Dear Supporter,

Sometimes it’s the little things – the things that receive the least public fanfare – that seem like the biggest indicators of change. Over the past four years, we’ve welcomed bold new policies on women and gender equality, new partners collaborating to advance health and rights of women, and increased support for integration of family planning, HIV, and maternal health. While the external environment has laid the groundwork for much of this, we know that our advocacy in meetings with the administration, in coalitions, and with legislators is a driving force for change – even seemingly small change.

There have been big changes too. We marked significant successes in July at the International AIDS Conference with our “Not Without Women” media campaign. We were also in Guatemala in August, accompanying health and rights advocates in groundbreaking meetings with U.S. officials.

The next time we send out a newsletter, we will have elected our next president. With your help, we’ll continue to win changes big and small for women’s health and rights.

In solidarity,

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

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Global Female Condom Day
Thanks to all of you who made the first ever Global Female Condom Day -- held on September 12 -- a rousing success! The National Female Condom Coalition and female condom supporters around the world marked the day with a flurry of online advocacy, a photo campaign, and local efforts to increase the number of women, men, transpeople, and youth who know about, use, and advocate for female condoms.

A signal of success in advocacy to strengthen U.S. support for female condoms was the Obama administration’s participation in Global Female Condom Day by distributing female condom information and resources across agencies and through social media.

CHANGE Connects Civil Society to U.S. Officials in Guatemala
Who shapes how Washington-crafted policies are put into practice in the field? Civil society groups that aren’t direct beneficiaries of U.S. assistance are not typically consulted, but CHANGE is working to amplify the voices of sexual and reproductive health groups through our GHI Accountability Project.
The Obama administration’s Global Health Initiative (GHI) continues to be relevant to implementing organizations and U.S. officials overseas, despite GHI restructuring in Washington over the summer. In Guatemala, civil society groups mobilized with support from CHANGE are embracing the GHI’s principles of country ownership, integration, and a focus on women, girls, and gender equality as critical components to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights. In August, these groups met with U.S. officials to share their perspectives and insights on pressing health issues in Guatemala. As a result of this meeting, the groups will have ongoing consultations with U.S. officials to help U.S.-funded programs meet the needs and advance the rights of women and girls on the ground.

**International AIDS Conference, Washington, D.C., July 22-27**

AIDS 2012 was full of great moments. CHANGE brought international attention to women at a conference where women and girls are often left off the agenda. We worked with some truly exceptional advocates, and hosted an impromptu visit from Sec. of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's staff to our Global Village booth.

It was our “Not Without Women” campaign that caught the eye of Sec. Clinton's staff. They stopped by our booth and left with our stickers, posters, and a press kit. "She's going to love this," they said. We think the message is in good hands! If you would like to receive “Not Without Women” posters, please contact us at change@genderhealth.org.

The “Not Without Women” campaign ended up in outlets like *the Washington Post*, *the Seattle Times*, *the Boston Globe*, *Ms. Magazine Blog*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle*; a headline on CBSNews.com; and ads in a *USA Today* insert and *A&U Magazine*. The campaign, developed in collaboration with U.S. and global colleagues, included bus shelter ads, 11 x 17 posters, Facebook cover photos, stickers, an infographic, and a press kit. It had a viral effect—variations on the "Not Without Women" message started appearing in our partners’ press releases, talking points, chants, rallies, and even the opening plenary by CHANGE advocate Annah Sango. As intended, the message now has a life beyond CHANGE. We hope this chorus of voices is heard loud and clear!

Our Global Village booth provided an interactive forum and ended up with great results. We asked conference participants what “including women” meant to them, had them write their response on a whiteboard, and snapped a picture. We now have a [Facebook album](#) of advocates defining women's participation in their own words.

