

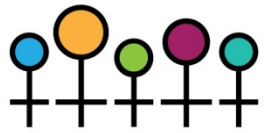
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A Girl Like Me: Building Community and Advocacy Through Blogging



Iris House Women of the Face of AIDS Summit

May 6, 2019

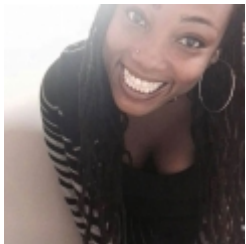


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Speakers



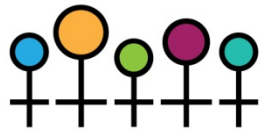
Gina Brown, Community Advisory Board, WRI member, and *A Girl Like Me* blogger, The Well Project; Community Organizer, Southern AIDS Coalition



Ciarra Covin, *A Girl Like Me* blogger, The Well Project



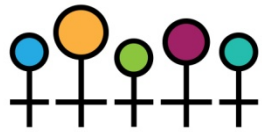
Krista Martel, Executive Director, The Well Project



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Agenda

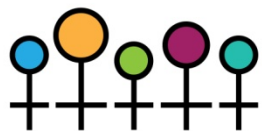
- About The Well Project and *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo*
- Diversity and *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo*
- Building community and advocacy through blogging
- Sharing your story/becoming a blogger
- Personal experiences: Gina Brown, MSW and Ciarra Covin



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About The Well Project

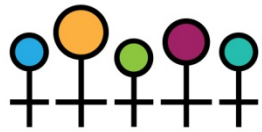
- Non-profit organization with a mission to change the course of the HIV/AIDS pandemic through a unique and comprehensive focus on women and girls
- Leverages technology to improve health outcomes and increase quality of life for women and girls living with HIV
- Focus is to provide accessible and comprehensive #information, #community support, and #advocacy building
- Access our resources and join our community at www.thewellproject.org



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About *A Girl Like Me* / *Una Chica Como Yo*

- *A Girl Like Me* (2009) and *Una Chica Como Yo* (2015) are online blogs where women living with HIV can share their everyday life experiences and stories
- Women around the globe who are living with HIV often feel they are alone in their disease and isolated in the experiences they go through each day
- *AGLM/UCCY* create a safe space for women living with HIV to share experiences, find commonalities, and build community
- Decreases stigma and isolation by providing an always-available, anonymous platform to read the stories of women living with HIV who are thriving

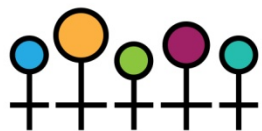


What is diversity?

- The fact or quality of being diverse; difference
- A point or respect in which things differ
- The ways we are different; the condition of having unique characteristics

Why is it important to understand diversity?

- *Diversity is more than just tolerating differences.* It is:
 - Respecting, appreciating, and understanding what the varying characteristics of individuals bring to groups
- Everyone is unique and no single person is a representative of a certain group



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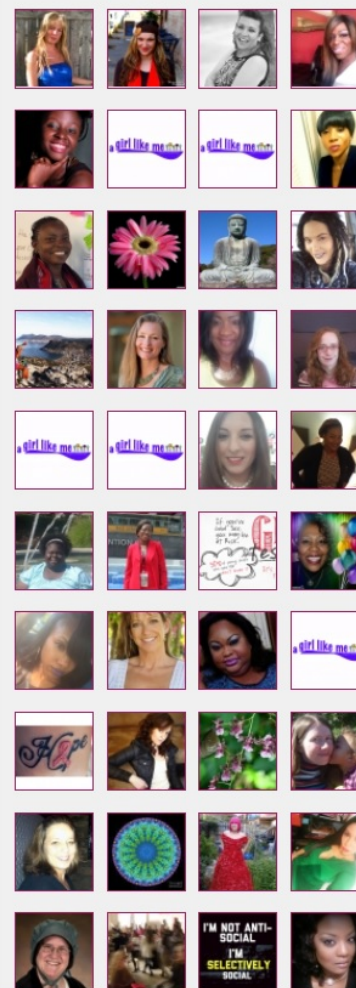
Diversity and *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo*

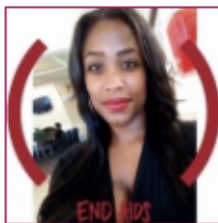
Of the 100+ *A Girl Like Me* and *Una Chica Como Yo* bloggers:

