

empowher fund by aidsfonds

The EmpowerHER Fund

A collective action for an HIV free future for women and girls

The challenge

Every week, 3,300 adolescent girls and young women acquire HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa, they account for 63% of all new infections in the region.

This isn't because prevention tools don't exist. It's because they don't reach the girls and women who need them.

New HIV prevention options are expanding choice like never before. Yet for many young women and girls, that choice remains out of reach. Inequality and stigma limit their control over their own health, and those facing multiple forms of discrimination face even greater barriers. **This has to stop.**

With worldwide cuts in HIV/AIDS funding, investing in women and girls is more urgent than ever. The impact goes beyond HIV prevention; it ripples into their health, education, and economic futures.

The tools exist. Now we need to close the gap.

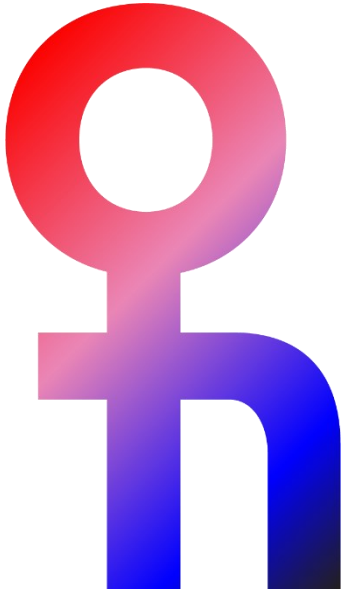


EmpowHER changes that

EmpowHER accelerates access to HIV prevention options - current ánd groundbreaking new ones - so women and girls can choose what works best for them.

Through funding cycles, we invest in women- and girls-led civil society organisations to:

- **Advocate for HIV prevention options that are easier to get, afford, and access**; like making prevention options available at pharmacies or community health workers, not just specialized clinics
- **Raise awareness and demand so more women and girls use these options;** for example, running community campaigns that explain new prevention methods in plain language
- **Support women-led movements to advocate for their own health, long-term;** for example, training local champions to lobby their governments for inclusive policies



The gap we fill

Most HIV funding focuses on procurement or government health systems. Those investments are essential, but not enough.

The EmpowHER Fund fills a critical gap:

- **Choice-centred:** women choose what fits their lives. The pill, the ring, or an injection. We are not promoting a single option
- **Prevention-first:** entirely focused on stopping new infections
- **Demand driven:** builds community demand so tools are actually used
- **Power shifting:** women lead at every level, from grantee to governance
- **Adaptive:** a learning-by-doing model that adjusts in real time
- **Feminist by design:** feminist and HIV principles shape everything from the start



Innovative funding model

EmpowHER is a pooled, catalytic fund bringing together resources from donors, to jointly close the HIV prevention gap for girls and young women across Southern and Eastern Africa.

This enables strategic investment, greater flexibility, and amplified impact in more ways than any single donor could achieve alone.

By bringing together donors, partners, and communities, the fund builds a bridge between innovation and real-world access. Aidsfonds has seeded the fund with €10 million from its own fundraising efforts among the Dutch public.

Our goal? €100 million

We are seeking co-investment through:

- Public grants
- Philanthropic funding
- Commercial partnerships
- Individual and unrestricted donations


An EmpowHER Fund grant example

A partnership between
International Community of Women Living With HIV (ICWEA) in Uganda & Advocacy for Prevention of HIV and AIDS (APHA) in South Africa

Despite multiple approved HIV prevention options in Uganda and South Africa, equitable uptake remains low. Yet, voices of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are largely absent from rollout planning, services are inconsistently youth-friendly, and provider stigma continues to deter access. Without AGYW-centred accountability and agenda-setting, new options like the Lenacapavir, risk replicating the inequities seen with earlier innovations.

Focus population: Adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity

Geographies: Mbarara, Hoima, Kampala Metropolitan (Uganda)
Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Western Cape (South Africa)

Core activities:
- Peer-led community dialogues and digital campaigns
- Healthcare provider training
- Community-led health facility monitoring
- AGYW policy advocacy and budget tracking
- Engagement with Ministries of Health and national decision-making platforms

Join the movement

Many share our ambition of an HIV-free future for women and girls, but resources remain scarce and fragmented.

By joining EmpowHER, you:

- Maximize impact while minimizing administrative burden
- Reach underfunded women-led organizations at the forefront of HIV prevention
- Support scalable, evidence-based community-driven solutions
- Join a growing global movement for gender-equitable HIV prevention
- Your investment doesn't sit alongside others, it multiplies them.

Together, we can achieve what no single donor can do alone.





Learn more about investing in the EmpowHER Fund or how you can support the movement with your knowledge, networks and other resources.

Scan the QR code, find us at www.aidsfonds.org/empowher or contact Silvia Jongeling (Fund manager) at sjongeling@aidsfonds.nl


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