**Communications and Media Training, July 20 and 21**: We were very happy to welcome back the advocates who participated in our March 2011 leadership training for women living with HIV, and some new advocates as well. For a day and a half before the conference, we worked with professional media trainer Geoffrey Knox on messaging and print, radio, and television interview skills. The benefits were clear early on--nearly 1/4 of the participants spoke with members of the media at the conference, and media have called CHANGE since then asking to be connected with the training participants for interviews. In their own words, participants said they would use the skills they acquired during the training during their everyday work, and one participant noted that the training increased her confidence and that she intended to share her knowledge with her organization at home.

In their own words:

- “Through CHANGE, VOA called me seeking for an interview on my experience on forced and coerced sterilization among women living with HIV.
- “I really felt a part of a bigger group of women that represent advocacy for women with HIV and the issues we face. This training has empowered me to be more effective with all types of media encounters.”
- "I've had media training before, but nothing like this. Thank you all."

**Congressional reception**: "An AIDS-free Generation? Not Without Women": In partnership with UNAIDS, UNFPA, and UN Women, CHANGE hosted a reception on Capitol Hill that was sponsored by 22 Members of Congress, featured four Members as speakers, was attended by more than 100 people, and was live-tweeted by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Laurie Garrett. [Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), and David Cicilline (D-RI)](#) spoke in support of a woman-centered approach to HIV prevention, and CHANGE advocates Gina Brown of AIDS United and Annah Sango of the International Community of Women Living With HIV spoke on the health and rights of women living with HIV. Other speakers included Jan Beagle, Deputy Executive Director, UNAIDS; Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen, Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA; and Nazneen Damji, Policy Advisor, Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS, UN Women.

**Washington Update**

Before leaving for a recess of campaigning this week, Congress passed a continuing resolution that will keep the government running, at current funding levels, through March 2013.
The $524 billion continuing resolution complies with legal requirements that include a government-wide $26.6 billion cut in discretionary spending from fiscal year 2011 levels. The continuing resolution does not substantially affect current family planning or global health funding. However, if the budget situation is not resolved, the Budget Control Act of 2011 requires that spending will be subject to sequestration - an across-the-board funding cut that would have dramatic impacts on women's health, in addition to all other programs. Congress is slated to return for a lame duck session after the election, although it remains unclear whether they will resolve the major issues currently in limbo – including sequestration.

In July, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced H.R. 6138, the Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Act of 2012, which presents a bold roadmap for comprehensively addressing HIV both domestically and internationally. After office visits with CHANGE-trained advocates from the Global South during the International AIDS Conference, the bill currently has 44 co-sponsors. While it is not expected to pass this Congress during the lame duck session, the bill may play a pivotal role in PEPFAR reauthorization next year. The bill presents a comprehensive, human-rights based approach to HIV prevention and treatment, and the introduction of such language into Congress changes the shape of the conversation around HIV. Law makers will have to consider the human rights violations that perpetuate HIV, and that will be critical to creating an AIDS-free generation.

CHANGE in the Media
Associated Press (picked up by the Washington Post, the Seattle Times, the Boston Globe, the San Francisco Chronicle and nearly 500 additional outlets): AIDS Experts: Focus on pregnant women not enough
CBSNews.com: AIDS conference highlights "blind spot" for women, action urged on education and treatment
Forbes.com: Sex workers and HIV: A tricky issue for the US
Washington Post Express: Gender Gap seen in AIDS battle (page 6)
Citizen News Service: After 19 years of neglect, female condoms in spotlight at AIDS 2012
Dallas Morning News: Addressing an Epidemic: Major HIV/AIDS Awareness campaign hits newsstands
DevEx: What's next for America's global HIV/AIDS program?
Huffington Post: The U.S. Global Health Initiative and Diplomacy
Huffington Post: AIDS-free Generation? Not Without Women
Fem 2.0: An AIDS-free Generation Begins with Women

Support CHANGE
As we move into the fall, we hope you will consider supporting CHANGE with a financial contribution. Any way you choose to contribute, your support strengthens our efforts to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide through U.S. foreign policies and programs. For federal employees, CHANGE is part of the Combined Federal Campaign, #62113.