

AVAC-GCM Advocacy Fellowship Bulletin

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

• 2010-2011 round of Advocacy Fellowship launched

Inaugural Fellows making headway in their advocacy

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Alliance & civil society 2

Patrick & grassroots 2

Gift & MSM 2

Fellows @ M2010 3

Coming up 8

Six months and counting...

It was January just the other day, and it's past midyear already – how time can fly! Fellows have continued to make good progress in their different projects. This update gives highlights of some milestones from their activities thus far.



Nono (l), Alliance (c) and Patrick (r) share a light moment at M2010.

Jauhara engages media

The media are a moving target and can be challenging to bring together. Ugandan Fellow Jauhara Nan-yondo's project aims to develop a media training guide. She successfully organized and facilitated her

first media stakeholder meeting – a needs assessment which was held on ... in Kampala. "Having 15 out of 18 journalists attend, and remain engaged as they were throughout the day was more than I could ask for at my first meeting," said Jauhara. Her other milestone was meeting 14 key informants, including HIV prevention researchers to whom she introduced her project.

2010-2011 round of Fellowship

As many would have noted, we are currently accepting applications for 2010-2011 Advocacy Fellowships. We thank Fellows and Host Supervisors who offered feedback during the revision of ap-

plication materials. It was very useful in developing new materials. As was for the first round, applications will be expected from developing countries where there is ongoing or planned HIV prevention

research, or roll out of male circumcision. Applications will be received through July 19.

Further information and application materials can be found at www.avac.org/fellows.

Cynthia takes her advocacy to rural women

She has engaged various stakeholders including ministry of health representatives, traditional leaders and councilors in wards.

Cynthia Mungofa, a Fellow from Zimbabwe, took her advocacy to rural women whom she wants to empower to be microbicides advocates too. She has engaged various stakeholders including ministry of health representatives, traditional leaders and councilors in wards

(districts) where the project will be implemented. She has developed several IEC materials including poster and t-shirts for community based advocates. Cynthia is currently working on a documentary, “Voices of Rural Women” and has identified resource persons to work with her on its production. We hope to see snippets soon...

Munya develops communications tool for CABs and trial staff

Zimbabwean Fellow, Munyaradzi “Munya” Chimwara is also working on a media-related project. Munya successfully conducted needs assessment meetings with CAB members, clinic staff and researchers. “My biggest achievement was being able to develop a media and communications training tool that Community Advisory Boards and trial site staff can use,” Munya said. This fills a big gap and it shows the impact this project is already having on the prevention research landscape in this community. In addition to this, Munya delivered a

talk about microbicides to about 40 female students from seven tertiary institutions around Harare during a sexual and reproductive health workshop.

Munya enjoyed what he called the real “fruits of media engagement” in May. The Microbicides 2010 conference which he attended, and to which he recommended three Zimbabwean journalists provided an opportunity for the reporters to proactively report on Microbicides

and other new prevention options. First was a pre-conference analysis that *The Herald* did on April 28, followed by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) News on May 16, Voice of America (VOA) on May 18 and then *The Standard* on May 23. Details of these previews and other coverage available at www.avac.org/fellows.

“As I write, I am speaking to a producer on one of the radio stations about doing a women’s health program which will highlight issues to do with women’s vulnerability, HIV and a host of others,” said Munya. How exciting!

Alliance pulls off inaugural civil society dialogues

Rwandan Fellow, Alliance Nikuze, conducted a civil society dialogue in March, and a consultative meeting in May with SWAA-Rwanda.

Alliance is working to engage civil society in the rollout of medical male circumcision or HIV prevention in Rwanda (MMC). The dialogue helped facilitate the development of a common understanding on several issues concerning MMC, including availability of affordable services, understanding partial protection, misconceptions and myths to be addressed during the rollout.

“This dialogue helped to identify advocacy needs and priority actions for Rwanda,” Alliance said. Participants identified the need to have more of these discussions to be able to have an impact in their communities.

At the SWAA consultation, she was amazed at how much community groups can contribute to ongoing MMC national rollout, and at how more and more women are becoming aware of the importance of involving them in MMC rollout.

In May, Alliance attended the international microbicides conference. She says *“I became knowledgeable of what is currently going on in the field of microbicides research thus increasing my awareness on the advocacy needed to be done but also giving me the passion for this field,”*.

During the conference, she earned herself an invitation from WHO’s Dr. Kim Dickson to participate in the country update meeting on scale-up of male circumcision programs in the southern and eastern Africa region held in Arusha, Tanzania in early June.

“This meeting gave me more proof for how important this advocacy fellowship is in countries where new biomedical prevention interventions are being implemented,” concluded Alliance.



Participants at one of the civil society dialogues in Kigali.

