

**Donor Collaboration Meeting—Sexual Health and Rights
Wednesday, May 4, 2005**

**Sexual Health and Rights Program (SHARP)
Open Society Institute-New York
400 West 59th Street
New York, NY 10019**

Meeting objective: *To educate one another regarding individual program parameters and to explore how donors working in the field of sexual health and rights can improve communication and collaboration to make our work more effective and complementary.*

Meeting participants:

Michelle Coffey, Tides Foundation
Heather Doyle, OSI
Barbara Klugman, Ford Foundation
Andrew Park, Wellspring Advisors
Karen Plafker, Wellspring Advisors
Shira Saperstein, Moriah Fund (by telephone)
Jael Silliman, Ford Foundation
Sue Simon, OSI
Kathy Toner, Packard Foundation (by telephone)
Danielle Tuller, OSI

Introductions

Sue Simon, Director of OSI's new Public Health Program initiative, the Sexual Health and Rights Program (SHARP), welcomed the group and expressed her enthusiasm for the opportunity to learn more about each other's work and explore opportunities to support each other.

Overview

All participants were given the opportunity to describe the overall mission of their programming, funding parameters, activities, and plans for the future. Discussion followed each presentation. The group found this mechanism to be an effective way to explore meeting objectives so the agenda was not followed.

***Barbara Klugman (see handout)
Sexuality and Gender Portfolio, Education, Sexuality, Religion Unit,
Ford Foundation***

Barbara Klugman described her Sexuality and Gender Portfolio at Ford; the overall framing of her international portfolio is around strengthening debates from the southern perspective—i.e., building the capacity of southern NGOs to engage in international dialogue. Her domestic (U.S.) portfolio focuses on strengthening the capacity of people of color to engage in policy debate. Her portfolio is about \$3.5 million per year; at Ford the portfolio manager proposes what will be supported.

Three themes cut through the international portfolio:

1. Research—and the use of research to influence policy is a major component of the portfolio. Supporting the creation of an evidence base beyond a ‘public health’ framework—trying to push parameters and move away from KAP studies. Instead, focus on understanding processes of cultural change (i.e., focusing on societies and not individuals).
 - Religious framework; two strategies—advocating for a secular state and reinterpretation of religious texts
 - Any country-level activities support international activities (not country specific)
 - Ex., Collaboration between partners in Indonesia and India on how to do effective AIDS related research (how sexuality informs AIDS work)—one looks at widows and the other at lesbian women’s issues.
 - Evaluation of research
2. Reframing concepts—increase attention to SRH, SRR, and sexuality in professional curricula with aim for institutionalization.
 - Country specific and cross country curricula; working w/WHO to bring grantees together
 - Beginning work on curricula for teachers of sex education and for lawyers (looking for more to support on law)
 - Considering supporting curricula for journalists beginning next year
3. Evaluation—work of advocacy networks at international level
 - Poverty of theory and strategy for advocacy on international level
 - Activism across sectors needs to be encouraged (i.e., activists don’t know service providers who don’t know those working on national budgets, etc.).

LGBT-specific work

Many grants in the portfolio support LGBT as a component (nearly 80% of grants); but it is generally not the sole focus of the activity

- Ex., Medical curricula includes counseling on sexuality/orientation; AIDS issues (journalism and law curricula also include LGBT component)
- All Ford sexuality resource centers work on LGBT issues
- Some of the religion grants have LGBT component—ex., WWHR-New Ways
- Global Dialogue on Sexuality and Well Being addresses LGBT issues (Lagos, Brazil, California, India, Vietnam, China, Philippines)
- International Working Group on Sexuality and Social Policy (IWGSSP)—evidence base on sexuality

Future plans

- Interest in sexual violence in military, conflict, and post-conflict situations for next year.
- Ford is putting out a publication on why foundations should support a sexuality portfolio

Discussion

- Need norms-setting for sexuality funding; many NGOs are working on and prioritizing sexuality-related issues but many donors do not recognize this
- Donors are not pushing the envelope in this area (ex., Women's Donor/Funder Network is supporting conservative issues like child trafficking)
- Many donors may be supporting sexuality work (and NGOs may be doing the work) but do not frame it as such—this may be a way to fly under the radar

Andrew Park

LGBT Docket, Human Rights Docket Wellspring Advisors

Andrew Park described his interest in exploring intersections between dockets at Wellspring Advisors, beginning with the sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment dockets at Wellspring.

