

Editors Note

This last issue for the year of the ARASA newsletter showcases the Annual Partnership Forum (APF) that was attended by 47 delegates from the ARASA partnership in SADC and the Indian Ocean Islands.

Partners' perspectives of the meeting are included in this issue where they share their impressions and offer suggestions on how it can be improved next year.

The ARASA HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Award is presented annually to an ARASA partner that has shown outstanding work in advancing human rights in HIV/AIDS and TB related issues in their country.

In recognition of their excellent work and commitment the award was presented to Protection Enfants SIDA (P.E.S.) from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this year. Director, Léonnie Kandolo is interviewed

by ARASA Programmes Manager, Felicity Hikuam in this issue where Léonnie gives an account of what it means to P.E.S. to win the award and of the work that the organisation has done under very difficult circumstances to further the cause of human rights in relation to HIV/AIDS and TB in the DRC.

ARASA partnered with Prisons Care and Counselling Association (PRISCCA) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) to conduct research to gauge health and human rights in Zambian prisons. It is the first of its kind to be undertaken by national, regional and International partners in Zambia.

The preliminary findings covered issues relating to general prison conditions; treatment and discipline; HIV/AIDS; tuberculosis; general medical care; and access to justice. Katherine Todrys from HRW and Godfrey

Malembeka from PRISCCA were interviewed for an article on the research for this issue.

In November 2009 Felicity Hikuam was invited to join the UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation. In December, she attended her first board meeting as an observer along with 6 new NGO delegates and was appointed to the board on 10 December during its 25th meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland. In this issue she gives a report of her experiences during this week.

With the holiday season upon us, the ARASA Secretariat's office will close on Friday 18 December, 2009 and re-open on January 4, 2010. We wish all our partners and colleagues peaceful break over the holidays and a prosperous New Year.

The ARASA Team



APF delegates

ARASA's Annual Partnership Forum: November 2009

by Gillian Parenzee

The 2009 ARASA Annual Partnership Forum was held at the Airport Grand Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24 to 25 November.

It was attended by 47 delegates from southern Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands. During the course of 2009 the ARASA partnership has grown to 48 partners in the region.

The objectives of the forum were outlined by the Director of ARASA, Michaela Clayton as presenting an opportunity and a space for the ARASA partners to come together once a year to talk about the work they have done in their own countries and for the ARASA secretariat to report on activities at the regional level.

"It is an opportunity to learn from each other, to share experiences and to get to know each other a little bit better," she added.

In her address to partners at the outset of the meeting Felicity Hikuam, Programmes Manager of ARASA said, "This forum provides us with a platform to consider new

developments in the HIV/TB and human rights situation in southern Africa and share our lessons learned during the past year.”

ARASA staff presented a general overview of the organisation for the benefit of new partners and updated partners on the activities of the Advocacy and Lobbying; Treatment Literacy and Advocacy; and Training and Capacity Building Programmes.

Partners were also briefed on ARASA finances and funding as well as on developments in the Communications and Monitoring and Evaluation initiatives at ARASA. Delegates had the opportunity to engage in a discussion on the various programme activities.

Anne Strode from the University of KwaZulu Natal and co-author of the ARASA the 2008 HIV and Human Rights in Southern Africa Report presented an overview of the report.

She explained that whilst annual updates of this report are currently done on the basis of desk research and information provided by ARASA partners, the 2010 update will, for the first time, be utilising information collected by participants in the ARASA Training of Trainers Programme as part of an assignment given to them as a requirement for successfully completing the programme. This assignment ensures that not only do Training of Trainer Programme participants end up with a complete dossier of information on HIV and human rights in their own countries at the end of the programme but ARASA has sufficient

information to update the HIV and Human Rights in Southern Africa Report annually.

Partners then had an opportunity to present country reports from each of the 15 countries in SADC as well as from the Comores.