“This dialogue helped to identify advocacy needs and priority actions for Rwanda,” Alliance.

Nono delivers Plenary Speech



"I couldn't be happier with my work around the female condoms," said South African Fellow, Nono Eland. She said that advocacy work on female condoms was one of her major achievements.

During this quarter, Nono and other colleagues at the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) worked hard to advocate for the incorporation of female condoms in the South African HIV counseling and testing campaign. They not only achieved this, but also ensured that more female condoms will be ordered for the World Cup in June. Nono also co-authored an article in TAC's newsletter

conducted a successful stakeholder meeting.

At the May 2010 International Microbicides Conference (M2010), Nono moved all the conference through her well-thought and exceptionally delivered plenary address titled *"Taking it to the streets"*. Nono related the fight against HIV/AIDS to soccer – whereby there are different players on the field, each with a clear responsibility. She emphasized the need for a strong attack on the epidemic noting that even in soccer, the best defense is offense.

"I couldn't be happier with my work around the female condoms."

Gift faces challenges with his work involving MSM in Malawi, but Moves Forward



Gift speaking at a recent congressional briefing in Washington DC.

Gift Trapence had been the centre of activism in Malawi as he and his host organization CEDEP have been directly involved with the recent case regarding a gay couple that was arrested. Gift and CEDEP worked tirelessly on getting legal representation and justice for them and advocating with national and international gatekeepers to influence

the decision of case. Through this storm, his office was broken into twice which added further challenge in doing his Fellowship work.

"Working on MSM issues in Malawi and Africa needs commitment and being strong. Expect the risks of arrests, media homophobia, politicians and religious negative statements... The only entry point to the issues is to take health perspective as a rights issue..." said Gift.

However, he was able to conduct a thorough literature review on male circumcision for HIV prevention and what it means for men who have sex with men (MSM). This helped

him to develop a fact sheet on male circumcision and a question guide for focus group discussions with MSM.

In June, Gift was invited to Washington D.C. by the U.S. State Department for discussions on the rights of minority groups in Africa. He and three other African minority rights advocates were applauded by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for the courageous work they are doing, and she pledged her support and that of the U.S. government towards this work.

Patrick documents grassroots women's voices on microbicides



One of the women illustrating a point to others

HIV prevention. The women suggested that couples' sex seminars could help strengthen male involvement in HIV prevention. The women said that "we also have our *mpango wa kando*"* (clandestine lovers)... "let us bring them on board as well."

Kenyan Fellow, Patrick Mwai Muchai, like Cynthia, also went to grassroots women. Patrick documented women's voices during a "Women's Day" event he coordinated. The women told him that there is minimal male involvement in HIV prevention activities and that they would like to see more men prioritize

In May, Patrick miraculously made it to M2010, after acquiring his U.S. visa just two hours before his flight! And in June, Patrick made a presentation about the Fellowship and his M2010 experience at a KANCO quarterly networking meeting. This meeting brings together KANCO's regional members – about 80 civil society groups, Ministry of Health, government departments and private sector organizations. This forum was aimed at sharing success stories and challenges in HIV prevention at the community level.

The women told him that there is minimal male involvement in HIV prevention activities, and that they would like to see more men prioritize HIV prevention.

Richard presents Fellowship project at M2010

Richard Hasunira, another Ugandan Fellow, presented preliminary results from his Fellowship project at an oral presentation at the International Microbicides Conference (M2010) in Pittsburgh- "Preparing communities for results of HIV prevention trials: the case of communities participating in MDP 301 in Masaka, Uganda." It was an exceptional opportunity for Richard to highlight the work that he

is doing, and an indication of the field's appreciation of the importance of the work being undertaken in the Fellowship. Congratulations to Richard. His presentation went well with the trial's international PI, Sheena McCormack asking to meet Richard to follow up, and requesting him to share his final results when his project ends.



Richard engages representatives from a research community in Masaka.

"I look forward to many more opportunities for me and other Fellows to highlight our work," Richard said.

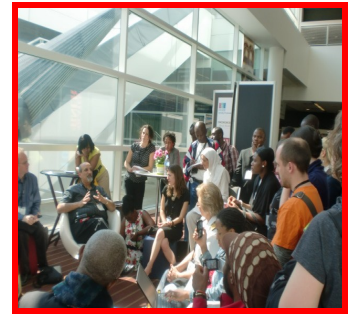
"I liked the fact that there was no barrier between scientists and community advocates and this made this experience wonderful," Alliance.

"The morning briefings were a great idea! It helped me not to lose focus. We had a review of the previous day's experiences and were able to address the matters arising out of the previous day's presentations and furthermore, we were informed on which presentations might be of interest to us as fellows," Patrick.