He added that by not naming sexuality work as such, it can take away the right to safely advocate for it (i.e., it is not recognized as a legitimate issue for advocacy). Andrew laid out interests he felt were common to the group and could be used to rally around:

- Right to self-determination (consent, engage, refuse)
 - Right to construct capacity (part of self determination) (ex., who gets to engage in human relationship—age power, economics, citizenship, status)
- Right to information (ex., sexuality education)
- Right to expression (speak for oneself/identify self); right to dignity, i.e., image in public places
 - Right to dignity parallels one's right to privacy in the U.S. but is in public place instead (not an American concept)
 - Right to dignity can apply to fair treatment in a healthcare setting
- Right to freedom from stigmatization (equality)—media/journalism
- Right to freedom from discrimination and unfair treatment

Karen Plafker

Sexual and Reproductive Health Docket; Women's Empowerment Docket Wellspring Advisors

Karen Plafker described her portfolio; activities include access to services, abortion advocacy, family planning, gender based violence, FGM, HIV/AIDS, access to sexuality education, addressing abstinence only issues. She would like to work on LGBT issues.

Karen also described her frustration with the narrow perspectives that many donors take on SRHR issues; as a consequence NGOs have problems engaging donors. Despite rhetoric many donors have population-based programs—how can we move forward? Karen suggested using sexuality as a lens for grantmaking instead of as a themed program (like how human rights are used as a lens).

Discussion

Other complications contributing to difficulties with collaboration between grantmakers and between grantmakers and grantees are that sexuality means different things to different constituencies:

- Generally, sexuality is not looked at in isolation or named as such.
- In public health what does sexuality mean?—sexual health? Sexual rights?
- Everyone defines sexuality differently

Perhaps sexuality does not need to be defined, but instead widely recognized that its definition cannot be easily constructed. Using sexuality as a lens for grantmaking/programming can be useful because sexuality differs culturally and in many cultural contexts it is a taboo topic. Naming and defining a term can also have the effect of taking the power out of what it does and could represent.

Participants also discussed if there is a developmental stage at which sexuality/LGBT needs to be incorporated into programming/grantmaking throughout all program areas or, does it serve needs better as a separate program?

- Naming activities as ‘sexuality’ or ‘LGBT’ related can be stigmatizing
- The notion of sexual identity is very culture bound
- There is no one correct way to proceed; it can be important for a foundation like Ford to make a political statement by having a specific program on LGBT, for example; those that don’t want to be classified as such can identify funding from other resources (such as Human Rights programs that have LGBT cross cutting)
- In some cases, if a small pot of money is set aside for such an issue as LGBT other program areas cease funding in that area

Michelle Coffey

Donor Directed Funding, Reproductive Justice Fund, HIV Collaborative Fund Tides Foundation

Michelle Coffey described the strategies for funding used in her various portfolios: Reproductive Justice Fund, HIV Collaborative Fund, and Donor Advised Funds.

Reproductive Justice Fund (domestic)

Reproductive Justice Fund supports bringing new voices into the reproductive health and rights movement domestically (focusing particularly on youth and women of color)—grantees are small grassroots organizations. A recent focus of grantmaking was civil engagement around election issues. This helped donors to think outside of traditional ‘silos.’

HIV Collaborative Fund (international)

This initiative works from the ground up in 10 regions, not including the US. The initiative grew out of a call from PLWAs for direct engagement with funding dollars. Activists develop RFP, review proposals, direct the grantmaking, etc.

