Gender-based violence and HIV

- Direct link between violence against women and HIV vulnerability
- Need for integrated services addressing both issues



# Barriers to HIV services for women

- Stigma and discrimination
- Limited decision-making power
- Economic dependence
- Lack of gender-sensitive healthcare



# Men's engagement in HIV response

- Importance of involving men in prevention and treatment
- Addressing harmful gender norms
- Encouraging male partners' support in HIV testing and treatment





# LGBTQ+ communities and HIV

- Intersectionality of gender identity, sexual orientation, and HIV vulnerability
- Need for inclusive and non-discriminatory services



# Youth leadership in the HIV response

- Engaging young people, especially young women, as partners and leaders
- Youth-led initiatives and peer education programmes
- Building capacity for youth-led advocacy in HIV policy-making



# Call to action: gender-transformative HIV strategies

- Integrate gender perspectives into all HIV programmes and policies
- Increase funding for women-centered HIV initiatives
- Use an intersectional lens
- Promote gender equality in HIV response



# WHO ARE WE?

More than 33,000 active young members and hundreds of thousands of volunteers across regions such as the Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

The network focuses on championing various issues through the ICPD agenda.



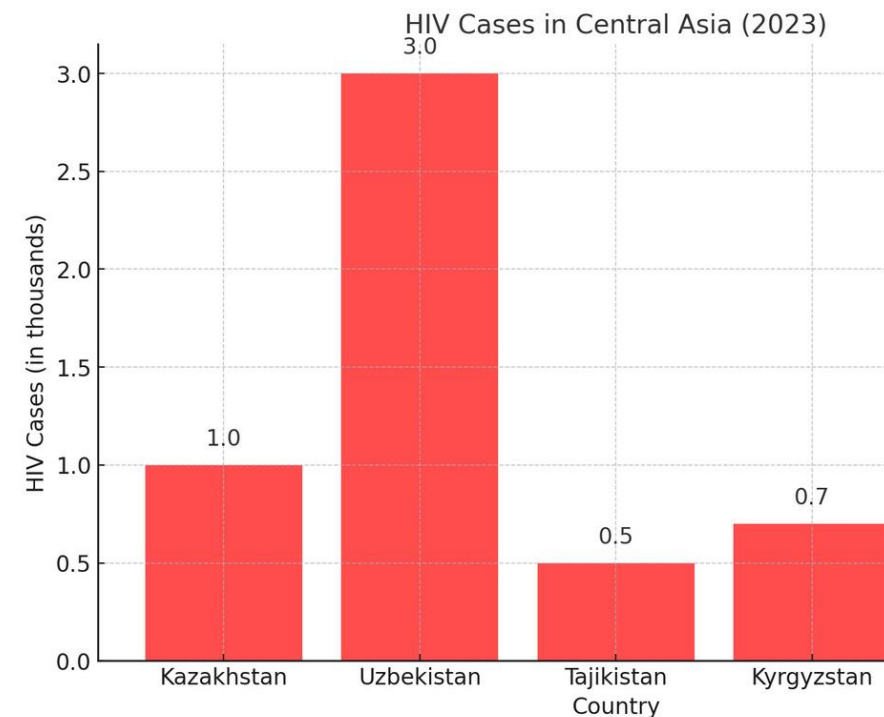
Y-PEER was pioneered by UNFPA focusing on peer education, grassroots activism, and advocacy in the fields of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), peacebuilding, youth leadership, and HIV and AIDS.

Y-PEER addresses gender-based violence (GBV) and advocates for youth participation and civic engagement.

It promotes the development of a culture of citizenship and emphasizes preparedness and emergency response efforts.

# Central Asia

- In 2023, there were 140,000 new cases of HIV in the region.
- 94% of new acquisitions in 2022 were among key populations
- Only 59% of people living with HIV know their status, and only 50% receive treatment.
- In Tajikistan, 32% of people living with HIV reported avoiding healthcare due to stigma.
- In Kyrgyzstan, nearly 50% of people who inject drugs reported avoiding healthcare for the same reason.



# Steering committee in ayKP Partnership

The adolescent and young key populations partnership brings together UN agencies, partner organizations, Young Champions for Equality and wider youth networks for joint strategic action in the HIV response for adolescents and young key populations.

A central focus of the partnership is on strengthening tools available to translate cutting edge evidence of what works to advance the holistic wellbeing of the adolescent and young key populations.

## 2023 ayKP Platform Development Process



# Creative solutions:

- Fund grassroots initiative
- Collective ownership of private
- Pharmacy companies

## For young people:

- Communicate
- Raise Awareness
- Network
- Help to each other

# Thank You





# Reflections from The Gambia SHE Project

- **Objective:** Enhance access to quality SRHR education and services
- **Target group:** Young mothers (15-24 years) at high vulnerability of HIV acquisition in the Central River Region of The Gambia
- **Reach:** 100 young mothers, 600+ community leaders and 24 healthcare workers



2024

The Gambia SHE Project

Aims at facilitating and strengthening access to quality and comprehensive sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education and services to meet the SRHR needs of young mothers and those at risk of HIV across in the central river region (CRR) of The Gambia.