- Countries represented: 12 (Argentina, Australia, Belize, India, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States)
- U.S. states represented: 25 plus Puerto Rico
- Youth (<30): ~11%
- Trans women: ~12%
- Black women: ~48%
- Latinx or Spanish Speaking: ~10%
- Caucasian: ~34%
- Asian/Southeast Asian: ~4%

www.thewellproject.org

OUR BLOGGERS





Middle Finger to the Stigma

Apr 1, 2019 - PDEES

A few months ago, I lost a really close friend, or at least a person who I thought was my friend. All behind a conversation this person was having in front of me with one of their other friends in regards to HIV and STIs.

[READ MORE >](#)



Turning the Tide in Nigeria - AIDS in Nigeria: Book Launch

Apr 1, 2019 - boseolotu

I recently came across this news for an upcoming book launch : It has been over 30 years since the onset of the global AIDS epidemic and advances in biomedical research have led to the discovery of...

[READ MORE >](#)

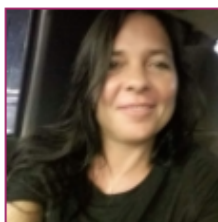


Intro - Derinthia

Mar 29, 2019 - Godschild27

Growing up in the hood in South West Atlanta was one of the hard things for me, especially being HIV-positive.

[READ MORE >](#)



I Am Not JUST HIV

Mar 28, 2019 - Angel S.

I have been undetectable of the illness since 2006; except for the stigma and unkind people that leave evident scars on my mental health.

[READ MORE >](#)

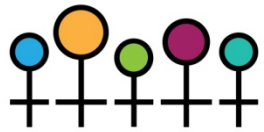


The Truth About the Truth

Mar 27, 2019 - Red40something

What do you know about the truth? Seriously, I'm asking. What's true for you? How do you define truth?

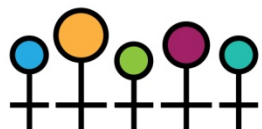
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Creating Community Through Blogging

- Address diversity through personal narratives
- Leverage technology to unite women from around the world to:
 - Create an online network and support community with a global reach and impact
 - Make connections across lines of identity and focus on common experiences
 - Provide newly diagnosed women with numerous stories and faces to show them they are not alone and build hope



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Building Advocacy Through Blogging

- Advocacy needs women's voices!
 - Only way to ensure the needs of women living with HIV are addressed
 - Need to identify and advance new activists
- *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo* have been a launching pad for several women living with HIV who are now well-known national and international advocates. It also cultivates leadership among newer advocates looking to reach a larger platform
- The Well Project identifies leadership opportunities for bloggers, including presenting at conferences/on webinars, attending conferences, representing The Well Project at events

Fighting to Get Free



Submitted on Oct 13, 2016 by [tj30trust](#)

Share 120 Tweet 8 G+

Like 64



had anticipated writing this blog much sooner, but the way my k
quired some much needed rest. I recently sper
nhandle coastline, what some call the Redneck
each was beautiful, and I had never seen a bod



Live in the Basement...



Submitted on Feb 12, 2016 by [Aryah Les](#)

Share 907 Tweet 29 G+

ve in the basement: the lowest floor of the s
e live the middle-class: not concerned with t
a bubble of supremacy; and the blessed: igr
manity. Proud and jubilant footsteps drum u
ke-me/aglm-blogs men, those not of color, and

IAS Durban 2016



Submitted on Aug 14, 2016 by [boseolotu](#)

Share 18 Tweet 3 G+

Like 9



The question was: Why do I make myself attractive if I have HIV?



