

A how-to guide to making a podcast for women living with HIV

Introduction

The WHAVE is a podcast series by and for women living with HIV around the world, talking about our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

This paper explains how The WHAVE podcast came about, and uses the experience to provide a guide for women living with HIV around the world who are interested in making a podcast.

How The WHAVE podcast came about

In 2019, Salamander Trust requested funding from UNAIDS to support the dissemination of key current advocacy messages related to sexual and reproductive health and the rights and priorities of women living with HIV, including through a pilot first series of a podcast by and for women living with HIV.

Called 'The WHAVE (Women with HIV: Advocates, Voices, Empowered)', Series 1 contained 13 episodes, with contributors from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe talking about their advocacy, organising and peer support work. Each contributor covered key current issues for women living with HIV in their country or region, including a focus on the perspectives of young women. Nine episodes were in English, three in Spanish and one in French



Longret Kwardem making her podcasts

We made Series 1 using the most basic and accessible equipment – smartphones and other handheld recording devices, interviews over skype, google hangouts, or similar, and using a free editing programme called Audacity. The sound quality of the podcasts reflects the reality – that women contributors were often speaking from noisy internet cafes, without additional equipment, and often with poor internet connections.

The WHAVE episodes were uploaded to [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google](#) and [Spotify](#) and added to the [Salamander Trust website](#) and shared using [twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

We aim to continue making The WHAVE, learning as we go, to make better quality recordings, support more women to record podcasts, and reach more listeners.

If you are wondering what is involved in making a podcast, we have prepared some guidelines below based on how we made Series 1 of The WHAVE. The guidelines can be used by women living with HIV who would like to contribute to possible future episodes of The WHAVE, or who would like to make their own podcast.

3. Making a podcast: A step-by-step guide

3.1 Who can make a podcast?

If you have access to basic recording equipment, and an editing package such as Audacity, you can make an MP3 recording. This can be shared on social media or on your organisation's website, or uploaded to a podcast hosting platform. Podcasts can be made in any language.

Series 1 of The WHAVE involved women living with HIV who are HIV activists or advocates and who have something to say about the priorities, preferences and rights of women living with HIV. We particularly welcomed contributions on the perspectives of young women, and made episodes in English, French and Spanish.

3.2 Think about what you want to say

First, think about the issue you would like to talk about:

- What would you like to say?
- Is something happening that you want people to know about?
- Why is it that women in your group, association, region or country are concerned about this issue at this time?
- Have you or women you know been personally affected by it?
- Is something being done about it?
- Are you lobbying, campaigning or raising awareness about it?
- How do you and other women living with HIV feel about what is happening?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

3.3 Podcast style - what works best?

- Whatever you are talking about, tell a story. Try not to sound like you are giving a presentation or a speech. Things that are more interesting for the listener are things like audio diaries, where you might describe what you are doing – 'Earlier today I was at a meeting with the health authorities in my area. I was there with other women living with HIV who are disappointed that Dolutegravir has been withdrawn for all women of reproductive age.'
- Assume listeners don't know anything about the subject.
- Spell out acronyms, and if you name people say who they are (eg the Minister of Health, the Director of the Department of HIV at the World Health Organisation, etc).
- Listeners will be interested to get a sense of you, and your experiences – but don't say anything you aren't comfortable sharing.
- Keep it short! The WHAVE episodes are no longer than about 20 minutes, but if you can say it in 6-10 minutes, that's great!

3.4 Monologue, interview, or conversation?

Decide whether you'd prefer your podcast to be a monologue, an interview, or a conversation.

- If you'd prefer your recording to take the form of an interview, think about what kind of questions you want to be asked and discuss these with the interviewer.
- If you want to record a piece where you are in conversation with someone you know, that's fine too.
- Or if you'd like to record a monologue of yourself talking about your advocacy, organising or peer support work, or about a current issue for women living with HIV in your country or region, that can also work!

3.5 Prepare your script

Preparing a loose script before recording your piece can help to make sure you get your points across and don't go off track.

We find it works best not to read from the script though – that can make it sound a bit too formal. Instead it works better if you have a script which is more like a checklist that you can follow and that will guide you through your recording and make sure you don't forget anything you wanted to say.

3.6 Get ready to record

If you have a smartphone, you may find that it already has a voice recording facility. You can also download a voice recording app to your phone. Voice Recorder HD Audio Recording and Playback is one such app, but there are many!

