



# CHANGE Matters

June 2009

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## In this edition

- Prevention Now: Civil Society Leaders Advocate for Female Condom Access in Uganda
- Foreign Aid Reform: CHANGE Cultivates Comprehensive SRHR Champions
- Appropriations Update: Increases for International Reproductive Health and Family Planning
- House Passes State Department Authorization Bill: Office for Global Women's Issues Created
- New Faces at CHANGE: Katey, Kiki and Sade
- What's New: Press and Publications
- Support CHANGE

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Dear Friends,

I have just returned from Kampala, Uganda, inspired by the incredible activists, service providers and government officials who are dedicated to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, men and young people in their country. Their enthusiasm and dedication has renewed my energy to ensure that U.S. foreign policy and assistance is informed by those who are impacted by it the most—women, men and youth on the ground.

CHANGE and the Global Campaign for Microbicides facilitated a three-day advocacy workshop in Uganda with civil society leaders to support government efforts to reintroduce the female condom later this year. It was incredibly moving to be among men and women for whom female condom access is not a policy debate, but an urgent daily need for themselves and the people they serve.

The Uganda training was the second advocacy training that CHANGE launched this year. In May, CHANGE held its first ever advocacy training summit for U.S. civil society leaders in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights within U.S. foreign policy and assistance. From Uganda to the U.S., it's inspiring to see advocates hone their skills and raise their voices in support of positive change for women and girls worldwide.

It has been equally inspiring to see the U.S. administration strongly support reproductive health for the world's women. In April, Melanne Verveer, U.S. ambassador for global women's issues, emphasized that the Obama administration has a deep commitment to the United Nations' 1994 Cairo Programme of Action and its assertions that women's reproductive rights and empowerment are fundamental components of human rights. Additionally, Secretary Clinton voiced that access to safe abortion is a critical aspect of reproductive health, and I was among eighteen SRHR and faith-based CEOs who sent her a [letter of support](#). We now call upon Congress to follow the Administration's lead in supporting reproductive health globally and hope you will join us in our efforts. One way to make a difference now is to make a [donation to CHANGE](#). Your support is greatly appreciated and helps us continue developing the next generation of global leaders for sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In solidarity,

Serra Sippel, President  
Center for Health and Gender Equity

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**"Family planning is an important part of women's health, and reproductive health includes access to abortion, that I believe should be safe, legal and rare."**

--Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State. Remarks before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.  
April 22, 2009.

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### **Prevention Now: Civil Society Leaders Advocate for Female Condom Access in Uganda**

Last week, CHANGE was pleased to have facilitated key connections among civil society advocates for female condoms in Uganda. In a [three-day workshop organized by CHANGE and the Global Campaign for Microbicides](#) (GCM), Ugandan advocates representing HIV/AIDS service organizations, women's rights groups, domestic violence activists, and faith-based groups took a solid step forward to a successful re-launch of the female condom in their country. Participants practiced key advocacy skills and put them into practice, meeting with international bilateral and multilateral donors to urge programmatic financial support, and with the Ugandan Ministry of Health to ensure civil society involvement in their rollout plans. Determined to ensure success, workshop participants not only formed a working coalition structure and implementation plan by the end of the three days, they also had written a proposal to secure resources for their advocacy campaign. CHANGE and GCM will continue to encourage and support these leaders as they carry out their campaign.

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### **Foreign Aid Reform: CHANGE Cultivates Comprehensive SRHR Champions**

From May 3-5, 2009, in Washington, D.C., CHANGE hosted "A Healthy Future for Women and Girls Globally: Action Summit on Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" - our inaugural three-day advocacy training for U.S. supporters. Twenty-three participants representing diverse backgrounds and organizations - HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, positive women, women of color, LGBTQ and students - were selected from strategically targeted states through a competitive application process. Participants learned about the elements and importance of comprehensive SRHR, gained critical advocacy skills and met with their Congressional offices around centralizing comprehensive approaches to SRHR within foreign assistance reform.

Hill meetings were the highlight of the Summit, where participants put their newfound knowledge and confidence into action. Advocates from Wisconsin had an encouraging meeting with Senator Feingold's staff and received follow-up correspondence with a statement the Senator made referencing the importance of reproductive health and family planning to global health. Likewise, participants from California had a positive meeting with Chairman Berman's staff and offered to educate and mobilize their constituencies around comprehensive SRHR and foreign assistance reform.

