



**The Global Coalition  
on Women and AIDS**

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# **EDITORIAL** STYLE GUIDE

## for GCWA publications

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) is a worldwide alliance of civil society groups, networks of women living with HIV, women's organizations, AIDS service organizations, and the United Nations system committed to strengthening AIDS programming for women and girls.

Our mission is to mobilize leadership and political will to influence laws, policies, programmes, and funding to promote action that gives girls and women the power to prevent HIV infection, and to have fulfilling and productive lives when living with HIV.

## The GCWA seeks to:

**MOBILIZE** our partners, decision makers and society at large to advance the AIDS response for women and girls at the national level;

**INFLUENCE** the national and global response by placing emerging or unaddressed issues firmly on global and national agendas;

**ACT** by reaching out to a broad array of partners to gather the technical resources needed by countries and communities to address programming challenges; and,

**EMPOWER** women and girls to participate in and influence national responses, and to build accountability for results.

## LOGO USAGE GUIDELINES

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- ▶ To ensure that all GCWA publications serve and support the mission of the GCWA
- ▶ To provide consistency of language and messaging throughout all publications – in print and on line
- ▶ To achieve high editorial standards
- ▶ To assure that texts and photos can be quickly and easily edited
- ▶ To make GCWA online content as easy to find as possible by assuring a common, core set of terms indexed by search engines

## 2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

GCWA has a special responsibility to use language carefully. Language shapes beliefs and can influence behaviours. Special care should be taken not to use language or images that reinforce stereotypes.

### GCWA strives for:

**LANGUAGE** that is clear and respectful with regard to individuals being highlighted, as well as their cultural norms and traditional practices.

**BALANCE** highlighting positive stories while stressing that the AIDS epidemic is a serious crisis.

**DIVERSITY** ensuring that the diverse voices and images of people affected by HIV and AIDS are heard and seen.

**RESPECT** for the rights of individuals with HIV and AIDS. Seek **informed** consent before intruding on anyone's privacy. By informed consent, we mean that people being identified in stories truly understand the potential consequences of appearing in our publications, particularly on line.

**All GCWA publications must protect the privacy of people.** Individuals may be at risk of reprisal or rejection in their communities as a result of agreeing to tell their story.

People living with HIV who are identified in any published content, story or photograph must read and sign the GCWA consent form at the end of this document. The **signed original** waiver form (see section 6 of this publication) **must** be sent to GCWA. Interviewees may agree to tell their story if kept anonymous. In these cases, steps should be taken to ensure that they cannot be identified by any means.

Particular care should be taken when identifying children who are affected by AIDS. UNICEF has developed principles to assist journalists reporting on issues involving children. GCWA encourages writers to familiarize themselves with these guidelines. They can be found at:

[http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_tools\\_guidelines.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html)

This and other important links are in section 5 of this document.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

### All articles published by GCWA must:

- Be related to women, girls and AIDS
- Not clash with the GCWA mission statement or Principles
- Be evidence-informed

All stories published by the GCWA should have a specific focus on results, communicating the significance and impact of the work of individuals and organizations. All stories should aim at sharing that wealth of experience and knowledge with all stakeholders.

**The GCWA prioritizes stories about people and organizations that:**

- Help illustrate a situation
- Provide conclusions and analysis that can help others achieve results
- Revolve around highlighted thematic areas and ongoing debates (theme of the month)
- Are focused at the national (country) level
- Help construct a global view of a particular problem
- Are timely – rarely (if ever) older than 3 months

Plagiarism, defined as the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of text, photos or other material in the stories you submit, will not be tolerated.

## RIGHTS

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GCWA will rarely pay for publishing or photography. Most stories will be provided by our partners' personnel in the field. Stories will be shared (that is, co-posted) on other websites as well.