The information from the country reports will be used to update ARASA’s data base of information on HIV and human rights in the region and feed into the 2010 Update of the HIV and Human Rights Report.

“The objective of the country reports was to describe new developments related to the laws and policies that create the framework for a public health response to HIV; for the provision of prevention, treatment and care services in SADC countries; and to describe new developments in the mechanisms that are in place to monitor and enforce human rights of people living with HIV (PLHIV),” explained Felicita Hikuam, ARASA Programmes Manager.

Following the country reports the forum was concluded with a discussion on the key human rights issues for the region in 2010.

The human rights issues of priority concern to partners in 2010 were:

- HIV in the military with regards to testing and access to treatment;
- Access to treatment, particularly pertaining to issues around access to drugs including stock-outs;
- The prevailing move in countries from voluntary counselling and testing to provider initiated testing;
- Criminialisation of HIV transmission

as well as punitive laws that are in place that criminalise men who have sex with men, sex workers and injecting drug users;

- Continued vulnerability of women to HIV;
- People with disabilities and their right to health and HIV-related services;
- Lack of enforcement of anti-discrimination laws .

The country reports can be downloaded from the ARASA Website.

In response to the advocacy that ARASA has taken the lead on to address Global Funding of HIV/AIDS as well as Government Accountability in reaching the targets set out according to the Abuja Declaration the partners issued a press release calling on donors and national governments to increase HIV and Health funding and to demonstrate a genuine respect for human rights.

The press statement entitled Missing the Target, Missing the Point was endorsed by 39 organisations based in SADC and the Indian Ocean Islands. It is available on the ARASA Website.

Subsequently the South African Broadcasting Association (SABC) contacted ARASA for comment in response to South African President Jacob Zuma’s speech delivered on World AIDS Day and for a follow up discussion on the Missing the Target, Missing the Point press statement.



APF delegates

Perspectives: ARASA Partners Share Their Thoughts of the APF

by Gillian Parenzee



Siphiwe Hlope, SWAPOL Swaziland; and

SWAPOL attended the ARASA Annual Partnership Forum (APF) for this first time since joining ARASA this year. Siphiwe Hlope was one of the delegates who benefited from partner organisations sharing their experiences at the meeting.

"I learnt that human rights issues are the same in the SADC region. One common problem is that our governments are not proactive in addressing human rights.

Upon comparison with existing laws that address the right to life pertaining to health services the actual services provided are not adequate to meet the demands of clients. An example is the case of Madagascar where medication is free however people have to face heavy stigma when attempting to access treatment."

Commenting on the material presented Siphiwe said that the presentations and country reports were well articulated. Extracting some of the issues discussed

Siphiwe said, "Women's and girls' issues remained the centre of controversy in nearly all the country presentations," and that, "Laws protecting the rights of minority sexual orientation groups such as men having sex with men (msm) and lesbians were only available in South Africa."

"Laws that criminalise HIV and AIDS in the region do exist and the penalty is very high, either death or a prison term of between 14 – 25 years," she said.

Sithimbile Shabangu, International Population Services Swaziland (PSI)

Speaking about her observations at the APF Sithimbile agreed with the commonly expressed sentiment that the partners have similar challenges especially in relation to laws that criminalise men who have sex with men, sex workers and LGBTI's.

"I think supporting one another and having one voice as partners in SADC countries and by vocalising the issues as

a group we can surely realise the decriminalisation of these groups thus ensuring that they can enjoy their health rights," she said.

"I have noted with excitement that in Mauritius men having sex with men is illegal, but NGO's are able to supply condoms in prisons and I think we can learn the best practices as to how they managed to implement this despite the fact that it is illegal," she said.

Based on her observation of the country presentations Sithimbile said that, "The countries with low HIV prevalence rates, according to available statistics, have a high rate of stigma and discrimination thus making it hard for partners to implement."

PSI Swaziland became an ARASA partner in 2009.

