



ICASO
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF
AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Advocate

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“

It is important that we renew our efforts to assist in this global mobilization to ensure that the community sector itself shapes the global AIDS agenda.

”

Not knowing your epidemic remains a principal barrier to controlling HIV and AIDS globally

“The most vulnerable are still the most excluded,” says new Executive Director of ICASO

Even as the world marks more than two decades of responding to HIV and AIDS, the numbers of people living with HIV keep climbing every year.

"Many of us talk about human rights, but we know that in countries where these rights are being violated, it remains a principal barrier to individuals and communities accessing services," says Kieran Daly, the new Executive Director of the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) International Secretariat.

"The consequence" he says, "is that as long as people who are most vulnerable and at risk are still the most excluded, we cannot control the epidemic."



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International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)

Advocate

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Founded in 1991, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) mobilizes and supports diverse community organizations to build an effective global response to HIV and AIDS. The ICASO network of networks works globally, regionally and locally, and reaches over 100 countries through its secretariats: the International Secretariat in Toronto and its Regional Secretariats based on five continents.

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Upcoming publications

Microbicides
Advocacy Briefing
(available April 2009)

Condom Advocacy
Briefing Update
(available April 2009)

Gender Toolkit
(available June 2009)

Vaccines
Facilitators' Guide for
Vaccine Advocacy
(available March 2009)

Available at
<http://www.icaso.org>



PTAP 10-country Prevention and Treatment Advocacy Project Impact Report

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Kieran Daly, Executive Director
ICASO International Secretariat

Kieran believes that to ignore this from an epidemiological point of view "simply does not make sense."

Focusing support where the need is most, is just common sense, he explains.

"The fact that every year, the number of new infections still reads in the millions, means that we are not doing the right thing."

Finding new ways to support people in realizing their rights is a public health issue, and pivotal to ICASO's response as a global network of networks mobilizing and supporting communities to build an effective response to HIV and AIDS.

"We need greater accountability in measuring our responses, so that communities can use the evidence to inform their national AIDS responses and international policy," Kieran says. "We need to bridge the gap that remains where governments are not investing sufficiently in the AIDS response and broader health systems, in ways that genuinely meet the needs of the most vulnerable and at risk."

Kieran, who was named ICASO's new Executive Director in January this year, says that the organization is well-placed to review and revise its programs in an environment that has seen the epidemic evolve, changes in leadership, and a greater diversity of "actors" in the global AIDS response.

"Our own support to national community advocates needs to reflect this shift, as well as respond to it," he says.

Kieran, who has been active in the field of AIDS policy for over ten years, has experience at the country, regional and international levels on AIDS policy and advocacy, with a particular focus on mechanisms for involving and funding of civil society and vulnerable groups. He has also been actively involved for many years in various global AIDS policy fora, such as the NGO delegation at the Global Fund Board and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) working groups and committees. Kieran holds a Masters degree in Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.



Dates to bookmark

MARCH 2 - 27

10th Session of the
Human Rights Council
Geneva, Switzerland

APRIL 1 - 3

Mid-term Review meeting
and Second Replenishment
(2008 - 2010) of the Global
Fund to Fight AIDS,
Tuberculosis and Malaria
Caceres, Spain

MAY 4 - 8

FORO 2009 - Latin American
and Caribbean Forum on
HIV/AIDS and Sexually
Transmitted Diseases
Lima, Peru

MAY 1 - 31

World Health Assembly
Geneva, Switzerland

JUNE 1

Closing date for Call for
Proposals for Round 9 of
the Global Fund

JUNE 22 -24

UNAIDS Programme
Coordinating Board meeting
Geneva, Switzerland

New members join ICASO's Board

ICASO's Board of Directors has been strengthened with four new positions, two of which are dedicated to People Living with HIV, as a way to guarantee that the perspectives and voices of people affected by HIV is integral to all the work ICASO engages in.

The current Board, which serves for the next three years, welcomed Anandi Yuvraj, who is the Asia Pacific Regional Coordinator of the International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW); Olayide Akanni, Executive Director of Journalists Against AIDS (JAA) in Nigeria; Tony Di Pede, a Toronto-based AIDS activist, who serves as Treasurer; and Carlos García de León, a Mexican AIDS activist.

The Board of Directors comprises:

Jacqueline Coleman - Chair and Executive Committee member
Represents North American Council of AIDS Service Organizations
(NACASO)

Don Baxter - Vice Chair and Executive Committee member
Represents the Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations
(APCASO)

Ton Coenen - Executive Committee member
Represents AIDS Action Europe (AAE)

Tony Di Pede - Treasurer and Executive Committee member
At-large member

Olayide Akanni - At-large member

Carlos García de León - Person Living with HIV designate
LACCASO representative - In process of appointment

Laurien Nyabienda - Represents the African Council of AIDS Service
Organizations (AfriCASO)

Kasia Malinowska-Semprich - At-large member

Richard Parker - At-large member

Anandi Yuvraj - Person Living with HIV designate

Kieran Daly, Executive Director of ICASO and ex-officio member of
the Board of Directors.