GCWA will hold the copyright for all stories it does buy. Authors may request royalty-free release of those rights so they may republish elsewhere, consistent with waiver agreements signed by article subjects. For other stories, the originating organization should grant GCWA nonexclusive world rights for use of the material in all media, including but not limited to print and online distribution or inclusion in a compendium of similar material.

For photography, as noted on Section 4, GCWA will credit the photographer (usually in the photo caption) but cannot pay for our use. Our use is non-exclusive. That is, the photographer can sell the picture elsewhere unless restricted by terms of the waiver agreement signed by the subject.

**Stories published by GCWA will include header material indicating:**

**AUTHOR(S)** Written by: (writer(s) and organization(s) that provided the story)

**WHERE THE STORY CAME FROM** Ordered by (organization that originated the story)

**ORIGINAL DATE OF CREATION** In day-month-year format

**COPYRIGHT** Wherever appropriate, include a line that says "Copyright (c) 20XX, (originating organization or GCWA). All rights reserved"

**DISCLAIMER**

## DISPUTES

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An Editorial Board consisting of five members will oversee the editorial policy of the GCWA

### **Its members will:**

- Evaluate editorial policy twice a year
- Advise on potential discordances/appeals from member organizations concerning decisions to publish or not publish particular articles
- Report to the Steering Committee on a yearly basis and recommend a course of action

### **The Editorial Board is composed of:**

- GCWA communications officer
- GCWA webmaster
- One representative of the Steering Committee
- One webmaster from among partner organizations
- One communications/advocacy officer from a partner organization

## STYLE GUIDELINES

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The GCWA prefers a style that is simple and direct, clear and concise. Wherever possible, key messages should be highlighted in the layout, typically by repeating them in a larger font.

**SENTENCES** Keep sentences active – the objective of web content is to energise the reader.

Bad: The notion that HIV could be spread by insects was attacked by Lillian Smith who...

Better: The local population feared spread of HIV by insects. Lillian Smith worked to refute that idea. Her organisation started by...

### **AVOID EXCLAMATION MARKS**

**NAMES** When names are provided, use given and family names upon first mention, then use “Mr.”, “Ms.”, “Dr.”, and so forth, followed by family name for all subsequent mentions.

*For example:*

“National AIDS plans must include specific responses for girls and women,” said GCWA Director Kristan Schoultz.

**ATTRIBUTE THE NAME OF THE ORGANISATION FIRST AND THE PERSON SECOND** The attribution should specify the organisation the person represents and the job title, or role of the person concerned.

*For example:*

“The schoolchildren welcomed GCWA Director Dr. Kristan Schoultz on her arrival in...”

*Rather than:*

“The schoolchildren welcomed Dr. Kristan Schoultz, GCWA Director, on her arrival in...”

The GCWA uses “**British English**” in all publications.

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## CHECK-LIST BEFORE SUBMITTING ARTICLES TO GCWA

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- ▶ Is the article Women and AIDS related?
- ▶ Does it clash with the GCWA mission statement or Principles?
- ▶ Have all subjects in the article been given a full briefing on the possible consequences of their names being published, and have they signed a written consent to do so?
- ▶ Is it evidence-informed?
- ▶ Have facts and figures been checked?
- ▶ Have individual names and titles been checked with regard to spelling and translation into English?
- ▶ Have institutional names been checked? Have their preferred translation of names into English been confirmed?
- ▶ Are sentences short and simple?
- ▶ Are paragraphs short, no more than four sentences and 50-70 words each?
- ▶ Does it include illustrative examples that portray how an idea works in practice?
- ▶ Does it provide a list of resources for more information, such as websites or related news stories?
- ▶ Does the article have any jargon that is not clearly and plainly explained?

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## DEFINITIONS – A BASIC LIST

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**HIV** Human Immunodeficiency Virus. May be abbreviated as HIV in GCWA publications, after first mention. May be used in headlines.

**AIDS** Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, May be abbreviated as AIDS in GCWA publications, after first mention. May be used in headlines.

