The Greater Invisibility of People with HIV/AIDS

January 28, 2012 By Sean Strub

The International AIDS Society has announced the plenary speakers for the International AIDS Conference, to be held this summer in Washington, DC. Alice Welbourn, a woman with HIV and a member of the Athena Network steering committee, has written an important letter to the President of the IAS pointing out that:

- more women than men in the world have HIV
- In countries with the highest sero-prevalence, young women are most affected
- women of color in the US are particularly affected

Yet... amongst the IAS's roster of more than a dozen plenary speakers, she notes there are **no women living openly with HIV**; **no young women**; and **no women of color from North America**.

I would add that while I know at least one of the speakers is living with HIV--Phill Wilson, from the Black AIDS Institute--NONE of the speakers announced in the IAS press release are identified as people living with HIV. More invisibility.

The IAS claims to respect the GIPA principles (Greater Involvement of People living with HIV/AIDS), which were inspired in large part by the Denver Principles.

But perhaps they misunderstand and think the "I" in GIPA stands for "Invisibility" instead of "Involvement"?

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