Krishnen Rangasamy, Prevention Information Lutte Contre Le Sida (PILS)

As an executive board member of PILS with limited exposure to Human Rights in relation to HIV/AIDS, Krishnen found the meeting very enlightening and stated that the work that PILS was able to achieve with ARASA's support should be applauded.

"The meeting was very well structured although there is too much information for one meeting." He suggested that a meeting of this nature should stretch over more days and be less intense. "I found the country reports too detailed and would have preferred that the priority issues be covered first. I would have liked to see more focus on joint projects between the ARASA secretariat and ARASA partners."

Responding to a question on how he

could apply what was learnt in his organisation Krishnen said, "I gained a lot from the examples of advocacy campaigns that were presented. PILS needs to focus more on advocacy in Mauritius. I was especially happy to learn about the creative ways in which advocacy can be done."

Krishnen explained that in Mauritius PILS is regarded as the expert on all HIV/AIDS related issues. "We also have an outreach programme for sex workers, where we are involved in providing care and food," he added.

Margaret Zulu, Women And Law Southern Africa

In sharing her impressions of the 2009 APF Margaret said, "Compared to last year the country presentations are longer. The information being shared is very good, more detailed and specific."

She was grateful to ARASA for the guidance given to partners in the form of questionnaires in preparation for the meeting. "The questions that were sent were very helpful in doing our research," she said.

"I was very happy to receive the annual report before the meeting. The handouts are very informative. Another helpful thing was the reporting format in which reference was made to links and websites of country reports and materials," she said.

Margaret observed that the attendance this year was better than last year.

"I like that people are showing more

commitment and that the participation is better. That's very good this year," she added.

"I found the meeting to be well organised and representative," she concluded.

Maketekete Alfred Thotolo, ADRA Lesotho

Alfred Thotolo from ADRA in Lesotho noted that the 2009 APF was bigger due to more members in the ARASA partnership. "This gives a better perspective on what other countries are doing and we now have a broader base of information," he said.

"Because of the growing partnership we need more time in future in order to make more time for discussion," he added.

Alfred emphasised that the APF was a very valuable platform that allowed him to network with more partners which is very important to him.

"Being part of the ARASA partnership also gave me an opportunity to be interviewed by SABC internationally thereby giving our country's issues wider exposure," he said. "This has an impact on how authorities in my country respond to issues now instead of hiding them," he added.

Juliet Mphande Friends of RAINKA

Friends of RAINKA joined ARASA in this year and is the first LGBTI group to become a partner. Funded by HIVOS it is a growing organisation in its initial stages.

Friends of RAINKA was represented by Juliet Mophande, the organisation's board

chairperson. "I was happy to be given the chance to come here and see what ARASA has done and it's been interesting to see that the challenges from the other SADC countries and Zambia are similar," she said.

"It was interesting to see the partners' reaction to sexual minorities. Some organisations face similar challenges with regards to attitudes on sexual minorities where these attitudes are not well integrated with human rights principles," she stated.

In her view most of the human rights professionals she encountered in the past allowed their personal beliefs to dictate their actions in a professional setting with regards to sexual minorities. "It is encouraging to hear ARASA's stand on partners who do not act in accordance with human rights principles," she said in reaction to a discussion which took place at the forum during which partners agreed that those partners who do not abide by human rights principles with regard to the rights of LGBTI's would be requested to withdraw from the partnership.

Juliet expressed particular interest in the TOT training as her organisation is totally volunteer based with a working board who cannot commit time to facilitate training. "The TOT will set the stage for where we want to move forward," she said.



APF delegates

Protection Enfants SIDA win the ARASA HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Award

by Felicity Hikuam

On 25 November, Protection Enfant SIDA (PES), a non-governmental organisation based in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was awarded the 2009 AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) HIV and Human Rights Award at a ceremony hosted in Johannesburg, South Africa.