**HIV/AIDS; HIV AND AIDS** Use HIV unless specifically referring to AIDS. Examples include people living with HIV, HIV prevalence, HIV prevention, HIV testing, HIV-related disease, AIDS diagnosis, children made vulnerable by AIDS, children orphaned by AIDS, the AIDS response, national AIDS programme, AIDS service organisation. Both “HIV epidemic” and “AIDS epidemic” are acceptable.

**GENDER AND SEX** The term “sex” refers to biologically determined differences, whereas the term “gender” refers to differences in social roles and relations between men and women. Gender roles are learned through socialization and vary widely within and between cultures. Gender roles are also affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, as well as by geographical, economic and political environments.

For a link to more detailed definitions, see section 5 of this publication.

## PREFERRED TERMINOLOGY

DO NOT USE	USE INSTEAD
<b>AIDS virus</b>	There is no “AIDS virus”. The virus associated with AIDS is called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV. Please also note that “virus” in the phrase “HIV virus” is redundant. Use HIV.
<b>AIDS-infected</b>	Avoid the term “infected”. No one can be infected with AIDS because it is not an infectious agent. AIDS refers to a group of opportunistic infections and diseases that can develop as a person’s immune system is increasingly impaired after primary infection. Use “person living with HIV” or “HIV-positive person”.
<b>AIDS test</b>	There is no test for AIDS. Use “HIV test” or “HIV antibody test”.
<b>AIDS victim</b>	“Victims” are often considered to be those who have lost a battle. Use “person living with HIV”. Use the term “AIDS” only when referring to a person with a clinical AIDS diagnosis.
<b>AIDS patient</b>	Use the term “patient” only when referring to a clinical setting. Instead, use “individual with advanced HIV-related illness (or disease)” or “AIDS-related illness (or disease)”.
<b>Risk of AIDS</b>	Use “risk of HIV infection”; “risk of exposure to HIV”.
<b>High(er) risk groups</b>	Use “key populations at higher risk” (both key to the epidemic’s dynamics and key to the response). See also, “vulnerable groups”.
<b>Vulnerable groups</b>	Vulnerable populations are distinct from key populations. Vulnerable populations may be subject to societal pressures or social circumstances that may make them more vulnerable to exposure to infections, including HIV. See also “higher risk groups”.
<b>Commercial sex worker</b>	Use “sex worker” or “commercial sex” or “the sale of sexual services”.
<b>Prostitute</b>	Use only with respect to juvenile prostitution; otherwise use “sex worker”.
<b>Intravenous drug user</b>	Use “injecting drug user”. Drugs may be injected subcutaneously (under the skin), intramuscularly (into a muscle) or intravenously (into the bloodstream, almost always into a vein).
<b>Sharing (needles, syringes)</b>	Say “using non-sterile injecting equipment” if referring to risk of HIV exposure; say “using contaminated injecting equipment” if the equipment is known to contain HIV or if HIV transmission has occurred.
<b>Fight against AIDS</b>	Use “response to AIDS”.
<b>Evidence-based</b>	Use “evidence-informed”.
<b>HIV prevalence rate</b>	Use “HIV prevalence”. The word “rate” connotes the passage of time and should not be used in most instances.
<b>Acronyms and abbreviations</b>	Don’t use them. As noted earlier, spell out all terms in full the first time.

## 3 ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

Online publications include the GCWA website, newsletters, e-alerts, and blogs, and new forms of online communications that are evolving, such as social communications networks (Facebook, etc.).

The GCWA website ([www.womenandaids.net](http://www.womenandaids.net)) has been conceived as a hub where users can find recent and practical information related to the response for women and AIDS. The website is not a repository of information nor aims to become a portal. Its added value is that it is specific to the needs of girls and women. This specificity filters what is published.

The GCWA website will link to a growing group of other portals and resource centers for all other information, acting as a hub for information search, including the GCWA partner websites.

