



The Global Forum on MSM and HIV (MSMGF)

Quarterly Report
April 2010 – June 2010

UNAIDS PCB planning

- The 26th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) will take place in Geneva on 22-24 June. MSM issues are slated to feature prominently on the agenda.
- The MSMGF Policy Associates and Executive Officer have been participating in a small strategy working group led by MSMGF Co-Chair, Robert Carr to maximize impact of this discussion. We provided input and edits to the development of three key MSM-related meeting documents; have had weekly conference calls with 2 of the NGO delegation representatives and other allies, and have drafted key talking points and priority issues for the meeting.
- Efforts are ongoing to engage with key players ahead of and at the meeting, including key country delegations and representatives. The MSMGF will sponsor three MSM activists to attend the UNAIDS PCB meeting as observers to ensure strong activist representation at the meeting.

Millennium Development Goals Summit

- This June, AIDS advocates will gather in New York in preparation for the Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly with Non-governmental organizations, Civil society organizations and the Private sector as a means to provide inputs to the process of the High-level Plenary Meeting, also referred to as the "MDG Summit" scheduled to take place later this year (September 2010). MSMGF Policy staff was engaged along with key global AIDS allies through the Free Space Process to strategize on identifying key indicators and demands to better impact the AIDS response as a key component of the MDGs both on its own as well as in relation to the other MDGs.
- Thanks to this planning process, 35 HIV advocates from around the world will meet in New York on 10-11 June to (a) develop the desired HIV-related language for this process (our "asks") and (b) develop an advocacy strategy for advancing these priorities around the globe.
- The MSMGF has been involved in a number of ways: nominating MSMGF Steering Committee members to take part in this meeting; working on developing the meeting agenda, MSMGF Policy Associate, Mohan Sundararaj participated in the development of a background document on human rights, HIV and most-at-risk populations; Krista provided comments and edits to all 5 background documents created in advance of the meeting.
- Pursuant to the advocates' meeting, MSMGF staff will also be in attendance at the civil society hearing scheduled at the UN Headquarters on June 14 and 15, 2010.

PEPFAR – Field Guidance on MSM

- Following concerted advocacy efforts over time by the MSMGF and others, the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) is moving ahead with developing a field on reaching MSM through PEPFAR AIDS programs
- Policy Associate Krista Lauer and MSMGF Executive Officer George Ayala have been in communication with the focal point person on the project to provide input and support.
- In her role as Co-Chair of the D.C.-based MSM Policy Working Group, Krista coordinated a face-to-face meeting with OGAC staff to discuss the guidance at the end of April, and subsequently led the

MSM Working Group through a process to develop written recommendations and a listing of useful resources and supporting documents that were submitted to OGAC. Input was solicited from MSMGF Steering Committee members and other allies (UNDP, etc).

- A final draft of the MSM guidance is anticipated shortly, though only available for internal circulation among key OGAC staffers at this time. The MSM Working Group is in conversations with OGAC to hold a final face-to-face meeting on the guidance prior to the IAS in Vienna in July.

MSMGF Participates in the Development of HIV Prevention and Treatment Guidelines with WHO

- The World Health Organization (WHO) is developing guidelines for delivering an evidence-based, essential package of interventions for the prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people in the health sector in low- and middle-income countries. WHO has formed a Guidelines Advisory Work Group, which will develop initial draft recommendations. The MSMGF is represented on the Advisory Work Group by MSMGF Executive Officer, Dr. George Ayala. As a global partner to the WHO on the development of prevention and treatment guidelines, the MSMGF will be systematically soliciting civil society input from MSM and transgender advocates through its ties to regional and country-level networks as part of the guidelines development process. The MSMGF will compile input it collects into a formal report to be submitted to the WHO Advisory Work Group.

GHC session on MARPs in Vienna

- The MSMGF policy associates have been involved in the planning a satellite session at the IAS spearheaded by the Global Health Council. Entitled: “*Dreams At Risk: Overcoming Barriers to Better AIDS Policy for Most At Risk Populations in Eastern Europe, A Community Discussion & Reception*”, the session will take place Wednesday, July 21st from 18:30-20:30 in Mini Room 6 of the Reed Messe Wien, Messaplatz I, Vienna.
- The session has a focus on Eastern Europe and the MSMGF recommended Tudor Kovacs as a speaker; he has since accepted the nomination.
- More than 200 participants are anticipated to take part; more details will be circulated soon.

Judicial Leaders Network

- The UNDP has received our final detailed budget for a proposed Judicial Leaders Network.
- A meeting of the 3 ‘core’ members of the Judiciary has been proposed for mid-August in Johannesburg, pending the scheduling and final approval.
- Strategy discussions led by MSMGF Co-Chair, Don Baxter have also begun around the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth Australia, in October 2011, and the Commonwealth Law-affiliated conferences that are scheduled to precede the CHOGM. Anton Kerr of the HIV/AIDS Alliance worked on decriminalization issues at the CHOGM in Trinidad and Tobago and is currently the Chair of the Commonwealth HIV and AIDS Action Group (CHAAG) – the MSMGF will join this group as discussions move forward.