“We are extremely honoured to receive this award,” said Léonnie Kandolo, Director of PES. “We have been an ARASA partner since 2004, which we have found extremely beneficial in promoting a human rights response to HIV and TB in the DRC. The work of ARASA and its partners in this region in promoting a human rights-based response to HIV/AIDS and TB is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goal of preventing new infections and halting the HIV epidemic’.

The ARASA HIV and Human Rights award is presented annually to an ARASA partner for innovative work in promoting a human rights-based response to HIV and TB, which empowers marginalised and vulnerable groups to take action against HIV and AIDS and TB and its consequences;



addressing issues of gender equality; the inclusion of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and key populations such as Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Intersex people (LGBTI). Their work is also judged in terms of its sustainability over time, its ability to be adapted to different settings and scaled up; and their strategic partnerships with other organisations to increase impact in the region.

PES has undertaken ground breaking work in the DRC in training and awareness-raising for civil society and government in five provinces on the need for the protection of human rights in an effective response to HIV and TB. It has also gained unprecedented access to prisons in four provinces to conduct HIV/TB and human rights sensitisation programmes for prisoners and warders.

“The award is presented during our Annual Partnership Forum in recognition of the work of a partner organisation that has had an immense impact on the HIV and TB-related policy and legislative development and reform processes in their country,” explained Michaela Clayton, Director of ARASA. “The award recognises partners for their work in often challenging political environments where they sometimes risk their lives and livelihoods to stand in defense of the basic human rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV and TB.”

The award ceremony was held at the conclusion of ARASA’s Annual Partnership Forum,.

Léonnie Kandolo, director of P.E.S. and fondly known as Madame Léonnie, talks about winning the ARASA HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Award in an

interview with ARASA Programmes Manager, Felicity Hikuam.

How did you feel when it was announced that you were the winners of the 2009 HIV and Human Rights Award?

I was surprised because many ARASA’s partner organisations do a wonderful job. For that reason, it was difficult to predict the winners. At the same time, I knew that we had done an impressive job in the DRC despite facing many challenges. I was filled with emotions and joy when I received the 2009 HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Prize on behalf of my organisation and my team. I thought of the PES team, Jean-Claude Katende and Leon KANDA, without whose support not much would have been accomplished. We had worked hard and endured many sacrifices in order to implement our programme. It is with great satisfaction that we see that our work has been acknowledged and rewarded by our peers.

My heart was filled with gratitude to ARASA and, particularly, to Michaela who trusted us to implement such an ambitious programme.

I would also like to thank Jacob and Luyanda who went with us to various parts of the DRC where living and work conditions can sometimes be very difficult.

My sons and the families of the other PES team members who had to put up with our absence were also in my thoughts. It is with a great deal of pride that I will bring this award to them.



From top to bottom:
Léonnie Kandolo talks to delegates at the APF;
Léonnie upon hearing that P.E.S. won the ARASA
HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Award; and
Michaela Clayton handing the award to Léonnie

What does this award represent to your organisation and to your partners in the DRC?

It is an acknowledgment of PES's work by ARASA and its partners as well as by our partners in DR Congo. It also shows that one should not be afraid of embarking on new initiatives and facing new challenges. The important thing is to be serious about work and be well organised. I hope that from now on we will be seen as a role model by our local partners in the DRC and that we have opened the way for them to a new adventure. This award also bears testimony to the capacity of Congolese NGOs whose head offices are located outside the capital city to achieve great things.

What were your most important achievements and your main challenges in working in the area of HIV/AIDS and human rights in your country?

In 2004, we became the first organisation to organize a workshop on HIV/AIDS and human rights in DR Congo. We did it with the support of ARASA. A document entitled "Charter on the Rights and Obligations of PLWA for the DR Congo" and signed by all the participants was issued at the end of the workshop.