This same focus on girls and women applies to other online GCWA publications.

### SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE STORIES

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#### **Specific rules apply to online publications in order to:**

- Assure that stories can be quickly and easily edited
- Assure that stories can be easily indexed by search engines such as Google
- Maintain the attention of readers
- Assure consistency over time

**TITLE AND OPENING PARAGRAPH** Like in a well written newspaper, the title and opening paragraph should clearly explain the topic of the story to encourage readers to continue reading.

**HEADLINE / TITLE** Use key words in the headline. For example, if the story is about a local activist, the headline should include the words “local activist”. If the story is about a mitigation strategy, the headline should include the word “strategy”.

**SHORT INTRODUCTORY TEXT FOR HOMEPAGE** This summary may appear on the homepage and should draw the reader in. If it does not get the reader excited about your story, the reader will go elsewhere.

## 4 PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs must be submitted complete with full captions that include details of the subjects, location and date and a photo credit.

**CONSENT** All photos including those of HIV+ individuals must be accompanied by a signed permission form (see section 6 of this publication). This form can be downloaded from our website [www.womenandaids.net](http://www.womenandaids.net). The **signed original** waiver form (see section 6 of this publication) **must** be sent to GCWA. Photos of people living with HIV that are not accompanied by the signed permission form will not be used. Interviewees may agree to tell their story if kept anonymous. In these cases, steps should be taken to ensure that they cannot be identified by any means.

**FORMAT** Photographs should be submitted digitally in a standard format such as JPEG (preferred), PNG or TIFF at 800x400 pixels.

**QUALITY** Photographs of poor quality may not be published. Before submitting photos make sure to follow the check-list:

- ▶ The photo is not overexposed.
- ▶ Bright light does not force the subject to squint.
- ▶ You have avoided deep shadows by using the camera's flash.
- ▶ The subject is not photographed against a bright window or other light.

**FRAMING** Usually, photos should be taken from 1 to 5 metres away. If the framing of the picture is poor, we may not be able to use it.

**SUBJECT** Photographs should show the subject in action – at the desk (working, not staring at the camera) or in a hospital or at a rally or just on the street with community life in the background.

**CREDITS** GCWA will credit the photographer (usually in the photo caption) but cannot pay for our use. Our use is non-exclusive. That is, the photographer can sell the picture elsewhere unless restricted by terms of the waiver agreement signed by the subject.

## 5 USEFUL RESOURCES

### **NINE PRINCIPLES FOR ETHICAL WRITING ON AIDS**

<http://www.journaids.org/ethics.php>

### **UNAIDS TERMINOLOGY GUIDELINES**

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual/2007/20070328\\_unaids\\_terminology\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual/2007/20070328_unaids_terminology_guide_en.pdf)

### **UNICEF GUIDELINES FOR MENTIONS OF CHILDREN IN STORIES**

[http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_tools\\_guidelines.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html)

### **GCWA STYLE GUIDE**

<http://www.womenandaids.net>

### **WHO STYLE GUIDE**

[http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2004/WHO\\_IMD\\_PUB\\_04.1.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2004/WHO_IMD_PUB_04.1.pdf)



## 6 WRITTEN CONSENT AND DISCLAIMER

### OBTAINING CONSENT

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When possible, establish a relationship before you start asking questions or taking photos. When you approach subjects in the field, briefly introduce yourself, be courteous, and explain the purpose of your visit or the reason you want to ask questions or take photos. In clinical contexts, speak with clinical director before you begin photographing health Workers or clients (asking also their permission to be photographed). e.g. “I am taking photos/preparing a story for the GCWA. Do I have your permission to take your photo/quote you on my article?”

If you don't speak the same language, communicate via an interpreter or with your body language. At the very least, smile, nod, and point to your camera before shooting.