As one participant reflected on the Summit: "I learned about comprehensive SRHR on so many levels. I understand the global issues much more, and I've taken away a sense of inspiration and desire to keep advocating!" CHANGE intends to build upon this momentum and host additional advocacy trainings for U.S. supporters - stay tuned for updates!

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### **Appropriations Update: Increases for International Reproductive Health and Family Planning**

On June 17, 2009, the House State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee approved its fiscal year 2010 bill. Chaired by Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D -NY), the total funding for global health was about \$7.684 billion. International reproductive health and family planning funding totaled \$648 million, including \$60 million for the United Nations Population Fund. The international reproductive health and family planning appropriation is an increase of \$103 million above the President's request. In addition to the reproductive health funding, \$5.7 billion was appropriated for global HIV/AIDS programs, including \$700 million for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria - a \$100 million increase above the President's request. Maternal and Child Health funding totaled \$541 million, about \$17.5 million above the President's request.

Historically, international reproductive health and family planning funding has decreased steadily by about 42% since 1995. Increases to the funding stream in recent years have been made possible by the tireless efforts of sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates and the leadership of Chairwoman Lowey. Chairwoman Lowey's commitment to promoting the health and rights of women and girls has set an example for other Congressional leaders as they consider support for critical health and development programs. Chairwoman Lowey's [press release](#) outlines the appropriation of funding for foreign aid programs for fiscal year 2010.

The full House Appropriations Committee approved the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill on June 23, 2009. Once the appropriations bills are approved in full committee, the House of Representatives will vote on the appropriations package in its entirety. The Senate will begin deliberations over appropriations for fiscal year 2010 shortly after the July 4 recess.

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### **House Passes State Department Authorization Bill: Office for Global Women's Issues Created**

On June 10, 2009, the House of Representatives approved a two-year State Department authorization bill (H.R. 2410) with a vote of 235 to 187. Of particular interest to CHANGE, the bill established the Office for Global Women's Issues within the Department of State. The bill also included a provision for permanent authorization for the position of Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, a post to which President Obama appointed Melanne Verveer earlier this year.

The stated purpose of the Office for Global Women's Issues is to "coordinate efforts of the United States Government regarding gender integration and women's empowerment in United States Foreign Policy." CHANGE applauds the creation of this important office and hopes that Ambassador Verveer will help make the United States a leader in promoting the reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide.

Next, the Senate will have to pass its own version of a State Department authorization bill, but the timeline for action is still uncertain.

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### **New Faces at CHANGE: Katey, Kiki and Sade**

CHANGE welcomes new members to our team! Katey Zeh is CHANGE's new program assistant, and Kiki Kalkstein and Sade Adeeyo are CHANGE's 2009 summer interns.

Before joining CHANGE, Katey was the Scholar in Residence at the Religious Institute in Westport, CT, where she worked on issues related to sexuality education in faith communities. While at the Religious Institute, she managed the Congo Sabbath Initiative, a grassroots effort to raise awareness in faith communities about sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Katey earned her bachelor's degree in religious studies from Davidson College and her Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School. She also serves on the board of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Connecticut.

Kiki is a recent graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied Public Health and Global Poverty and Practice. Through her studies Kiki took particular interest in international women's health and participated in various projects on access to family planning services in developing countries and the impact of population growth on poverty alleviation.

Sade is a rising senior at Spelman College majoring in Comparative Women's Studies with a minor in Public Health. Her passions and activism focus on a variety of issues such as violence against women, reproductive rights and justice and advancement of women's equality within a comprehensive human rights framework.

Katey, Kiki and Sade are dedicated to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all women and girls worldwide and are excited to contribute to CHANGE's work.

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### **What's New: Press and Publications**

- **Blog:** ["Uganda to Reintroduce Female Condoms. Critical Tools for HIV Prevention,"](#) Serra Sippel, *RH Reality Check*, June 29, 2009.
- **Interview:** Serra Sippel reacts to murder of Dr. George Tiller: [Abortion Doctor Killed At Church](#), *ABC World News*, June 1, 2009.
- **Sign-on Letter:** [CEOs sign-on letter](#) to Secretary Clinton addressing unsafe abortion, May 5, 2009.
- **Press Release:** [U.S. Shows the World it is a New Day in its Support for Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights](#), April 1, 2009.

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## Support CHANGE

Please consider making a donation today - there are many ways to contribute! Federal employees can now contribute to CHANGE via the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for 2009. Our CFC number is 62113.

You can also make a contribution online - [click here to donate](#). 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.

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The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) is a U.S.-based non-governmental organization whose mission is to ensure that U.S. international policies and programs promote sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls worldwide.

**Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)**

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