

**Global Campaign for Microbicides
Annual Report
March 2002- March 2003**

Summary

This year has been characterized by building partnerships, as the Global Campaign's advocacy framework has been incorporated into the agendas of a variety of organizations, coalitions and processes. Since our last report, we have established working relationships with newly formed entities and projects, such as the International Partnership for Microbicides, the Microbicides Advocacy Project of International Family Health in the UK, and the Empower project of PATH (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health).

Introduction

The Global Campaign for Microbicides is a broad-based, international effort to build support among policy makers, opinion leaders, and the general public for increased investment into microbicides and other user-controlled HIV prevention methods. Through advocacy, policy analysis, and social science research, the Campaign works to accelerate product development, facilitate widespread access and use, and protect the needs and interests of users, especially women.

Specifically, the goals of the Campaign are to:

- 1) Mobilize resources and political will for increased investment in microbicide research and greater access to the female condom and other cervical barrier methods
- 2) Create a supportive policy environment for the timely development, introduction and use of new prevention technologies, and
- 3) Ensure that as the science proceeds, the public interest is protected and that the rights and interests of trial participants, users and communities are fully represented and respected.

The Global Campaign pursues its work through a small core staff and by funding partner organizations to pursue activities that directly advance the Campaign's goals and objectives. The Global Campaign is based at PATH (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health), a global health organization that specializes in improving the health of women and children.

Raising Awareness and Political Will

Much of the awareness-raising and strengthening of political will in support of microbicides has been taken on this year by partner organizations and Global Campaign sites. Several organizations representing different but important fields have integrating the microbicides message more into their own efforts, including the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Gay Men's Health Crisis, the Feminist Majority Foundation and others.

These have been important allies in expanding the microbicides message to include a more comprehensive audience, and also finding synergy between issues to make a more effective case for expanding prevention research.

Because Global North governments are primarily those with the resources to invest, it is the responsibility of advocates in the Global North to mobilize sufficient political will to demand such investment. Under the leadership of Anna Forbes, Global North Programs Coordinator, the Global Campaign continued to strengthen our network of grassroots Campaign advocacy sites in North American and Europe. Hosted by one or more local NGOs and staffed largely by volunteer effort, these groups work to engage key interest groups – end users, women’s health advocates, HIV/AIDS service providers and individuals living with HIV/AIDS, among others – in activities that educate the public, donors and policymakers about microbicides. They, in turn, engage their communities in advocacy efforts to highlight the urgency of the issue, educate those in policy-making positions and foment political pressure for change.

The sites receive sub-grants from the Campaign and guidance from Campaign staff but pursue locally developed strategies. To date, these have included a campus organizing project in Connecticut, establishment of a statewide microbicide coalition in California, development of an active speakers bureau in Pennsylvania, a midwestern-states organizing project based in Illinois and nation-wide NGO outreach and education activities in Canada. Through the sites, the Campaign cultivates informed and vocal constituencies in the Congressional and Parliamentary districts represented by legislators who play pivotal roles in our appropriations strategy. The sites also help ensure visibility for our issue in regional media and at key AIDS, STD and reproductive health conferences in the US, the UK and Canada.

Internationally as well, more players have joined in implementing activities to raise awareness and build political support at national levels. Through its EC-funded microbicide advocacy project, International Family Health began local and regional activities in Africa and Asia, building on partnerships begun by the Global Campaign. By participating in the projects’ Global South Working Group, Global Campaign International Programs Coordinator Megan Gottemoeller, steering committee member Salimata Niang, and other partners helped structure and design the initiative. Advocacy campaigns have been strengthened in Uganda, India, and Thailand, and initiated in South Africa and the West Africa region.

