



At the United Nations, “Prescription for Life” Raises Needs of Children Living with HIV

For the past year, children in at least 14 countries have been writing letters to pharmaceutical companies and government officials calling on them to increase access to appropriate testing and treatment for the over two million children living with HIV.

Now on display in New York is an exhibit based on the children’s letters, “Prescription for Life: Help Children Living with HIV”. The exhibit, and a related panel discussion on the state of the response to children living with HIV, are part of the events at the UN marking the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The exhibit has been organized by the EAA in cooperation with UNICEF and UNAIDS, with the support of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran World Mission.

Koia, a 7 yr old member of the Fordham Evangelical Lutheran Church in New York, read her letter to invited guests from the UN, EAA, missions and church-based organizations in New York at a reception held to open the exhibit. “We can make enough medicine for everyone,” she read. “People are more important than money. Sick kids need medicine. Please share with them.”

The Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere should have, including the right to health. Yet every day, almost 1000 children die from AIDS-related illnesses, many of them infants who have not even been diagnosed. Others die because they don’t have access to appropriate pediatric treatments and still more could have

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Calendar of Events 2009

Until 4 December:

EAA “Prescription for Life” Exhibition at the UN Headquarters in New York

21-23 November:

V Latin American and Caribbean Forum on HIV/AIDS and STIs and the IV Latin American and Caribbean Communitarian Forum on HIV/AIDS and STIs (FORO), Lima, Peru.

1 December:

World AIDS Day

8-10 December:

UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting agenda is focused on the Second Independent Evaluation of UN-AIDS. For more information, see: <http://www.unaidspcbngo.org/pcb/>

7 December:

The NGO Delegation pre-meeting with civil society from 2-4 pm at UNAIDS. Please RSVP to Natalie Siniora at pcbaf@nsiniora@gmail.com

10 December:

International Human Rights Day

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 2009 Ecumenical Advocacy
Alliance

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is a broad international network of churches and Christian organizations cooperating in advocacy on food and HIV and AIDS. The Alliance is based in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, see www.e-alliance.ch/

This bulletin is located online
[www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/resources/
bulletins/](http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/resources/bulletins/)

Photographs in this bulletin do not necessarily represent the situations, opinions or beliefs of the persons depicted and in no way imply their HIV status.

The *HIV and AIDS Campaign* is based on the knowledge that all churches are living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. People who live with HIV and die from AIDS related illness are our friends and family, our teachers and neighbors, our pastors and priests. The pandemic continues to be measured in alarming statistics around the globe, and churches and people of faith everywhere must take up their pastoral and prophetic role to overcome stigma and discrimination, to care for body and spirit, and to advocate for universal treatment and effective forms of prevention.

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avoided contracting the virus if their mothers had access to the testing and treatment that could have prevented their children from contracting HIV.

A panel discussion on HIV and children is also being held at the UNICEF building in New York on 20 November, Universal Children's Day. The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, UNICEF, UNAIDS, Global AIDS Alliance, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Caritas Internationalis have co-organized the event to bring experts together to discuss the state of the response to children living with HIV. The Panel includes representatives from the US government's Center for Disease Control, Abbott, Clinton Foundation, UNICEF and the Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program in Nairobi. The discussion is moderated by Karen Plater, Presbyterian Church in Canada and co-chair of the EAA's HIV and AIDS strategy group and UNICEF are hosting a panel discussion on HIV and Children on 20 November, Universal Children's Day.

The exhibit will be displayed at the UN through 4 December 2009. You can see the panels and learn more about the exhibit and the panel discussion at: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/bivaids/accountability/prescription-for-life-help-children-living-with-hiv/>

See the fact sheet available on this webpage for more information on what is needed to give children living with HIV a "prescription for life." And for further information, see:

EAA: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/bivaids/accessmeds/>

Caritas Internationalis: http://www.caritas.org/activities/biv_aids/biv_and_tb_free_children.html

U.S. Ends HIV Travel Ban

"The U.S. AIDS travel ban has never made any sense at all except to re-enforce the stigma attached to living with HIV ... We want all countries to allow people living with HIV to travel freely. The fight continues", said Winnie Sseruma from Christian Aid

Faith based campaigners on HIV and AIDS have welcomed the announcement by U.S. President Barack Obama of the removal of entry restrictions to the United States based on HIV status and have called on other nations with similar policies to follow the US government's example. "Ending discriminatory policies and confronting stigmatizing attitudes toward people living with HIV and AIDS are essential for their full inclusion in society and religious communities," said Bishop Mark S. Hanson, president of the Lutheran World Federation and the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a statement on the lifting of the visa restrictions, urged, "all other countries with such restrictions to take steps to remove them at the earliest".

The Rev. J. P. Mokgethi-Heath, from INERELA+ said, "We in the faith communities and people living with HIV, have for many years been campaigning

for the removal of these misinformed and discriminatory travel restrictions ... When applying for my U.S. visa now I will not feel contaminating and contaminated. I will feel I am applying for a visa on the merit of my travel, the same as everyone else.”