- If you sense any reluctance, confusion, or disdain, refrain from taking the photo / asking questions.
- Respect a person's right to refuse to be photographed / quoted.
- If you are travelling with someone who speaks the local language, ask him or her to translate your request for consent.
- Identify an adult who is legally authorized give you consent on behalf of children.

### WRITTEN CONSENT

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Written documents may have little or no meaning to people who speak a different language, people of low literacy, and people who live in cultures where photography or publications are not common. Therefore, GCWA requires journalists and photographers submitting materials for GCWA to:

- Prepare consent forms ahead of time in the local language of the area they will be visiting.
- If you are unable to prepare written consent forms in the local language, orally translate the consent form to your photo subjects. Use an interpreter if necessary.

### WHEN IS CONSENT NOT NEEDED?

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You don't need to obtain consent in the following cases (except as otherwise provided in this document).

- Non-recognizable individuals in public (or where faces and all other identifying features are obscured)
- Public figures in public (e.g. celebrities, government officials at conferences or launches)
- Crowds in public (e.g. crowd at busy street market)

## CONSENT

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I, the Undersigned, voluntarily agree that I and/or the minor named below (of whom I am the legal representative) be photographed and/or interviewed by a reporter acting for or on behalf of the GCWA.

I hereby irrevocably grant the GCWA (Global coalition on Women and AIDS) permission to freely use, reproduce, publish and distribute (or have used, reproduced, published and distributed) the photograph(s) taken of me, or the minor named below (of whom I am the legal representative), in any format and through any medium whatsoever, to promote the activities of the GCWA and the fight against HIV/AIDS, including but not limited to publications, posters, audio-visual materials, web pages, and publicity material concerning the same. In connection with the foregoing, I agree that the GCWA will -at its discretion- have the right to change, edit and/or treat the photograph(s), provided that my image, or the image of the minor named below, and/or the setting in which the photograph(s) were taken, are not misrepresented.

I hereby furthermore grant the GCWA the right to superimpose text or quotations on the photograph(s). In this eventuality, UNAIDS will add the following disclaimer to these photograph(s): “The text printed on the photograph(s) does not necessarily represent the opinion, views or the beliefs of the person depicted.”

By ticking “yes” or “no” at the end of this sentence, I indicate whether or not I grant the GCWA permission to use my name in captions that appear with my image:

YES

NO

If I do not tick any box, I should be deemed to have withheld such permission.

I understand that the photographs will become the property of the GCWA. The photographs may be used by the GCWA, without any further consultation with me, for the above-mentioned purposes, free of charge, in any and all countries of the world.

I confirm that the content of this consent form has been explained to me, and that I fully understand its meaning.

**NAME:** .....

**DATE:** .....

**MINOR'S NAME:** .....

**PARENT OR GARDIAN'S NAME:** .....

**FULL ADDRESS:** .....

**SIGNATURE:** .....

THIS BOX FOR PHOTOGRAPHER'S USE

**PHOTOGRAPHER NAME:** .....

**PROJECT:** .....

**FILE NAME/FRAME #:** .....

**FOLDER NAME/FILM ROLL ID:** .....

**CAPTION/NOTES:** .....

**DATE:** .....

It is the responsibility of the photographer or videographer to obtain signed release forms and to send these records to the GCWA Secretariat in Geneva. Please return all completed copies to:

Andrés A. López  
Communications Adviser  
The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA)  
20, Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland  
Telephone: +41 (0)22 791 4724, Email: [media@womenandaids.net](mailto:media@womenandaids.net)



**DISCLAIMER**


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This disclaimer should be used on a GCWA or partner publication which carries the logo of the GCWA.

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The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) is a worldwide alliance of civil society groups, networks of women living with HIV, women's organizations, AIDS service organizations, and the United Nations system, committed to strengthening AIDS programming for women and girls. Our mission is to mobilize leadership and political will to influence laws, policies, programmes, and funding to promote action that gives girls and women the power to prevent HIV infection, and to live fulfilling and productive lives when living with HIV.