- In 2005, \$4 million was available across 10 regions; about \$200K in each region
- There is a coordinating position in country and a global advisory board
- Regions: Africa—East, Southern, West, and Women and Girls (torture and conflict issues), Asia, Caribbean, China, Latin America, Newly Independent States, and South East Asia.
- Communication and networking within a particular region is a focus—sharing resources (funding and TA) and global networking for PLWA
- Discussions around sexuality issues are beginning in NIS, SE Asia, S. Asia, and Caribbean. Tides is able to share this back with donors.

Donor Advised Funds

Sexuality, reproductive rights, and human rights are issues covered by donor advised funds. For example, one donor addresses these issues via artistic and cultural practice (including media and journalism to place information in the field). Donor advised funds are also used to support work around harm reduction, drug policy reform, and criminal justice domestically. It is also used for work on LGBT and work on women and girls issues. However, many donors stick to traditional norms and do not push the envelope.

- How can a progressive lens be pushed?
- Individual donor funding has less restrictions and can be used to fill in funding gaps and used for matching dollars.
- Donor education is important—meeting donors where they are at and then showing them what progressive grantmaking looks like

Shira Saperstein (see handout)

Women's Rights and Reproductive Health

The Moriah Fund

Shira Saperstein discussed her Women's Rights and Reproductive Health portfolio at the Moriah Fund, a family foundation with a budget totaling about \$8 million annually. Her portfolio has a budget of about \$1.6 million annually and funding is split evenly between domestic and international work.

Generally, the Fund provides general support grants to a core group of advocacy grantees. The Fund responds to the needs of the grantees; issues of focus for the Fund grow as grantees identify/address new issue areas: LGBT, trade and globalization, and sexuality.

- Funding dollars were more flexible in the past (that is how LGBT work began), now less flexible.
- International work is Guatemala focused.

Tension/balancing issues:

- Emphasis of grantmaking on human rights with a gender lens vs. sexuality with a human rights lens—difficulty to judge which approach will work best in a particular context
- LGBT work domestically has grown due to growth of HIV

Discussion

- Ford has recently released a new book called “Learning to Dance” which discussion the tension between human rights and public health approaches to sexuality and provides case studies. Jael will send copies to the group.
- Moriah helped jumpstart the Fund for Global Human Rights. Sexuality has been a focus of many proposals (more demand than expected).

Kathy Toner (see handout)

Population Program

Packard Foundation

Kathy Toner described that the Packard Foundation’s Population Program. Packard does not have an explicit program on sexuality issues or sexual rights but instead focuses on population issues, updated with a Cairo consensus. A demographic lens is used with a focus on reproductive rights.

The population program funds via four thematic sub-programs: Country Programs; Global Institutions/Global Solutions, Mobilization; and Reproductive Rights.

- Two-thirds of the investment supports international work.
- There are five countries of focus: Ethiopia, India, and Nigeria receive about \$5 million annually and Pakistan and the Philippines receive about \$1 million annually.
- Explicit regional strategies are not in place (the five thematic areas came out of ‘98/’99 rethinking).
- The five themes are adopted as needed in the country-level strategies.
- Packard’s in-country programs are very focused to the state-level.

Sexuality

- Addressed in youth work, services (post-abortion care), and increasingly through support for advocacy work, as the budget becomes tighter.
- Support background training on sexuality and religion.
- Support HIV/AIDS work in ‘robust’ countries (i.e., Ethiopia, India, and Nigeria).
- Hope to revive international reproductive health funding with potentially \$1 million per year (need ideas).
- Tensions—sexual health and rights may not be a framework that will be acceptable to foreign ministers but population/demographic work may be more palatable.

Discussion

- Packard is one of the only remaining donors working on abortion internationally.

- Buffett is adding dollars.

Jael Silliman (see handout)
Reproductive Rights, Human Rights Unit
Peace and Social Justice Program
Ford Foundation

Jael Silliman described her reproductive rights funding. Primarily, she funds domestically and has about \$4 million of funding annually for two initiatives.