Many national workshops were organized in Kinshasa. Our greatest challenge was to organize provincial workshops in Lubumbashi, Mbuji Mayi, Kananga, Kikwit, Matadi, Mbandaka, Kisangani and in the city-province of Kinshasa. We were faced with challenges

commensurate with the size of our country and the difficulty in gathering delegates from faraway towns as some of them had to travel 600 km on motor-bikes or in dugout canoes in order to attend the workshop.

Another challenge was the lack of electricity in some parts of the country.

It was difficult to achieve an equal representation and participation of women and men due to the weight of traditions and customs.

Finally, it was difficult to get the field workers and the authorities to understand the link between HIV/AIDS and human rights.

We took up all these challenges. This shows that we must not sit idly by when we face a fight that is vital to the future of Congo, of the SADC region and of the world.

What does the ARASA Partnership mean to you?

The ARASA Partnership has enabled PES to attend many training sessions and gain the kind of expertise DR Congo needs. The partnership has provided us with a platform for networking and dialogue with other organisations within SADC working in the same field and for sharing experiences.

It has also enabled us to implement an ambitious and innovative programme in DR Congo. ARASA has been more than a partner to us. It has brought a new dynamics and shown us that nothing is impossible.

Léonnie Kandolo, director of P.E.S. discusses winning the ARASA HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Award in an interview with ARASA Programmes Manager, Felicita Hikuam. Madame Léonnie's answers in French are reprinted below.

Comment vous êtes senties lorsque on vous a annoncé que vous êtes les gagnants du 2009 de Prix VIX et de Droit de l'Homme?

J'ai été surprise parce que je sais qu'au sein d'ARASA il y a beaucoup d'organisations qui font du bon travail. Donc, ce n'était pas une partie gagnée d'avance. Mais j'étais aussi sûre que le travail que nous avons fait en RDC est impressionnant surtout quand je pense aux défis que nous avons bravés.

Quand, j'ai entendu, enfin, que notre organisation qui avait gagné, c'est avec beaucoup d'émotion et de joie que j'ai reçu ce Prix « VIH/SIDA et Droits de l'homme » 2009 au nom de mon organisation et de toute mon équipe.

Ma première pensée a été pour l'équipe de PES Jean-Claude Katende et Léon KANDA sans lesquels ce travail n'aurait pas pu se faire.

Nous avons beaucoup travaillé et consenti d'énormes sacrifices pour la réussite de ce programme, c'est une très grande satisfaction de voir que le travail que nous avons abattu a été reconnu et récompensé par nos pairs.

Il y a également un sentiment de gratitude pour ARASA et tout particulièrement Michaela qui nous a fait confiance pour la réalisation d'un projet aussi ambitieux.

Mes remerciements vont également à Jacob et Luyanda qui nous ont accompagnés à travers la R.D.Congo où les conditions de vie et de travail ont été parfois très difficiles.

J'ai également eu une pensée pour mes fils et pour les familles de toute l'équipe PES qui sont privés de notre présence pour la réussite de notre

travail. C'est donc avec beaucoup de fierté que je leur ramène ce Prix.

Ceci représente quoi pour votre organisation et vos partenaires en RDC?

Ceci représente une consécration et une reconnaissance du travail de PES tant par ARASA et ses partenaires que pour tous nos partenaires à travers la R.D.Congo. Je pense aussi que cela démontre qu'il ne faut pas avoir peur de se lancer dans des thématiques nouvelles ni faire face à de grand défi, l'essentiel est de mettre du sérieux dans son travail et de bien s'organiser.

Je pense que nous serons désormais un exemple pour nos partenaires à travers le pays et que nous leur ouvrons la voie d'un combat où beaucoup de choses restent encore à faire. Cela montre aussi que des ONG congolaises dont le siège se trouvent loin de la capitale peuvent réussir des grandes choses si elles ont vraiment la volonté.

Que ont été vos plus grandes réalisations et plus grands défis dans le travail de l'implantation du VIH et Droits de l'Homme dans votre pays?