Appropriations language submitted

- The MSM Policy Working Group, led by Krista, submitted language to Appropriations staff in U.S. Congress calling for HIV-related funding to prioritize MSM in the global response.

Advocacy Toolkit

- With the busy policy agenda taking up staff time, a full-time consultant was hired to help lead the development of our Advocacy Toolkit on MSM and HIV. Jonathan Ripley comes to us with a background in HIV and advocacy, including 3 years experience providing capacity support to community-based organization advocating for the rights of MSM in rural Tamil Nadu, India. Jonathan is a former William J. Clinton Fellow for Service in India, and has consulted for the HIV/AIDS Team at John Snow, Inc. (He is also a self-professed “huge fan” of the MSMGF website.)
- In addition to providing the pilot Advocacy Training of Trainers session at the MSM Pre-Conference on July 17th, we applied for and were successfully accepted to provide a second training session at the Human Rights Networking Zone at the Global Village space on Monday July 19th. We will be providing a third training on Wednesday July 21st in the MSMGF Networking Zone in the Global Village.

Response to Human Rights Abuses

- Krista Lauer strategized with key US Congressional offices on legislation condemning the Anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda and calling for decriminalization efforts in all nations;
- Krista held a meeting with the Uganda Desk Officer at the U.S. State Department to relay concerns from advocates on the ground, particularly around “TheCall Ministries”, a rally organized by U.S. evangelist Lou Engel.
- The MSMGF issued condemnations of the conviction and sentencing of Steven Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga in Malawi, in coordination with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and the Center for the Development of People (Malawi). The couple was subsequently released but the MSMGF maintains communication with CEDEP and IGLHRC staff on the issue, and hopes to highlight it in various speaker’s capacities at the MSM Pre-Conference event.
- MSMGF Policy Staff Mohan Sundararaj participated in a protest march in Barcelona, Spain that was organized to persuade global health agencies to depathologize transgender identities. This campaign titled ‘Stop Trans Pathologization-2012’ is an action coordinated by the International Net for Trans Depathologization.

International Day Against Homophobia and MSMGF Policy Brief: Social Discrimination Against Men Who Have Sex With Men, Implications for HIV Policy and Programs

- On May 17, 2010 the International Day Against Homophobia, the MSMGF launched an Executive Officer’s statement and a policy brief to underscore established linkages between social discrimination against gay men and other MSM and their vulnerability to HIV. This brief contains recommendations for enhancing the AIDS response by mitigating stigma and discrimination. While an online version is currently available for download, the print version will be available at the UNAIDS PCB meeting in Geneva and print with translated versions in French, Russian and Spanish in Vienna.

Advocacy for Transgender Persons

- In support of worldwide advocacy efforts to depathologize transgender identities, the MSMGF issued a statement in April 2010 calling for the removal of Gender Identity Disorder from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association and the World Health Organization’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. Resonating key thought leadership from global activists and researchers, the statement reviews weaknesses in the diagnostic criteria and their appropriateness in the context of human gender identity

variance. Further, the need for advocacy is underscored in the context of widespread stigma and discrimination fostered by a psychiatric diagnosis and resulting negative health outcomes.

- This statement was translated into Spanish with editorial expertise from MSMGF Program Associate, Omar Banos.
- Policy Associate Mohan Sundararaj attended the International Congress on Gender Identity and Human Rights in Barcelona, Spain June 1-6, 2010. At the pre-conference, Mohan facilitated a workshop for a group of global transgender advocates on global organizing in the context of HIV/AIDS where key and relevant MSMGF publications were disseminated.
- The MSMGF is eager to receive expertise through the establishment of a Transgender Reference Group to help inform future organizational directives to support this vulnerable population within the contexts of HIV and human rights abuses. We are currently planning to resource such a group pursuant to the transgender session at the MSMGF pre-conference event in Vienna in July 17th. The MSMGF plans to actively engage with researchers, clinicians, advocates and civil society to solicit inputs to developing such a process.

MSM Report in collaboration with amfAR

- The MSMGF participated and co-authored a report in collaboration with amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research that is currently being finalized. The report identifies key elements of the AIDS response within the grassroots context. It touches upon the multi-pronged scope of approaches required at those levels. Data presented in the report emerged primarily from interviews with organizations that were funded by amfAR's MSM Initiative. MSMGF Staff Omar Banos conducted the interviews in Spanish. George Ayala and Mohan Sundararaj provided writing assistance to the report. English print versions will be available in Vienna and translated versions in French, Russian and Spanish shortly thereafter.