The lifting of the US travel ban will go into effect at the beginning of January 2010.

Commemorate World AIDS Day in Your Community

World AIDS Day, observed on 1 December each year, is an important opportunity when governments, national AIDS programs, faith organizations, community organizations, and individuals around the world bring attention to the global AIDS epidemic and emphasise the critical need for universal access to essential care.

The global theme for World AIDS Day in 2009 and 2010 is “Universal Access and Human Rights” chosen by The World AIDS Campaign. This theme encourages people of faith to deepen understanding, develop partnerships and challenge discriminatory laws, policies and practices that stand in the way of access for all to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance has prepared a special liturgy for the 2009 World AIDS Day in English, French, Spanish and German. Please visit: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/biv aids/world-aids-day/> to download the liturgy and other resources.

2010 International AIDS Conference Theme: RIGHTS HERE, RIGHT NOW

The Conference Coordinating Committee of the AIDS 2010 conference has selected “Rights Here, Right Now” as its theme. It emphasizes the central importance of protecting and promoting human rights as a prerequisite to a successful response to HIV.

All registrations (regular delegate, student/post-doc, youth delegate, accompanying adult and child, media representative) for the XVIII International AIDS Conference will open on 1 December 2009. Delegates are encouraged to register by 24 February 2010 to avoid a late surcharge. Learn more at: www.aids2010.org

The conference will take place in Vienna, Austria, 18-23 July 2009.

AIDS-2010: Guide to Community Involvement!

The Guide to Community Involvement in AIDS 2010 at www.aids2010community.org was created by the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) to help you better understand and participate in the international AIDS conference.

Multifaith pre-conference and other faith-based activities

The EAA is currently soliciting nominations to serve as members of the Multifaith Planning Committee for the one-day pre-conference, on 17 July 2010. The committee will develop the theme and program for the event, coordinate fundraising, and insure implementation. If you have a nomination, or additional questions about faith-based activities at the IAC, please contact Thabo Sephuma within the week at: tsephuma@e-alliance.ch.

Registration for the 2010 Commission on the Status of Women

Preparations are underway for the Beijing + 15 review meeting, which will focus on “sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals”. The online pre-registration has begun. All relevant info can be accessed through the DAW website:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/NGO.html#invitation>



World AIDS Day 2009 resource from
The World AIDS Campaign

Food advocacy linked to HIV

Over 45 organizations and individuals signed a letter to Dr Jacques Diouf, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization in advance of the World Food Summit that just concluded in Rome.

The letter called for the Summit outcomes to respect and help realize the right to food for all people. Noting the unique link that the EAA has with two campaigns on food and on HIV and AIDS, the letter highlighted our “particular concern for the right to food as it affects people living with, and vulnerable to, HIV.”

As the letter stated, “Access to sufficient and appropriate food is essential not just in aiding the effectiveness of treatment but reducing vulnerability to the transmission of HIV. The answer lies not in the short term provision of aid or reliance on cheap

imports that decimate the livelihoods of local producers, but in just and sustainable solutions that support local producers and economies in ways that preserve the environment for future generations.”

In their recent meetings, the strategy groups working on the two EAA campaigns had discussions on possible links in actions on Food and HIV. With the issue gaining prominence, EAA's joint expertise and experience will assist effective lobbying. A focus on HIV and food for World AIDS Day; contributing issues related to food, nutrition and HIV to the “Food and Nutrition Watch” annual report, and developing joint articles on the linkages to raise awareness are some of the actions planned.

For more information, see *The Right to Food in the Context of HIV/AIDS*, published by the FAO in 2008 <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/resources/library/document/22835/download/>



Resources

SAVE: A Comprehensive Approach to HIV prevention, care & support

An independent evaluation was commissioned by Christian Aid and the Friends of Canon Gideon Foundation to study the effectiveness of the SAVE approach to HIV prevention, care and support. SAVE stands for Safer Practices, Access to medication and nutrition, Voluntary counseling and testing, and Empowerment through education. Among the findings is that the SAVE framework provides an enabling tool for individuals to discuss and disseminate comprehensive and educational information on HIV. See: http://www.aidsportal.org/repos/SAVE_EvaluationReportMay2009.pdf

2009 “Towards Universal Access” Progress Report

More than 4 million people in low- and middle-income countries were receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) at the close of 2008, representing a 36% increase in one year and a ten-fold increase over five years, according to a new report by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The full report can be downloaded in English or French from the WHO HIV/AIDS Department web site: <http://www.who.int/hiv>.

The Open Society Institute has launched a new and improved online resource guide for practitioners and advocates at: www.equalpartners.info. The resource guide covers the basic concepts and resources in health and human rights, and provides information on international treaties and enforcement mechanisms that can be applied to health care settings.

For past Action Alerts and Bulletins from the HIV and AIDS Campaign, see
www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/resources/