



CHANGE Matters

August 2010

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Dear Supporter,

"Walk, walk, walk your talk - women's rights!" How exhilarating it was to join throngs of women and men from around the world in the streets of Vienna, insisting that human rights are essential to combating HIV and AIDS. CHANGE staff, with leaders of the vibrant global women's rights community, raised our voices in a chorus demanding that governments and international bodies "walk their talk" and truly make women's rights central to HIV and AIDS initiatives.

It was a message fresh in my mind following an early July trip to Ethiopia, where CHANGE led a delegation of three state legislators - State Senators Sandra Pappas (Minnesota) and Arthenia Joyner (Florida), and State Rep. Kay Khan (Massachusetts). We met with NGOs and government agencies, and visited rural clinics. We listened to girls talking about staying in school and avoiding early marriage. Sex workers told us about their important role as peer reproductive health and HIV educators in addressing the country's health challenges. Doctors discussed the lack of paved roads as an obstacle to preventing common ailments and treating women most in need. The Ethiopian government has made positive changes in recent years; however, systemic gender inequalities are among the main culprits preventing further progress. It is, in a sense, another unpaved road.

Women's rights are central to achieving sustainable global health and are becoming a prominent and standard piece within international discourse. President Barack Obama's Global Health Initiative (GHI) promises to put women and girls at the center of health programming. This cannot successfully happen without significant input from civil society groups on the ground. It also requires the watchful eye of groups in the U.S. - CHANGE and colleague organizations will be tracking the GHI's implementation over the coming months and years and assessing the GHI's impact. Ethiopia, a "GHI Plus" country, will be an important country for us to watch with the many people we met there.

Together, we can help the Obama administration truly "walk their talk" on women's rights.

In solidarity,

Serra Sippel
President, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

"If you look at the situation of girls in countries of sub-Saharan Africa, we know the sad figures, that girls can - between 15 and 24 are sometimes three times, four times, five times more likely to become HIV positive. And the reason for that is a power imbalance."--Former President of Ireland Mary Robinson at Women Deliver

AIDS 2010: XVIII International AIDS Conference, July 18-23, Vienna, Austria

With the theme, "Rights Here, Right Now," AIDS 2010 reflected the progress human rights activists have made in generating global consensus that HIV and AIDS feed off of human rights abuses, and that only by respecting and promoting human rights can we advance the fight against the disease. CHANGE sponsored workshops highlighting [the right to access female condoms](#) that drew more than 200 people at the conference and youth preconference. A CHANGE poster presentation detailed [the rights of sex workers](#) to appropriate health care, and how the U.S. anti-prostitution loyalty oath violates those rights. We made the case for [the rights of women and young people to full information about prevention of HIV](#) in a press conference and [related blog post](#) about continued U.S. funding of abstinence, faithfulness-only programming. And [the rights of women and girls](#) to inform and influence policies and programs related to HIV and AIDS were paramount to many of our workshops, panel presentations, and discussions.

CHANGE staff especially appreciated the rich interactions with colleagues from all over the world who visited the CHANGE booth, where conference participants signed postcards to Ambassador Goosby demanding for human rights in U.S. global AIDS policy. We look forward to building on these relationships to enhance our capacity to bring critical voices into U.S. policy making.

Ethiopia study tour, July 4-8, 2010

CHANGE hosted a delegation of three state legislators on a study tour to Ethiopia to assess the effects of U.S. policies and funding on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our delegates, State Senators Sandra Pappas (Minnesota), and Arthenia Joyner (Florida), and State Rep. Kay Khan (Massachusetts), met with international and local NGOs, the Ministry of Health, the president of the Amhara Province, USAID and the US Embassy, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. We also visited clinics, hospitals, and rural and community-based programs.

The delegates were impressed by the Ethiopian government's reproductive health strategy, which promotes an integrated and comprehensive approach to reproductive health as part of a larger global health and development agenda. But they also saw the significant challenges that remain - many of which come from policies made in Washington that do not reflect the reality nor respect the rights of women on the ground. For example, inflexible funding coming from Washington has often meant that critical women's health services are located in different clinics, with large distances between them. And while the repeal of the Global Gag Rule has helped clinics refer women for safe abortion, Ethiopian

advocates fear its reinstatement - which would be devastating given the number of women who die there annually as a result of unsafe abortion.

CHANGE will release a full report and documentary video about the study tour this fall. We will also be conducting a speakers tour with the delegates in their home states in October and early 2011.

See [photos](#) of the study tour on our [Facebook](#) page.

Intern Training Series and Advocacy Day

Over the course of the summer, CHANGE interns Annie Fedorowicz and Kristen Yoh co-organized the third annual Summer Intern Training Series on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV/AIDS, in partnership with [Advocates for Youth](#), the [Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States \(SIECUS\)](#), and [Choice USA](#). The training series included four lunch sessions hosted by each organization, culminating in an advocacy day on Capitol Hill, where more than 30 Washington-area interns met with their legislative offices to advance key international and domestic SRH and HIV/AIDS issues.