1. Meeting the SRH needs of vulnerable people: LGBT, immigrants, prisoners, people of color, etc
 - Some international funding (Ex., fistula, widows and property)
2. Building synergies between the SRH movement and other social justice movements.
 - LGBT and SRHR, domestic violence and RH (emergency contraception), SRR as part of the right to health.
 - Ex., LGBT Center realized RH issues were important because RH groups would not address LGBT; now the Center is quite active in RH field.
 - Ex., Convinced domestic violence activists to work on abortion rights re: Unborn Victims of Violence Act/Rights of the fetus (difficult at first but now RH and domestic violence activists are working together.

Future Plans

Over the next few years aiming to institute and make available funding for women of color organizations on the regional and international level--\$8 to \$10 million of matching funds.

Sue Simon (see handout)
Sexual and Health and Rights Program (SHARP), Public Health Programs
Open Society Institute

Sue Simon described the vision for the Public Health Program's new Sexual Health and Rights Program (SHARP) which was launched on April 1, 2005. The Program is currently in a consultation and strategic planning process; a geographically diverse Advisory Group (AG) of international health experts, human rights leaders and affected community members will be convened in order to help establish program priorities and assist OSI staff in developing strategic responses to key programmatic and policy issues. The program will be part will be part operational and part grantmaking.

Specifically, SHARP seeks to address sexual health concerns and rights violations associated with high-risk sexual practices and identification with a marginalized group

(self-identified or perceived). Existing HIV/AIDS epidemics linked to high-risk sexual practices or the violation of sexual rights and the potential emergence of new HIV/AIDS epidemics among socially marginalized populations are of particular concern. SHARP target groups include sex workers; gay, lesbian, transsexual and transgender persons; prisoners; Roma community members; injecting drug users; and people living with HIV/AIDS. SHARP has a broad geographic mandate and may undertake activities in Africa, Asia, Turkey, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet Union (FSU).

- The ‘lenses’ for SHARP will be socially marginalized populations and HIV.
- It will be important to stick to the parameters laid out and not spread staffing or funding too thinly; additional funding will be available through cross-cutting Public Health Programs (e.g., Media, Capacity-building, Law and Health).

Discussion

- Research is needed looking at the number of children and needs of children of sex workers.
- BreakthroughTV has looked at marriage and HIV in India; a focus on the needs of married women is needed (Orlando Bagwell works on media issues at Ford and might be interesting to speak with).

Next Steps

Participants discussed the utility of holding an additional meeting. It was decided that one more focused meeting to discuss the following would be useful only after participants have the opportunity to digest the first meeting and follow-up with one another individually:

Parking lot issues

- Sexuality as a lens—what does this mean?
- Utility of affinity groups?
- What is the affinity? Does it matter what we call it?
- Balancing health as a human right and personal responsibility
- How can we be more effective collaborators in the SRHR field?
 - Affinity groups do not move agendas forward
 - Don’t know which outside affinity groups are useful to be a part of

Soap Box

- Opportunity for participants to say their piece.

Possible future collaboration/useful mechanisms for collaboration

- Discuss identification of a more useful forum for collaboration rather than affinity groups.
- Knowing the texture of each other’s programs is useful—sending grantees/projects we cannot fund to colleagues.
- Sharing ideas and concepts (ex., research on children of sex workers) is a need.

- Identifying new areas for collaboration that are possible; many have strict funding parameters—others are less strict.
- It is possible for OSI to convene the group (or a larger audience) to learn more about or discuss key issues identified.
- Funders shadow grantee conferences—share information.

Next Steps

- Listserv for information relevant to the group; to be used discretely.
- Circulate grants lists and any recommendations to each other for grantees doing innovative/interesting work that you many not be able to fund.
- All will review notes individually; pool suggestions for future discussion.
- Next meeting could potentially piggyback on Human Rights Funder Conference to take place at OSI on June 14th(?).
- Barbara will circulate newsletter with upcoming meetings of interest.