Communications: Newsletter, Website, Communication Strategy

- The MSMGF has released an issue of our monthly news letter on schedule every month to donors, strategic partners and other supporters (see www.msmgf.org/forumnotes). The MSMGF has now released four issues, with the fifth issue under production.
- The MSMGF website (www.msmgf.org) has received 14,358 unique visitors from April 1, 2010 to June 7, 2010.
- The MSMGF has put out at least one eblast a week this quarter. This is reduced from the usual two in order to redirect efforts to the launch of the new multilingual website.
- A Communications Intern has been hired to work on the MSMGF Eblast full time.
- The MSMGF's new website, to be fully available and regularly updated in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, is near completion. Expected launch will be in late-June.
- Contracts are in negotiation with six MSM-focused organizations abroad to partner with the MSMGF on information exchange in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Each organization will be a primary partner for information exchange in the language that they work in.
- The MSMGF developed and released four statements this quarter:
 - The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) supports worldwide advocacy efforts to depathologize transgender identities
 - Homophobia in the Age of AIDS - Letter from the MSMGF's Executive Officer on the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO)
 - The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) Condemns Ruling against Same-Sex Couple in Malawi

- MSMGF Outraged at 14 Year Imprisonment of Monjeza and Chimbalanga in Malawi

MSMGF Partners with Organization in China in Proposal to Human Rights and Democracy Fund

- A letter of interest was developed and submitted to the US Government's Human Rights and Democracy Fund. The letter proposes a \$1.3 million project focused on targeted information exchange and capacity building for grassroots organizations in China working on issues concerning MSM and HIV.

MSMGF Begins Work on a New Publication Focused on MSM Living with HIV

- MSMGF Program Associate, Omar Banos continued work on the concept and design for *SENSE*, a new multimedia publication focused on MSM living with HIV. The design of the online publication is in final draft stages, ready for final review. Omar worked with contributors from Romania, Morocco, China and Paraguay. Articles were submitted in English (translations from originals in Rumanian and Chinese); the other two were submitted in Spanish and French. MSMGF Co-Chair Othman Mellouk reviewed the French language submission.

Technical Support to Global Fund Round 10 Proposal

- Omar has been working closely with Dr. Jorge Saavedra and ASICAL to develop a proposal for Round 10 for Global Fund from the Latin American region. A small team representing partnering organizations has been meeting via Skype for several weeks. Omar helped to identify consultants who could work with the consortia to develop their application.

PrEP Surveys to be Launched Globally in June

- Dr. Patrick Wilson of Columbia University has helped the MSMGF develop online surveys to poll MSM and their service providers about their knowledge about PrEP and their overall access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services. We will translate and launch the surveys in June, with extensive distribution throughout our e-blasts and various global contacts and regional networks. Preliminary findings will be presented this summer at our Pre-Conference event in Vienna as part of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant funded activities. A full report of the survey findings and related recommendations will be disseminated in the fall to our constituents and key stakeholders worldwide.

MSMGF Partners with IRMA and AVAC

- MSMGF Senior Education Associate, Pato Hebert continued conversations with the International Rectal Microbicide Advocates (IRMA) and AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC) to partner on the multi-lingual dissemination of their fact sheets about emergent HIV prevention technologies such as microbicides and PrEP. We plan to release a series of fact sheets through our global online presence in late June. We also hope to finally launch our series of prevention technology-related webinars in June as ramp-up for Vienna.

Vienna Pre-conference Satellite – Planning and Preparation

- Planning for the Pre-Conference event in Vienna this summer is well underway. Titled *Be Heard!*, the one-day pre-conference event will focus on challenges and best practices in achieving universal access to HIV-related prevention, care, treatment, and support services for MSM and transgender communities worldwide. We are expecting well 600 human rights advocates, artists, researchers, public health officials, multi-lateral organizations, and global donors for a day of workshops, skills building, information exchange, and networking sessions. The one-day event will include morning and afternoon plenary sessions, a networking lunch, poster and art galleries, and an evening reception. Michel Sidibé, Chris Beyrer, and Steven Lewis are among the confirmed speakers. The Pre-Conference will take place on 17 July 2010 at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. The MSMGF will be sending a draft program to the steering committee shortly.
- The MSMGF is also organizing of the MSM Networking Zone in the Global Village at the 2010 IAC in Vienna. Entitled, *Be Heard! A Space for MSM to Network and Connect*, the space will open on the afternoon of Sunday, 18 July and showcase a range of MSM-related activities through Thursday, 22 July. The MSM Networking Zone will offer presentations, art exhibits, workshops, innovative HIV prevention materials and opportunities to meet other MSM and advocates from around the world. Each day will feature one morning session and two afternoon sessions.

Dynamic presentations already scheduled include the following:

< Jules Elondou speaking on Human rights violations, discrimination and homophobia in Kenya.

< John Mathenge speaking about the experience of a Kenyan sex worker and the community-based support services of HOYMAS.

< A training-of-trainers session designed to build participants' advocacy skills--using the MSMGF's new MSM and HIV Advocacy Toolkit.

< An introduction to *Sense*, the MSMGF's new multilingual, multimedia publication. *Sense* focuses on the lives and experiences of MSM living with HIV, and covers the treatment and socio-cultural contexts that foster and/or hinder a healthy living. We will be showcasing stories from our first issue and engaging in conversations to recruit contributors from around the world.

< A workshop orienting participants to www.msmsgf.org <<http://www.msmsgf.org>>, the MSMGF's brand new, multilingual website.