More than 30 interns also attended CHANGE's training session, "[Female and Male Condoms: Keys to Comprehensive Prevention](#)," where they discussed the lack of awareness and access, the stigma, and the cost associated with both male and female condoms.

Advocacy Day, held on August 3rd, began with basic advocacy training and messaging for two overall policy asks: End Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Funding, and support the [Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act of 2010 \[H.R. 5121\]](#).

Women Deliver and HHS Gender Forum

At the second Women Deliver conference on maternal health, held from June 6-8 in Washington, D.C., CHANGE organized sessions on human rights, culture, and sexual and reproductive health, with panelists that included former President of Ireland Mary Robinson, and health and rights advocates from around the world.

The United Nations released its draft Joint Action Plan for Women's Health at the conference, which proved a disappointment. The plan, announced by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, did not address human rights, neglecting the gender inequality that is at the root of women's most significant health issues. We are awaiting the finalized plan with anticipation of improved language. [See CHANGE's analysis of the UN Joint Action Plan](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' two-day Gender Forum, "Bringing Gender Home: Implementing a Gender Responsive [National HIV/AIDS Strategy for U.S. Women and Girls](#)," immediately followed Women Deliver. As a member of the planning committee, CHANGE facilitated the participation of women from around the world, especially women living with HIV, to share lessons learned and build links between women in the U.S. and internationally, in order to develop a gender responsive strategy to HIV/AIDS. The strategy was released last month.

Congressional Committees Approve Money, Better Policy for Global Reproductive Health

On the funding front, international family planning and reproductive health received big boosts for fiscal year 2011 in House and Senate Appropriations Committees. In June, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations approved \$735 million for international family planning, including \$60 million in contributions to UNFPA. Meanwhile, in July, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed \$700 million, reserving \$55 million for UNFPA. Both figures represent a significant increase over the FY 2010 enacted level of \$648.5 million for international family planning and reproductive health. In addition, maternal and child health and global HIV/AIDS each received modest increases from the House and Senate committees over the FY 2010 enacted levels.

On the policy front, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to include an amendment offered by Sen. Lautenberg (D-NJ) that would create a legislative barrier to a future president reinstating the Global Gag Rule. Sound familiar? It might, especially if you have taken action with CHANGE on the [Global Democracy Promotion Act](#)-stand-alone legislation that would do the same thing. This dual strategy helps lay the Global Gag Rule to rest, though we will certainly need your help keeping the pressure on Congress.

Appropriations is a long and uncertain process, and whether the Global Gag Rule appropriations amendment survives the legislative process and gets written into law will depend in part on whether and how loudly advocates voice their support. After August recess, the full House and Senate must still approve their versions of these appropriations bills before they can be reconciled and sent to the President to sign into law. It's unclear what this timeline for action will be. Regardless, CHANGE will keep you informed about how to raise your voice and help ensure access to crucial reproductive health services worldwide.

What's New

Check out CHANGE poster sessions from AIDS 2010:

[Trends in U.S. Support for Global Female Condom Procurement, Distribution, and Programming](#)
[New Approaches to U.S. Foreign Policy and Global AIDS Strategy: What it Means for Women and Girls](#)

[A Framework for Comprehensive Approaches to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Including HIV](#)

[HIV/AIDS and Women in the Sex Sector: Facing Challenges and Finding Solutions](#)

Take Action

[Urge your representative to cosponsor the ICPD resolution](#)

[Raise your voice for the Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act](#)

[Take Action on the Global Gag Rule](#)

CHANGE in the Media

- [CQWeekly: AIDS Activists Want To Be Shown the Money](#)
 - [NPR: Female Condoms: No Better Time Than Now](#)
 - [RH Reality Check: Why are we Still Funding Abstinence-Only Programming?](#)
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- [Global Health Magazine: Will the GHI Guarantee the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women & Girls?](#)
- [AFP: It works, but female condom neglected in anti-AIDS battle](#)
- [Alternet: Female Condoms: No Better Time Than Now](#)
- [AIDS 2010 Blog: Female and Condoms at the Youth Preconference](#)
- [A&U Magazine: A Woman-Centered Approach Addresses a Web of Needs & Resources](#)
- [Feministing: No, Honey, I'll Wear the Condom Tonight](#)
- [Huffington Post: craigslist: ISO Human Rights](#)
- [Our Bodies, Our Blog: Deliver This: Female Condoms and Maternal Health](#)
- [IRIN News: GLOBAL: Healthy women mean healthier nations](#)
- [CHANGE at Women Deliver 2010: Investing in Women: A Human Rights Approach](#)

Support CHANGE

Please consider making a [contribution](#) today. Any way you choose to contribute, your support strengthens our efforts to ensure U.S. international policies and programs promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide. For federal employees, CHANGE is part of the [Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area](#), #62113.



Center for Health and Gender Equity | 1317 F St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20004
| www.genderhealth.org

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