Nous avons été la première organisation à lancer un atelier sur le thème VIH/SIDA et Droits de l'homme en R.D.Congo dès 2004 avec l'appui d'ARASA.

Suite à cet atelier nous avons publié « la charte des droits et devoirs des PVV et PAV pour la R.D.Congo » dont tous les participants à ce premier atelier ont été signataires. Nous avons organisé plusieurs ateliers nationaux à Kinshasa.

Mais notre plus grand défi fut l'organisation des ateliers provinciaux à Lubumbashi, Mbuji Mayi, Kananga, Kikwit, Matadi, Mbandaka, Kisangani et

la ville province de Kinshasa.

Nos défis ont été du à la grandeur du pays et aux très difficiles conditions pour réunir les participants venant de très loin, certains ont dû faire 600km en moto ou en pirogue pour participer à nos ateliers.

Nous avons été également confronté au problème du manque d'électricité à l'intérieur du pays.

Des problèmes liés aux coutumes et traditions ont été également un défi pour avoir une représentation paritaire aux ateliers. Enfin la difficulté pour faire comprendre tant aux activistes qu'aux autorités la jonction entre VIH/SIDA et Droits de l'Homme.

Tous ces défis nous les avons relevés et cela est pour nous la preuve que nous ne devons jamais baisser les bras face à ce combat vital pour l'avenir du Congo, de la zone SADC et du monde.

Que est ce que ça représente pour vous d'être les partenaires de ARASA?

Pour la PES être le partenaire d'ARASA nous a permis de participer à de nombreuses formations qui ont développé en nous une expertise dont la R.D.Congo a besoin.

ARASA est un cadre qui nous a permis d'être en contact d'autres organisations travaillant dans des domaines similaires à travers la SADC et de pouvoir échanger nos expériences.

Et enfin cela nous a permis de mettre en œuvre et de réaliser un programme très ambitieux et totalement innovant en R.D.Congo.

ARASA a été pour nous plus qu'un simple partenaire car il nous a insufflé un vrai dynamisme et nous montrer à travers la confiance qu'il nous a témoignée que rien n'était impossible.

Health and Human Rights In Zambian Prisons

by Gillian Parenzee

Research to gauge health and human rights in Zambian prisons, a joint project by Prisons Care and Counselling Association (PRISCCA), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) is the first of its kind to be undertaken by national, regional and international partners in Zambia.

The preliminary findings covered issues relating to general prison conditions; treatment and discipline; HIV/AIDS; tuberculosis; general medical care; and access to justice.

During an ARASA TOT training session PRISCCA expressed the need to embark on a joint prison based project in Zambia to motivate the country's government to respect the right of access to health for prisoners with evidence based information.

As a result of the ensuing discourse a joint PRISCCA, ARASA and HRW team was established to conduct a project called Human Rights Sensitisation and Research in Zambian Prisons.

The research assessed the health and human rights conditions in the country's prisons.

Katherine Todrys who leads the Human Rights Watch Research team expressed gratitude to the Zambian Government for allowing the team to conduct the research. "I hope that Zambia will implement the recommendations and potentially become a model in the region. The Zambian Government should be commended for their openness," she said.

Katherine added that from a Human Rights Watch perspective they were interested to partner with PRISCCA and ARASA to conduct this research as "there is a deficit of in country evidence based research".

She emphasised the extensive coverage of the research. "We visited 6 prisons in urban and peri-urban as well as in rural areas and conducted over 250 interviews that lasted over an hour each, sometimes longer when translation was needed," Katherine explained.

Researchers were careful to include men and women and sexual minorities in their interviews. They were able to get an enormous wealth of data that will provide a strong basis for recommendations currently being worked on.

A draft of the report is currently being reviewed by ARASA, PRISCCA and Human Rights Watch. The launch of the report has been pitched for early May 2010.



"We hope to engage in extensive advocacy based on the recommendations to government and donors," said Katherine.