Global Campaign Sites and Host Organizations

California

California Microbicides Initiative

Connecticut

Yale School of Nursing

Georgia

SisterLove

Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Iowa

AIDS Project of Central Iowa

Maryland

Health Education and Resources Organization (HERO) and Sisters Together and Reaching (STAR)

Massachusetts

Action for Boston Community Development

New York

Harm Reduction Coalition and Gay Men’s Health Crisis

Pennsylvania

Health Federation of Philadelphia and ActionAIDS

Washington

Planned Parenthood of Western Washington

Canada

Canadian AIDS Society

UK/Ireland

National AIDS Trust and International Family Health

Creating a supportive policy environment

Legislative Advocacy

The Global Campaign continued to work together with the Alliance for Microbicide Development and consultant Pam Norick to design and implement an advocacy strategy targeting the US Congress and microbicide research funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Our efforts have resulted in an increase of tens of millions of dollars at NIH and CDC¹, and a designated investment of \$18 million for microbicide research and development at USAID in FY 03. The Microbicide Development Act, authorizing federal spending and creating a designated program at the NIH, was introduced by Senator Jon Corzine (DE-NJ) and is now serving as a foundation for the coming year's legislative efforts. The International Partnership for Microbicides, an entity that emerged from the efforts of the Rockefeller Foundations' microbicides initiative of the last two years, has partnered with the Alliance and the Global Campaign to contract the services of Washington communications specialists Witeck Combs, Inc. The staff of Witeck Combs will help us as a field to create a concise, convincing media and messaging strategy that directly supports our legislative efforts in Washington.

Influencing Policy

In addition to seeking a direct impact on research funding today, the Global Campaign is looking ahead to the day when safe, effective microbicides do exist, and working today to create a supportive environment for microbicides when they are available. This year the Global Campaign continued its collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to develop mathematical models that help policy-makers envision the potential impact that microbicides could have for their countries.

Global Campaign team member Ananthu Thambinayagam undertook a qualitative research project in India to assess the attitudes of key "gatekeepers" towards microbicides as HIV prevention for women. She interviewed dozens of health care providers, NGO representatives, government officials and others in the state of Tamil Nadu, an area with a high prevalence of HIV. She will present the results of her research at a meeting of National Stakeholders in India, organized by the Global Campaign and funded by USAID, to take place in October 2003.

Protecting Public Interest

Perhaps the most critical aspect of the Global Campaign's mission is the principle of keeping the rights and perspectives of research participants and users at the forefront of our

¹ Despite these welcome increases, NIH spending on microbicides accounts for just over 2% of all AIDS spending at NIH. As more microbicide candidates are advanced into later-stage clinical trials and development costs rise correspondingly, current levels of funding become increasingly inadequate.

efforts. Several initiatives this year have highlighted this role. We received a grant from USAID to launch a three-year program on community involvement in clinical trials of microbicides. This project will explore the various approaches to engaging communities in HIV prevention research, and facilitate dialogue and evaluation to discern key areas of “best practice” in community involvement. This year we have deepened our participation in key groups working on community issues in research, such as the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN), IAVI, and the African AIDS Vaccine Program (AAVP). We also visited a number of clinical trial sites in South Africa and interviewed community educators, researchers, members of advisory boards, and local NGOs about their perspectives on community involvement.

In another initiative that represented an opportunity to engage different constituencies, the Global Campaign took the lead on an effort to have N-9 removed from condoms and sexual lubricants that may be used rectally.

The Global Campaign continued in its role as convener by hosting a small consultation on the issue of providing anti-retroviral treatment to participants in clinical trials who sero-convert. We undertook this effort after recognizing that debates on this issue were stalling the approval of research protocols. The Campaign worked with IAVI to convene representatives of the key HIV prevention research networks to share their approaches and to discuss the issue from both ethical and practical frameworks.

Global Campaign Development

As a coalition of over 180 organizations around the world, the Global Campaign has always walked between the worlds of tangible entity and loose network. We are continuing to manage that balance, responding to the needs of our partners while also providing some cohesive strategy and identity. Last year we designed and adopted a new logo- this year we consolidated that identity with materials, buttons, and t-shirts available to all our partners for their own use. We also designed and launched a comprehensive, interactive website that can serve the needs of many constituencies at once, from the new visitor seeking the basic information to the well-informed advocate looking for the latest materials and resources.

We have also strengthened the synergy of our relationship with PATH. The Global Campaign forms a key piece of the HIV, AIDS, and TB strategic program at PATH. We have also integrated our work more closely with that of the Empower project, which focuses on developing prevention methods for women, by including cervical barriers as part of our discussions about women-focused methods.