



Lucy

Facts about HIV and sexuality

- Globally, new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women are substantially higher than among males of the same age
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime
- Sexual education can prevent unplanned pregnancies
- Sexual education teaches youth to take measures to prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections

I am 1 in 3

1 in 3 women experience physical and sexual violence in their lifetime.

I am one in the three who experienced sexual violence at a very young age. It was from a teacher.

I never told anyone back then, I was only 8 years old and the next best person that I trusted enough to tell started doing the same. When we had a science class to learn about the vagina and the penis as reproductive organs, I was mostly scared of mine because it brought pain and heartache and it made people you trusted untrustworthy. I was not sure what both these men did but I knew it was not right, even without penetration.

The next time we had a class on STIs, I was scared stiff that I could be having all the STIs mentioned. I still had no one who felt safe enough to confide in, someone who would not use this against me or make me think I was the one at fault. Finally I did find my voice and made it stop. However my supposed most trusted person never said sorry and sometimes I wonder if he even knows that he violated me? That he took my innocence and that the trauma of it still affects me to date? If confronting him would help me give me peace? These are questions of a woman who turned out to advocate for rights of girls and women and who identifies as a feminist. Who is now raising a daughter and still gets panic attacks, my mind going crazy for not wanting to raise her in the same world as mine when growing up. Who still gets sexually harassed in the streets, in public transport vehicles and online.

My heart breaks into pieces every time I see people being against sex education in school. If we had this and our parents too, then

maybe the statistics would change. The conversation would have started from home, being taught what private parts are and how no one should ever touch them without consent. And how and where to report it if it happened. For example a place to talk about it is at kindergarten, during parents meetings. This could also be reinforced so that parents who have not started the conversation could start. We would call the parts by their names and not 'Dudu' and 'Nunu', as if it is a foreign thing in your body. We would teach our children on what violence looks like for it is rarely a stranger who defiles or rapes you. We would have cases on the same with very short turnaround time on ruling with dire consequences.

I believe it would all start with Comprehensive Sexual Education for children, parents and teachers. Children who later become the police, judges and teachers and the person seated next to you, related to you and who could be the one to violate you.

I can't wait to live in a world free of sexual violence, a world where everyone feels safe and has sex by choice and when well informed.

Hiv Vereniging

The Dutch Association of People Living with HIV (Hiv Vereniging) represents the interests of all people with HIV in the Netherlands, irrespective of background. We provide information about living with HIV and organise all kinds of meet-ups.

Servicepunt

Our team of expert volunteers can be contacted for any question about living with HIV, by telephone on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 14:00 – 22:00 hrs, or by email: servicepunt@hivvereniging.nl.

See www.hivvereniging.nl