Submitted on Mar 24, 2016 by [Mariatmejia](#)

Share 2462 Tweet 87 G+

Like 579

I am Maria Hiv Mejia-Laing. I am here as a living
example that HIV/AIDS is not the end! I am here to let
you know that we can live with this condition and still
be beautiful inside and out! We are not dirty! We are
not unclean! We are just human beings living with this
condition! WE ARE MILLIONS AND MILLIONS around
the world. If you are newly diagnosed I want to tell you
that there is hope! That if you take your medications,
live a healthy lifestyle, eat well, drink lots of fluids and
exercise !!! you will live a long life with this condition.
Please do not feel ashamed and feel like you will never
find anyone that will love you! YOU are deserving of everything and a person
on this subject will understand that if the proper precautions are taken, HIV wi

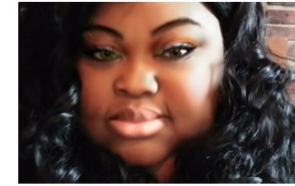


Sex After HIV



Submitted on Feb 21, 2017 by [Jewel Terrell](#)

Share 4143 Tweet 56 G+



When a person gets
think that the positiv
activities or only dat
thinking infuriates m
life hasn't ended, it
that I need to know
undetectable viral load and use condoms or dental c
are positive.

Sex is healthy and normal, it releases stress and endo
However, for me, often times sex is overrated. With r
intellectual connection with a person before we can

Living with HIV a



Submitted on Aug 11,

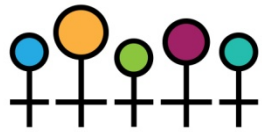
Share 35

Tweet

The aftermath and education...

I made it through. I am Clean!
to weeks just what my part in s
Stigmatizer myself. I found that
the ignorance of others. I self-r
advocacy, now I see how wrong

I accept my status and I love ar
decisions. I took a more colorfu
inner peace upon finding out n

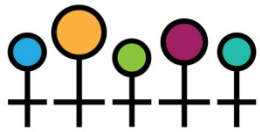


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Sharing Your Story

- Why share your story?
 - While disclosing can be difficult, finding a safe place to share your story can be empowering
 - Take baby steps – share your story with friends, family, or in small settings that are safe
 - Utilize your story to raise awareness and educate communities
 - Sharing can also help others feel they are not alone, decrease stigma, empower others

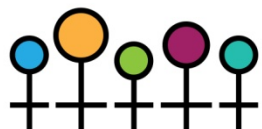
Sharing stories takes the burden of shame away.



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Sharing Your Story Through Blogging

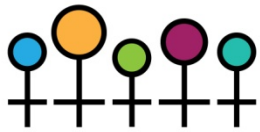
- Blogging can be used to share everyday experiences living with HIV and allows one to “unpack baggage”
- You can blog anonymously – can be very empowering, helpful
- A powerful tool for HIV advocacy
 - Call to action
 - Raise awareness on topics that affect women living with HIV
- Blogging impacts both the writer and the reader
 - Writer: healing, decrease isolation, increase connection to community
 - Readers: healing, feeling less alone, decrease stigma and isolation



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Blogging with *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo*

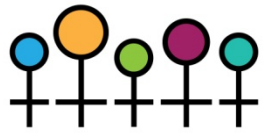
- Send email to Juliana Hawawini Johnson:
jhawawini@thewellproject.org
- To apply, we ask for:
 - Brief bio
 - Introductory blog
 - Statement on why you want to blog with *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo*
- Review and sign blog agreement
- Account is set up and blogs are posted by The Well Project team
- Blogs are shared on social media (we tag bloggers only if given permission)



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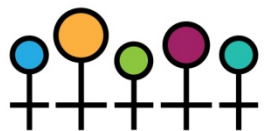
Benefits of Blogging with *A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo*

- Established community of bloggers and women living with HIV
- Wide-reaching platform (2.5 million+ annually!)
- Diverse, supportive community of women living with HIV
- Potential opportunities with for scholarships to conferences, speaking engagements, media opportunities, mentorship
- Connection to The Well Project's larger community:
 - Offers 110+ fact sheets, slide sets, and webinars to build advocacy and leadership among women living with HIV
 - Includes more than 25 partner organizations and their programs/events



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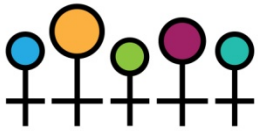
Panel Discussion



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Questions & Answers



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Learn More!

- To learn more about this topic, please check out these fact sheets:
 - [Women and HIV](#)
 - [Talking to the Media and Using Social Media](#)
 - [Why Race Matters: Women and HIV](#)
- For more fact sheets and to connect to our community of women living with HIV, visit:
 - www.thewellproject.org
 - www.facebook.com/thewellproject
 - www.twitter.com/thewellproject
 - www.instagram.com/thewellprojecthiv



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Thank you!!