**Project site:**  
Central River Region, The Gambia

The SHE Project logo features the year 2024 at the top, followed by the text 'The Gambia SHE Project'. The 'SHE' is in large, bold, black letters, with a female symbol integrated into the 'E'. Below 'SHE' is the word 'Project'. The logo is set against a light blue background. To the right of the logo is a portrait of a smiling woman wearing a colorful headscarf. At the top right, there is a small graphic of a hand holding a colorful object.

# Gender disparities observed

- Young mothers with limited education and agency
- Gender power dynamics & polygamy's role
- Structural barriers increasing vulnerability



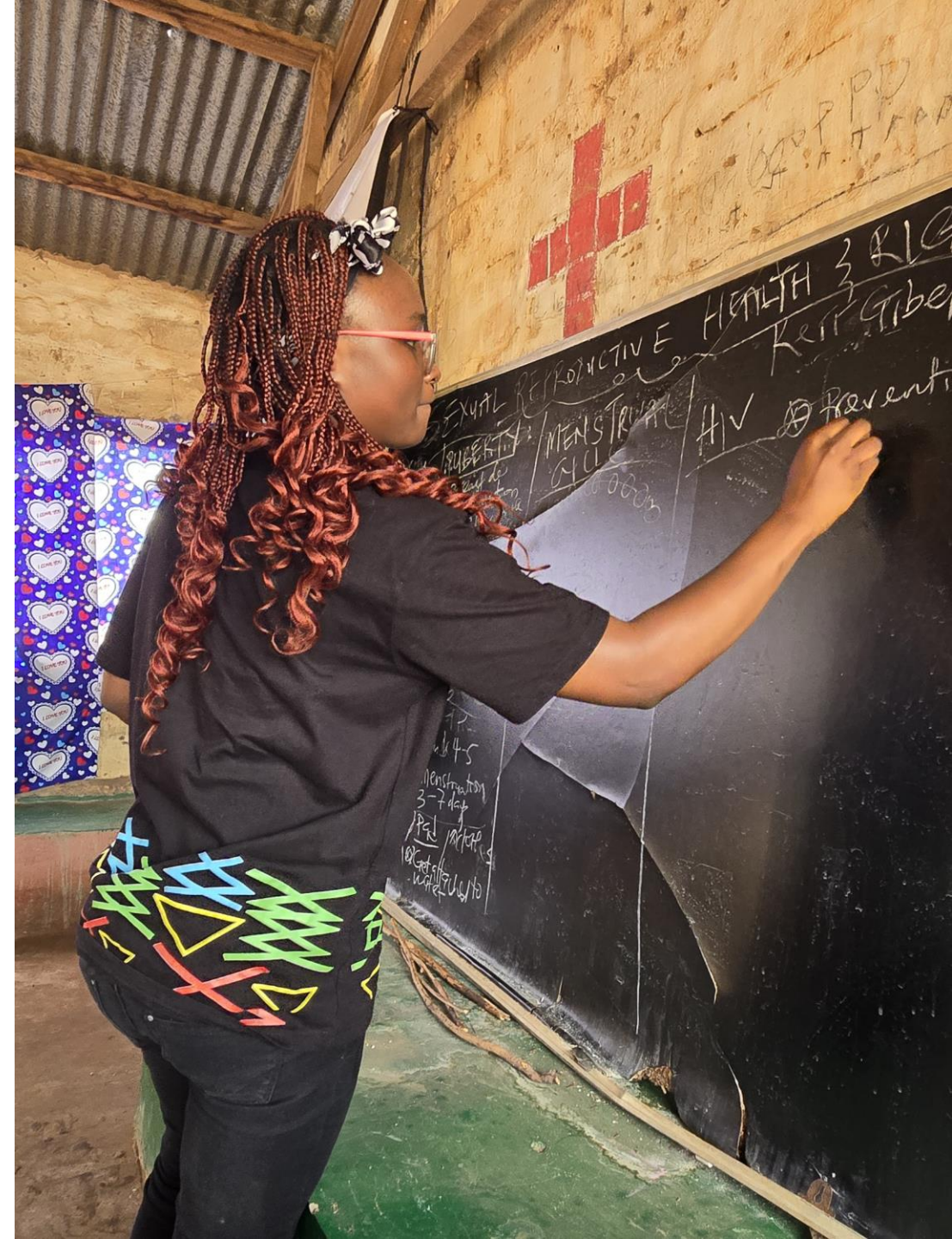
# Challenges & personal reflections

- Emotional toll of witnessing extreme vulnerability
- Existential question: Is education enough?
- The dilemma of short-term intervention vs. long-term change



# Lessons learnt & recommendations

- Integrate gender analysis
- Strengthen peer networks and community-based advocacy
- Engage community leadership
- Create integrated, multi-sectoral interventions
- Address gaps identified



# Conclusion

- Demand for comprehensive, multi-level interventions
- Resilience of young mothers in The Gambia SHE Project
- Community involvement & healthcare system strengthening as key to project success
- Need for economic empowerment & expanding education opportunities for sustainable impact





International AIDS Society

[iasociety.org](http://iasociety.org)

# Q&A with **our panel**

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