Once you have read our tips for preparing your podcast content, and found somewhere quiet where you can talk and not be disturbed by interruptions or background noise, you are ready to record!

3.7 Record your piece

- Find a quiet place, where there is no background noise and you will not be interrupted.
- Make yourself comfortable. If you are using a script, have it ready where you can see it. Lay it out so that you don't need to turn

pages while you are recording – turning pages makes a noise!

- Remember also that if you have bracelets or mugs or plates nearby these can also make a noise. It is better to remove them first if you can.
- Do a test recording, and play it back. Can you hear yourself well? Is the sound clear? If you have headphones and a microphone, try them out, and see if they improve the sound quality. If you don't, work out where to hold your phone to get the best recording of your voice.
- Once you have had a try and are happy with the quality of the recording, you are ready to go!
- Press record.
- Wait for a few seconds before you start to speak. Then introduce yourself and your topic. For example, 'Hello, I'm [your name]. Welcome to [the name of the podcast - for example, 'Welcome to The WHAVE: Women living with HIV, Advocates, Voices, Empowered']. I'm speaking to you from [your country] and I'd like to tell you about something that has been happening in [your country] that is a worry for women living with HIV.'
- Speak slowly.
- Leave pauses in between sentences and points. (Pauses makes editing much easier. Pauses that are too long can be edited later.)
- If you make a mistake, don't worry. You can just leave the recording running, pause, and start your point again. Any ums and ahs and fluffs can be edited out later!
- Don't rush your words.
- When you have finished speaking, carry on recording for a few seconds, then stop the recording.

Please remember, gaps and pauses are really useful when it's time to edit your recording.

Once you have finished recording your piece, it really helps if you make a separate recording of some background noise from your surrounding area. This can be used as background to your piece. It could be a recording from the street, a market, a meeting, singing, a cock crowing or other birds calling - anything you think would convey to listeners an idea of your location.

When you have a recording or recordings that you are happy with, you are ready for the editing process. If you are sending them for someone else to edit, save them as MP3 files. You can send small audio files as email attachments. Larger audio files can be sent using the free services at www.WeTransfer.com or www.mailbigfile.com.

3.8 Edit your recording

If you are editing your recording yourself, you may want to use an editing package such as Audacity, which can be downloaded for free. You can find video tutorials and helpsheets for Audacity online. If you are not editing your recording, and need to send your recording to an editor (if it is for The WHAVE, Salamander Trust will edit your recording), don't worry about mistakes, repetitions or pauses. An editor can remove any mistakes or long pauses, and add an intro and outro to make it into a podcast episode. The editor should check with you that you are happy with the final edit. Then you are ready to share it.

3.9 Confidentiality

If you would like to make a podcast, but would rather not be identified, think about what you would be comfortable with. You don't have to use your own name or share your HIV status. Don't share anything you don't want to – if you'd rather not mention place names or other things that could identify you, that is fine. You don't even have to use your own voice. If you would rather have someone else reading your

words so that your voice can not be identified, that is fine. You could think about working with a colleague or a friend who is happy to speak to your script.

3.10 Get your podcast out into the world!

Once your recording has been edited, and an intro and outro have been added, you are ready to upload your podcast. You can share it using social media or on your organisational website, or you can upload it to a podcast hosting platform – there are many, and some of them are free to use.

You may want to post your podcast with a photo or an image that conveys what it's about or who is speaking. Also think about a short description that can be included as a text caption for your recording, which captures the content in a very short phrase and will raise the interest of possible listeners. Examples of these descriptions from Series 1 of The WHAVE include 'Why women living with HIV in Kenya are advocating for access to Dolutegravir', or "Why am I even being screened if I have no recourse if I need further treatment?' Cervical cancer and women living with HIV'.

4. Want to help us develop the technical quality of The WHAVE?

We are learning as we go! If you have technical skills related to podcast production, and would like to help us develop The WHAVE, please get in touch!

Post-script: As COVID-19 overwhelms us all globally, digital ways of connecting are becoming all the more urgent and essential. It is all the more important that women living with HIV are meaningfully involved in the all decisions made around our SRHR. We are learning daily of increased intimate partner violence facing women in communities in lock down, of limited access to contraceptive goods and services, including condoms, of reduced access to abortion (with concomitant future increases in maternal morbidity and mortality). ARV stockouts will also no doubt ensue. We are also yet to learn about the effects of COVID-19 on women living with HIV across the life span, including during pregnancy, as well as the effects on the baby in-utero or post-partum. One thing that more than three decades of global community HIV activism has taught us, as well as the women's rights movement, is that there will be no ethical, effective, sustainable response without meaningful community engagement to uphold our SRHR¹. So please do start making podcasts to get your messages out there. If you would like any help, do contact us by facebook, twitter or our webpage and we will do what we can to support you.