M2010 Advocates preconference

There were over 200 participants at day-long workshop before the 2010 Microbicides Conference (M2010). Dr Slim Abdool Karim provided a with an excellent state of the field address, followed by an animated panel discussion panel on the challenges of prevention advocacy work on

the ground, moderated by Gus Cairns from AIDSMAP. Nono was on this panel as well. Several team members from AVAC and GCM facilitated the skills-building breakout sessions. The workshop was co-hosted by GCM, AMAG, AVAC, IRMA and the Pittsburgh task Force.



Advocates Corner @ M2010

GCM together with AVAC, the African Microbicides Advocacy Group (AMAG), International Rectal Microbicides Advocates (IRMA), New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society (NHVMAS) and the

Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force (PATF) co-sponsored the *Advocates Corner at M2010*. The "Corner" provided a networking and information sharing space where delegates representing community, advocates and

civil society interacted, socialized and shared ideas throughout the conference. AVAC launched its "Turning the Page" excerpt of the 2010 AVAC Report at the *Corner*.



M2010 in pictures

Fellows @ M2010



Alliance (l) in a discussion with Dr. Salim Abdool Karim (c) and FHI's Beth Robinson (r).

make a plenary address on “Taking it to the streets”, which she handled exceptionally well. She spoke on behalf of Vuyiseka Dubula, her Host Supervisor who could not attend at the last minute.

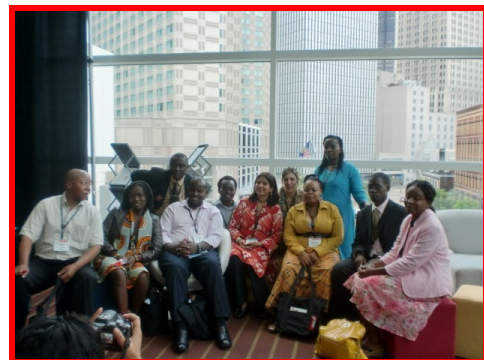
Six Fellows were at M2010 in Pittsburgh on conference scholarships - Alliance, Cynthia, Munyaradzi, Nono, Patrick, and Richard . Pittsburgh provided a unique opportunity for the Fellows and the Fellowship. Richard (Uganda) made an oral presentation on his Fellowship project on community engagement in the releases of the MDP301 results. Nono (South Africa) was selected to

Munyaradzi (Zimbabwe) brought his expertise in media engagement during a media program that AVAC co-sponsored with M2010 and MTN. The other Fellows – Alliance , Patrick and Cynthia – participated in various activities including volunteering at the Advocates’ Corner. It was a unique opportunity for the Fellows to network

with seasoned advocates and to meet leading scientists in the field. It



A considerable number of African conference participants expressed interest in the Fellowship at an informational session, and it’s expected that we’ll receive more applications in the second round than in the first.



Some of the Fellows and mentors at M2010.

AVAC and partners train journalists @ M2010

AVAC together with M2010 and MTN organized a one-day journalists’ training at M2010. The training targeted journalists from several African countries, South America and the U.S. The training was designed to

provide journalists with relevant background, context and detail on HIV prevention research to enable them to have informed reporting. It was a rich program especially given that the focus of this year’s M2010 conference was expanded beyond microbicides to

include the array of experimental biomedical prevention interventions. Nineteen journalists from 12 countries attended. The conference got good media coverage with a big percentage coming from these journalists.

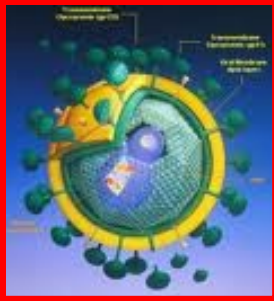
Coming up...

AIDS2010 Vienna (July 18 – 21)

Preparation for the International AIDS Society Conference (AIDS2010) continues. In addition to the abstracts accepted for poster and oral presentations, Global Village booth and exhibition hall booth, AVAC and GCM will be involved in several other sessions and activities. The full 2010 AVAC Report will also be launched at the conference. Fellows, Gift and Victor, and some Host Supervisors will make it to AIDS2010. We hope to be able to pull together a meeting between us all. Also, we will be presenting a poster on the Fellows on July 21.

AIDS Vaccine 2010 Atlanta (September 28 – October 1)

Planning for the AIDS Vaccine 2010 conference is already underway.



About AVAC

Founded in 1995, AVAC is an international, non-profit organization that uses education, policy analysis, advocacy and community mobilization to accelerate the ethical development and eventual global delivery of AIDS vaccines and other new HIV prevention options as part of a comprehensive response to the pandemic.

About GCM

The Global Campaign for Microbicides (GCM) is a civil society organization that works to ensure the ethical and accelerated development and widespread access to new and existing HIV-prevention options—especially for women.