2009 and beyond - Global Planning Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya

ICASO's Global Planning Meeting, which was held in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, in November last year, brought more than fifty people - all connected to the ICASO network of networks - together, to review the work of 2008, as well as work on new programs for ICASO.

The meeting was a first in uniting all ICASO's key partners: the Prevention and Treatment Advocacy Project (PTAP) country partners from Belize, Jamaica, Rwanda, Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana, Russia, Ukraine, China and India; the Civil Society Action Team (CSAT) hubs from Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, Peru, Thailand and Lithuania; our Regional Secretariats based in Senegal, Brazil, Malaysia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Canada; ICASO's Board of Directors and staff from all over the world.

Central to the discussions were plans for 2009 and beyond, ensuring support for civil society leadership in a way that will allow the network of networks to manage the challenges in making Universal Access a reality. The meeting, which was hosted by the Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO), included visits to three local community-based organizations responding to HIV and AIDS.



news from
the ICASO Global Planning Meeting in Nairobi

Visits to three communities underscore need for universal access

Sex work can be dangerous work, especially when, as in Kenya, it is also illegal. Risk and "kinky," two young women who earn their living this way know all about the dangers, the moral judgment and the stigma associated with their work. They also know how vulnerable they are to HIV and the abuse and exploitation that often go hand in hand with how they earn their living. "We know that when we provide 'full sex', when our clients refuse to wear condoms, we take a big risk." But "full sex" is worth 1000 Kenyan Shillings. If they insist on the men wearing condoms, the price drops to 500 Kenyan Shillings.

Eight months ago, however, things started changing for them when the Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO) started their work with some 50 sex workers in Ongata Njara in the Rift Valley Province. For the first time they say they fully understood how vulnerable they were. Now trained as peer educators, with amongst others, the health service support they receive, they feel somewhat "safer". Easy access to free condoms, training in prevention, an understanding of the value of voluntary testing and counselling, and a greater sense of being able to dictate to their clients have made a real difference in their lives.

The sex worker program, is one of the programs supported by KANCO, a strong advocate for universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support. The Network of Men Living with HIV & AIDS in Kenya, which mobilizes men living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, and the Strategic Community Development Network's Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program, also offered glimpses into the lives of vulnerable communities - this time in Kibera, the sprawling slums of Nairobi.

"It is touching to see how the (OVC) program (page 2) is improving the financial situation of individual families," says Guh SoonSew of the Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations. "An unintended outcome of how the program provides an entry point to voluntary counselling and testing provides food for thought. The stories of the women also strongly suggest that income creation schemes must be supplemented by income protection schemes," she believes.

Murali Sharmugan of the Indian Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS says that the field visit was also an opportunity to see what others are doing, and to learn from their experiences. "Hopefully we can apply some of this in our own local context in India."

This is about committed people who know their community.
Michael Cai - Daytop, China

* Names changed for reasons of privacy

ICASO Global Planning Meeting newsletter



Miriam Awour Muga

One small step towards universal access*

by Innocent Laison, AfriCASO

Miriam Awour Muga is a 58 year old Kenyan woman living in Kibera, an area known for its extreme poverty. It is also an area where HIV affects every small dwelling. With a welcoming smile, Miriam shares her story: "I am a caregiver and support ten children, who are orphans and vulnerable children. In 2000, I was trained in home-based care, as I was helping my neighbours affected by HIV. I joined the Strategic Community Development Network (SACODEN) - a community-based organization working in five "villages" in Kibera - as a volunteer."

Like Miriam, Grace Adhiambo and Priscah Sosiah are also among the 150 women taking care of 500 children in Kibera. Miriam sells fish in the market of Kibera to earn a small income to take care of the children. Despite her and the other women's enormous efforts to provide education for the children who are in primary school, they struggle every day to give them food and medication.

SACODEN supports and trains the women in managing their income generating activities. In addition, groups of five women each are benefiting from a micro-finance project that gives them access to small amounts of money that they only dreamed of in the past. This community initiative is one small step in a long journey to achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support.

*Published earlier in the Global Planning Meeting newsletter on November 18, 2008



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ICASO's 10-country Prevention and Treatment Advocacy Project

As access to HIV treatment increases, so too is there an increased need to sustain and scale up prevention programs. This is the challenge ICASO and its partners are focusing on in the 10-country Prevention and Treatment Advocacy Project (PTAP), now in its last year of implementation.

The five-year project, known as PTAP, was rolled out in ten countries: Belize, Botswana, China, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Russia, Rwanda and Ukraine. It was designed as a global advocacy initiative to contribute to policy and program shifts that would enable people to have better access to comprehensive HIV prevention alongside expanded treatment.

The project has raised the awareness of decision-makers that HIV prevention programs and investments should be kept high on national and international agendas with the goal of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support.

Key to moving beyond 2009, when the project comes to an end, is to apply the lessons learned so far, and how best to do so. The Global Planning Meeting held in Nairobi in November last year, provided a forum for discussion on how to move the work of PTAP forward in a sustainable way, and beyond the project itself. Examples of this are INP+ in India, which has included in their 5-year strategic plan key aspects of the project, such working with people living with HIV, men who have sex with men, and sex workers. This will continue well beyond PTAP's end. In Russia, HIV prevention through harm reduction is the focus of our partner, the Russian Harm reduction Network. This work will be sustained by their Global Fund grant. In Nigeria, the government has established a National Prevention Plan and has begun to seriously consider better investments in HIV prevention.