¹ Htun, M., & Weldon, S. 2012, The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 548-569. doi:10.1017/S0003055412000226

The WHAVE, Women living with HIV, Advocates, Voice, Empowered. Salamander Trust 2019 - 2020

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/salamander-trust-the-whave-podcasts/id1453316451>

The WHAVE is a series of podcasts by and for women living with HIV, talking about our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- In English: The WHAVE <https://salamandertrust.net/project/podcasts/>
- In Spanish: La Ola <https://salamandertrust.net/project/salamander-trust-podcasts-en-espanol/>
- In French: La Vague <https://salamandertrust.net/project/salamander-trust-podcasts-en-francais/>

- #1 (English) Lucy Wanjiku Njenga, Kenya. Why restrict access to the antiretroviral drug Dolutegravir for women of reproductive age?
- #2 (French) Francine Nghanhale, Cameroon. The importance of peer support for women living with HIV in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- #3 (Spanish) L'Orangelis Thomas, Puerto Rico. Women living with HIV, sexual health and pleasure.
- #4 (Spanish) MariJo Vázquez, Spain. Learning from women living with HIV: training for medical students.
- #5 (English) Resty Nalwanga, Uganda. Peer mentoring for young mothers living with HIV.
- #6 (English) Martha Tholanah, Zimbabwe. 'Why am I even being screened if I have no recourse if I need further treatment?' Cervical cancer and women living with HIV.
- #7 (English) Bakita Kasadha, UK. Research with us, not about us: meaningful involvement of people living with HIV.
- #8 (English) Bakita Kasadha, UK. Undetectable = Untransmittable: transforming the way we feel about ourselves as women living with HIV.
- #9 (English) Lucy Wanjiku Njenga, Kenya. A success story for collective campaigning: overturning the 'restriction' on Dolutegravir for women of reproductive age.
- #10 (English) Rahayu Rahmat, Malaysia. Women living with HIV, sex workers and women who use drugs: challenges in accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- #11 (Spanish) Mariana Iacono, Argentina. Women living with HIV in Argentina, our priorities.
- #12 (English) Longret Kwardem, UK. 4M Mentor Mothers: where is the funding?
- #13 (English) Longret Kwardem, UK. Peer research and meaningful involvement of women living with HIV, an ongoing challenge.

BACKGROUND ON THIS PAPER

Podcasts are increasingly popular, can be produced and edited with basic equipment, and are accessible to people around the world with a smartphone or computer. In each episode of Series 1 of The WHAVE, a contributor tells a story of advocacy, organising, or peer support work by and for women living with HIV. In this way, contributors from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe share their perspectives, expertise and current priorities, in episodes in English, French and Spanish.

Some issues come up time and again in different episodes. These are now brought together in this collection of thematic papers to support the dissemination of key messages arising from The WHAVE podcast:

- **Paper #1:** Funding for organisations of women living with HIV
- **Paper #2:** Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV services for women and girls living with HIV
- **Paper #3:** Equal partners: recognising the expertise of women living with HIV

We expect these papers to be of interest to relevant teams in UNAIDS, WHO and other technical partners, Ministries of Health, NGOs, networks and associations of people living with HIV, and others involved in addressing HIV and/or sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls living with HIV.

A fourth paper is for women living with HIV who are interested in recording a podcast:

- **Paper #4:** A how-to guide to making a podcast for women living with HIV

To access all the briefs, please click [here](#).

Suggested Citation: Salamander Trust (2020) The WHAVE Podcast Paper #4. A how-to guide to making a podcast for women living with HIV

Acknowledgements:

This paper was written by The WHAVE Podcast producer Fiona Hale, in collaboration with Emma Bell, Mariana Iacono, Bakita Kasadha, Longret Kwardem, Resty Nalwanga, Francine Nganhale, Rahayu Rahmat, L'Orangelis Thomas, MariJo Vázquez, Martha Tholanah, Lucy Wanjiku Njenga, and Alice Welbourn. It was designed by Jess Nicholson.

The financial contribution of UNAIDS towards this brief, and the podcast series on which it is based, is gratefully acknowledged. However, their content and ideas expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of UNAIDS or engage the responsibility of UNAIDS.

