

May 30, 2007

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past few months, SHARP and its partners have undertaken a wide range of activities which we are excited to share. We will continue to provide periodic news on sexual health and rights projects and initiatives, as well as offer links to key resources and calls for proposals. Please circulate these updates—we welcome all who are interested to join SHARP’s listserv (see instructions at the bottom of this message). We keep our site updated with new information and links, so check back regularly for additions. For those in New York City, we regularly host community forums with leading advocates from around the globe and hope that many of you will attend these events. To receive invitations, please contact Jill Wood at [jwood@sorosny.org](mailto:jwood@sorosny.org)

Regards,  
Sue

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1) *A Global Gaze: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Grantmaking in the Global South and East*, March 11-13, 2007

Funders who support LGBT issues outside of the US and Western Europe convened in Amsterdam with the goal of developing more effective funding strategies for LGBT rights issues and movement-building. In addition to participating on the steering committee for this meeting, SHARP helped fund a preliminary report, conducted by Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues, to assess donor trends. This report also documented the current and emerging needs and strategies of organizations working on LGBT health and rights issues in the global South and East, as well as at the broader global level. The final report will be launched at OSI on June 21 (see #10 below for details).

2) *Advancing International Advocacy on Sex Workers Health and Human Rights*, April 2-4, 2007

SHARP brought together 35 female, male and transgender sex worker health and rights advocates from 20 countries (including Argentina, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand and Ukraine) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to address human rights abuses committed “in the name of assisting sex workers.” The major goals were to develop sex worker-led advocacy and media campaigns on key health and rights concerns and strengthen the advocacy impact of global sex worker networks through improved use of information technology. The priority issue participants selected for global campaigning was the impact of “raid and rescue” interventions undertaken by police, anti-trafficking organizations and abolitionist groups. It was agreed that a major forum

for advocating against the human rights problems associated with raid and rescues is the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico City. A list of actions and key messages will be further developed in the coming months.

3) *Second Annual SWAN Meeting*, April 26-30, 2007

The Sex Worker Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), which links 15 countries across CEE/FSU, held its second annual meeting in Kiev. A priority for SWAN has been to increase sex worker representation and involvement in its network. This year, 12 sex workers from six countries were among the attendees. Participants identified several key issues as regional priorities: the criminalization of clients (end demand legislation); obligatory HIV testing and registration of sex workers; police repression of sex workers (raids, arrests, violence, anti-prostitution measures); and reporting and representation of sex worker issues in the media. Members chose police repression as SWAN's advocacy campaign focus for 2007-2008 and selected a working group to move plans forward. SWAN's most recent newsletter is available at: [http://www.tasz.hu/index.php?op=contentlist2&catalog\\_id=3913](http://www.tasz.hu/index.php?op=contentlist2&catalog_id=3913)

4) *Reproductive Justice, Sexual Rights, and HIV: What Funders Should Know*, April 26, 2007

SHARP's Director, Sue Simon, was one of the presenters in an Audio Teleconference co-sponsored by Funders Concerned About AIDS; Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health & Rights; and the Ms. Foundation for Women. The call sought to better define "reproductive justice" and "sexual rights" and how HIV/AIDS fits into this grantmaking framework. The growing feminization of the AIDS epidemic and the complexities of reproductive justice and sexual rights issues have forced philanthropic entities to examine whether their grantmaking is responding appropriately to the needs of grantees.

5) *International Harm Reduction Conference*, May 13-17, 2007

SHARP supported sex worker health and rights advocates from around the globe to have a strong presence at the International Harm Reduction Conference in Warsaw, Poland. Rachel Wotton of the Scarlet Alliance in Australia, a leading sex worker advocacy organization, spoke on a plenary panel about the relationship between sex worker rights and harm reduction. Prior to the conference, she consulted with numerous sex worker rights groups to gather their perspectives. Conference organizers also dedicated a major session and a smaller "living room" session to presentations by sex worker leaders. The presentations of sex worker rights advocates generated much interest; the sex worker networking meeting was well attended and led to new linkages; and many sex worker health and rights resource materials were disseminated at the booth.

6) *Advocates Launch Video and Speaker Tour*, June, 2007

In June, the Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) and the Sex Workers Project (SWP) at the Urban Justice Center are launching an educational curricula and speaker's tour in New York City, Washington DC and Atlanta, Georgia to accompany screenings of the video, "Taking the Pledge," which documents the ill effects of the Anti-Prostitution Pledge. Meena Seshu (SANGRAM, India) and Hazera Bagum (Durjoy Nari Shongho, Bangladesh) will participate. NSWP and SWP were instrumental in re-focusing some of the sensationalistic media coverage away from Randall Tobias's (US Director of Foreign Assistance and Administrator of USAID) resignation in the wake of his involvement with an escort agency towards the fact that

he had been the principal enforcer of the Anti-Prostitution Pledge. This is an angle the press would not have picked up otherwise.

