

## Concept Note

### General Outline:

<b>Donor</b>	ViiV Healthcare
<b>Activity Title</b>	Women in all their diversity addressing HIV-related Stigma & Discrimination (S&D), abuse and disrespect against women in Health Care Settings
<b>Activity Description</b>	Series of evidence-based awareness sessions on HIV and S&D in Tunisia
<b>Implementation Period</b>	February 2023 – June 2023

### Background Information:

MENA Rosa is a network of Women Living with HIV (WLHIV) working in 10 countries of the MENA region, with the main objective of providing an independent niche for Women in all Their Diversity (WiTD) to bring up their concerns, be it psycho-social, educational, gender issue, marriage, sexual, raising and disclosing to children, etc.

In the MENA region, Stigma and Discrimination tend to be more critical against WLHIV than men, given gender inequality and societal gender norms. Within Health Care Settings, common drivers to produce Stigma can include negative attitudes, fear, lack of awareness about the HIV and the impact of S&D: Health Care Providers may fear the infection, experience moral distress based on their personal disapproval or beliefs, lack of information and knowledge concerning HIV and how to provide care.

In 2021, MENA Rosa conducted a situation assessment on the relationship between Health Care Providers and PLHIV, focusing on WLHIV in the MENA through a gendered lens, and highlighting the issue of S&D impacting the lives of WLHIV. In addition, and under the Robert Carr Network Fund, MENA Rosa developed [three testimonial videos](#), revealing stories and challenges of WLHIV in Health Care Settings, and the effect of S&D on their lives.

### Description of the Activity:

MENA Rosa wishes to raise awareness on HIV and Stigma and Discrimination in Health Care Settings, and improve the relationship between HCP and WLHIV.

A series of awareness sessions with Health Care Providers and WLHIV will be conducted in three major cities of Tunisia: Tunis, Sfax, Monastir, starting February 2023. These sessions will offer a space for discussion around the issue of Stigma and Discrimination in Health Care Settings.

MENA Rosa's Focal Points will have the opportunity to share their experiences, as well as other WLHIV.

A facilitator will be recruited to identify the participants in collaboration with MENA Rosa's focal points and local NGO, draft the sessions' agenda, coordinate with guest speakers; facilitate the sessions and finally prepare a narrative report highlighting the major discussions and recommendations.

### **Project's Objective:**

The project's objective is to remove barriers to access Health Care Services by decreasing negative attitudes adopted by Health Care Providers & increasing inclusive behaviors towards WLHIV. Accordingly, MENA Rosa will conduct awareness sessions with Health Care Providers in Tunisia, aiming to:

- improve access to HIV services for WLHIV in Tunisia: Tunis, Sfax, Monastir,
- sensitize HCP on ethical issues in addressing WLHIV needs during everyday clinical practice,
- develop HCP ability to effectively respect the human rights of patient and WLHIV; and
- strengthen effective communication between WLHIV and Health Care Providers.

### **Project's Outcomes:**

- Assessment of S&D situation towards PLHIV, particularly WLHIV in Health Care Settings,
- empowerment of WLHIV and improved self-esteem by sharing their experiences in Health Care Settings,
- Health Care Providers demonstrate sensitivity to ethical issues and ethical behavior within and outside professional practice,
- decrease S&D in Health Care Settings,
- improving access to HIV services and SRH services for WLHIV; and
- improving the health of WLHIV and reducing the number of new HIV infection through Vertical Transmission.

### **Target Stakeholders:**

One session will target **Nurses**, and another session will target **Midwives**. MENA Rosa Focal Points will be representing the community of WLHIV in both sessions.