

## Linking women's health to human rights: using HeRWAI for RBA

**Monday 13:00**  
**Participants:22**

**Tuesday 15:00**  
**25**

### Introduction

The Health Rights of Women Assessment Instrument (HeRWAI) is a practical tool to enhance lobbying activities for better implementation of women's health rights. A HeRWAI analysis links what actually happens with what should happen according to the human rights obligations of a country. Based on this analysis you can make recommendations to a government to improve their policies or the implementations of their policy. Organisations around the world are using HeRWAI.

### Presentations

Marije Nederveen of Aim for human rights starts with a group discussion about the relation between the health of an individual woman and the human rights responsibilities of a government. She discusses the advantages of using human rights impact assessment:

1. It helps to get better knowledge on the effect of activities and policies on the human rights situation
2. It supports the rights based approach
3. It offers a means of democratic control on government bodies by civil society/civilians – assist in the development of democratic movements in a country

HeRWAI works as a work book with a clear structure and rights based questions to ask. HeRWAI takes NGOs step by step through an analysis of the advocacy issue and helps to formulate the message that should be used. It is being used in a variety of countries, organisations in amongst other Kenya and Nepal have been succesfull to change policies and laws. The tool can be downloaded from <http://www.humanrightsimpact.org/themes/womens-human-rights/herwai>

Patricia Nyaundi, executive director of Fida Kenya tells about her experiences with working with HeRWAI. Fida used it to analyse the maternity leave provisions in the labour law. A strategic lobby with the Central Organisation of Trade Unions resulted in a change of law, to allow all women 3 months maternity leave with rights to annual leave as well as 14 days paternity leave. HeRWAI helped to build firm arguments which could not be put aside. Fida is now working on a study on cervical cancer.

### Discussion

Participants wonder how to mobilize enough pressure on the government. Governments are made up of culturally constructed people with their own social perspectives. The HeRWAI analysis helps to see where to make the most change and then get the facts right and collect arguments that cannot be put aside. In the lobby process it is important to form alliances. Budget analysis can also be helpful in the process. Another question is whether the tool is adaptable to local context. Fida managed to do so. HeRWAI has also been translated into various languages, to facilitate its use in various contexts. Participants discussed some of the practical consequences of the maternity leave provisions and the choice to lobby for PAP- smears to detect cervical cancer.