7) *International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS*, July 4-7, 2007  
Claire Thiboutot, former Executive Director of Stella, and SHARP Advisory Group member, will deliver several workshops on sex worker health and rights at the YWCA's International Women's Summit in Nairobi, Kenya. While in Kenya, Claire will undertake a needs assessment among sex worker rights advocates, on behalf of SHARP and OSI-East Africa, to identify openings for future support.

8) *Sex Worker Human Rights Training*, 2007-2008

SHARP is developing a sex worker human rights training initiative which will target participants in Thailand, South/Southern Africa and East Africa. Such training needs were identified at our 2006 Johannesburg Human Rights and Policy forum. Susana Fried, an experienced sexual health and rights advocate, has been hired to work with the training teams: a local sex worker organization and human rights education organization in each site. In collaboration with a technical review committee, Susana will also oversee the selection of participants from sex worker rights groups. For East Africa, the countries of focus are likely to be Kenya and Uganda, and for Southern Africa, South Africa and Botswana. Participants can apply for follow-up funding to support human rights projects. These projects might encompass the delivery of additional human rights trainings among local constituencies; documentation of human rights abuses; strengthening of sex worker led advocacy networks; efforts to build alliances with traditional human rights groups for joint advocacy efforts; or the development of police training/monitoring projects to reduce harassment of sex workers. Technical assistance will be made available to selected projects.

9) RECENT EVENTS

*International and Domestic Responses to Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Persons*, April 30, 2007

Sunil Pant, Founder and Director of the Blue Diamond Society, Nepal, and winner of the 2007 Felipa de Souza Human Rights Award, joined Clarence Patton, Director of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project (AVP), to speak about domestic and global advocacy for the health and rights of LGBT persons. Sunil shared stories about mobilizing and educating men having sex with men (MSM) and LGBT persons about HIV and human rights issues, including advocating for change in Nepalese government through documentation of abuses, public hearings and meetings with local police. Clarence spoke about AVP's efforts to combat violence against LGBT persons through public education, advocacy and policy reform.

*Silence Speaks: Stories of HIV Discrimination and Homophobia Told Through Digital Media*, May 11, 2007

Amy Hill, Community Projects Director, Silence Speaks, discussed a project she worked on in South Africa with the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). Workshop participants came from seven Southern African countries to learn how to create a 3-5 minute digital video, or "digital story," about their experiences as survivors or witnesses of violence. Amy shared videos created by individuals facing homophobia and HIV stigma in Southern Africa and the United States.

Audio of these events can be accessed via SHARP's website (<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp>).

#### 10) UPCOMING EVENTS

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Funders Research Report Release*, June 21, 2007 from 11:30 am – 1 pm

Robert Espinoza, Director of Research and Communications, Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues (FLGI), will present an overview of a first-ever report on the needs and resources related to LGBT rights in the global South and East. The report was commissioned by FLGI which remains the sole organization dedicated exclusively to increasing institutional giving to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities. Joo-Hyun Kang, Director of Programs, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, will join Robert to share recent cases which highlight both the challenges and successes for promoting LGBT health and rights worldwide. She will discuss achievements in challenging oppression and empowering LGBT persons to claim their human rights as well as how additional resources can help expand these efforts.

*"Taking the Pledge": Update on the Anti-Prostitution Pledge and Its Global Impacts*, June 25, 2007 from 3:30pm – 5:00pm

Meena Seshu (SANGRAM, India) and Hazera Bagum (Durjoy Nari Shongho, Bangladesh) will speak at OSI about the effects of the Anti-Prostitution Pledge on their work in India and Bangladesh. Joining them on the panel will be Rebekah Diller, Justice Program Counsel, Brennan Center for Justice, and Melissa Ditmore, Coordinator, NSWP. Rebekah will provide background on the Pledge, and an update on the status of the lawsuit filed by OSI and the Alliance for Open Society International in 2005 to challenge the constitutionality of the Pledge requirement (all grantees receiving HIV/AIDS funds from USAID must pledge their opposition to prostitution). Melissa will speak about advocacy efforts undertaken since the pledge requirement was passed by Congress in 2003 and show the film, "Taking the Pledge."

To attend either of these events, RSVP to Jill Wood ([jwood@sorosny.org](mailto:jwood@sorosny.org)).

You may join SHARP's listserv at:

<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/newsletter>