For more information on the work of PTAP, please download our recent Impact report from the ICASO web site at:

http://www.icaso.org/publications/PTAPImpact_report.pdf



Participants in the ICASO Global Planning Meeting in Kenya in November 2008

ICASO is the global host for the Civil Society Action Team (CSAT)

For more information on CSAT, visit: <http://www.icaso.org/csat.html>

In brief

Richard Burzynski, former Executive Director of ICASO, is recognized for his pioneering leadership and activism in the fields of AIDS and social justice by Toronto's Casey House. Casey House opened its doors as one of the world's first hospices for people living with HIV and AIDS just over two decades ago. The Casey Award is given out annually. For more on the 2009 award, visit the Casey House web site at www.caseyhouse.com

Civil Society Action Team Update

Preparations for Global Fund Round 9

There are only a few months left before the Round 9 call for proposals to the Global Fund (to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) closes on June 1 this year. Given the opportunities to civil society to become principal recipients of grants, it is crucial that proposals be of the highest quality.

Equally important, is making sure that existing implementers of Global Fund grants representing civil society are given the necessary technical support to succeed. CSAT, which is hosted by ICASO, has been instrumental in providing this kind of support at regional and country level through its six regional hubs.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, CSAT has been instrumental in facilitating consultations among networks of key populations (which ICASO defines as groups of people who are key to the dynamics of, and response to HIV and AIDS) in Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. These populations include people living with HIV, orphans and vulnerable children, women and girls, youth, sex workers, people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, migrants, refugees and prisoners. Other countries also working on their Round 9 proposals include, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Bolivia, Jamaica and Morocco.

West and Central Africa CSAT workshop

AfriCASO, in November last year, hosted a workshop that brought some 50 people from 23 countries in West and Central Africa to Senegal, to train people in the technical aspects and project management of implementing Global Fund Grants. The workshop was a partnership initiative between Grant Management Solutions, the UNAIDS regional support team, AfriCASO and CSAT.



Participants of the Grant Performance Workshop held in November 2008 in Senegal.

"Mentorship" an important support mechanism

A pilot project, named MentorPro, will be launched in West and Central Africa in February this year. Supported by UNICEF, the mentorship project will be coordinated by the African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfriCASO), CSAT's West and Central Africa hub. The project is aimed at sharing skills between organizations, thereby strengthening overall capacities to implement programs. The idea of MentorPro came out of the CSAT workshop held in November last year.



Regional Focus

Each International Secretariat newsletter highlights the work of one of the ICASO Regional Secretariats: AIDS Action Europe, AfriCASO, APCASO, LACCASO and NACASO. The February 2009 newsletter focuses on the work of AIDS Action Europe.



www.aidsactioneurope.org



European Partners in Action on AIDS By Martine van der Meulen, AIDS Action Europe

AIDS Action Europe, with offices in Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Vilnius (Lithuania) is the regional partner of ICASO in Europe. AIDS Action Europe is also involved in ICASO's 10-country Prevention and Treatment Advocacy Project (PTAP), which ends this year, while one of its other projects, European Partners in Action on AIDS, has now come to an end. The following is a review of the achievements made:

Seven European best practice seminars

One of the key activities of the EPAA project was to build capacity among HIV-related European NGOs on several themes by organizing European best practice seminars. The themes of the seminars were identified by the NGOs themselves in order to respond to their needs in the most effective way. They included: Working with the Media (2006); Monitoring and Evaluation (2006); Gay men's health (2007); Legislation and Judicial systems in relation to HIV/AIDS (2007); HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing (2008); Resource Mobilisation (2008); and Public Policy Dialogue (2008).

Each seminar brought together around 40 NGO representatives from Eastern and Western Europe. They learned practical skills that included building a media campaign, the do's and don'ts of monitoring and evaluating their projects, and received tips for engaging in (political) dialogue with policy makers. All seminar reports and guidelines are available in English and Russian at <http://www.aidsactioneurope.org/index.php?id=194#c1248>

The Pan-European HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse



While face-to-face linking and learning was facilitated by means of the best practice seminars, the EPAA project also resulted in the development of a tool for on-line linking and learning: the AIDS Action Europe clearinghouse. The clearinghouse - accessible at <http://www.hivaidsclearinghouse.eu> was launched in March 2007, and allows access to more than 500 good practice resources from Europe and beyond. Interactive in its nature, the visitors of the clearinghouse can upload their good practices themselves with their personal user account. A bi-monthly newsletter keeps all users of the clearinghouse updated about the latest added items, as well as the most downloaded materials. A large-scale usability test carried out in 2008 confirmed what the statistics already showed: there is a great need for such a tool in Europe, as it enables NGOs to learn from each others' experiences in a quick and interactive way. Therefore, AIDS Action Europe will continue to host the clearinghouse - also now that the EPAA project has come to an end.