ARASA is planning a regional conference on HIV and TB in prisons in early February 2010 at which Human Rights Watch will present the preliminary findings.

Godfrey Malembeka from PRISCCA explained that there were two major reasons why prisons lagged behind in the human rights response to HIV/AIDS and TB. "Government did not want to open doors for security reasons and they have not been contacting researchers," he said.

The research conducted in Zambian prisons can have a benefit for all countries in the region. "The research that was done is of immense importance as it can avoid shooting in the dark. It will benefit partners in the SADC region as well as the prisoners. Now there is evidence based information from which to work," explained Godfrey.

He added that together with implementing the recommendations set out in the report the education gained from the HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Training facilitated by ARASA needs to be extended to educate inmates and prison officials for maximum impact.



“We would also like to see this research replicated in all SADC countries,” he said.

Godfrey expressed the hope that the research would help solve the issue of condom distribution that is still not allowed in Zambian prisons. He said that organisations and governments need to work together to achieve international human rights standards.

On a more empathetic note he said, “For prisoners, losing one’s freedom is enough. Lack of access to treatment can be compared to being incarcerated twice.”

He stated that countries in the SADC region should look forward to the report as all the countries share similar problems.

There were several challenges to overcome in carrying out the research. The initial negotiation with the Zambian government and prison officials in securing access to prisons for a very large research team was overcome by obtaining written authority from the Ministry of Home Affairs and by launching the research through a workshop held for prison officials to obtain their support and co-operation.

Prisons were required to adapt to

Challenges



allow for all the interviews to be confidential. Interpretation meant that the interviews became very long. The interviews as they were without the involvement of an interpreter were already of a long duration as researchers were careful to collect information both for qualitative and quantitative research.

Researchers had to be careful to include all groups. Included were pre-trial (remandees), detainees and convicted prisoners, juveniles, female and male and LGBTI groups.

In closing, Godfrey announced that PRISSCA would establish an information desk towards the aim of seeing this research extended to other countries in SADC .

“Human Rights Watch was thrilled to be involved and proud to be working with ARASA. We hope the outcome of this research will see benefits to

prisoners in the realisation of their human rights in terms of access to health,” said Katherine.

A presentation by Godfrey Malembeka entitled Human Rights Sensitization and Research in Zambian Prisons is available on the ARASA website.

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Mumbwa state prison



The research team

A week in the life of a PCB NGO Delegate

By Felicity Hikuam

UNAIDS was the first UN entity with civil society formally represented on its highest decision-making body, the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB).

The UNAIDS PCB consists of 37 seats - 22 Member States, 10 Cosponsors, and 5 NGOs (represented by one delegate and an alternate from Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean and North America).

The NGO Delegation to the UNAIDS PCB represents the perspectives of civil society, including people living with HIV, within UNAIDS policies and programming. Its mission is to ensure that the priorities and interests of affected people, constituencies and communities are considered in UNAIDS decisions and policies. For more information on the NGO delegation, visit www.unaidspcbngo.org

In November 2009, Felicity Hikuam, Programmes Manager of AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) was invited to join the UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation.

In December, she attended her first board meeting as an observer along with 6 new NGO delegates and was appointed to the board on 10 December during its 25th meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Below is a report of her experiences during this week.

Thursday, 3 December

After a hectic day reading documents and packing for my trip I depart for Geneva, Switzerland at 21:15 PM. Although I have had an induction and briefing calls, e-mail correspondence as well as several skype chats with Sara and Natalie from the NGO Delegation's Communications and Consultation Facility, I must admit I am extremely nervous to meet the other delegates and not sure what to expect. The Communications Facility was established in 2008, to promote greater outreach and accountability within the Delegation and wider civil society.

Friday, 4 December

After about 13 hours of travelling, I arrived in Geneva at 10:30 and was exhausted. We head out to Chateau de Bossey for a group orientation for the NGO delegates for the weekend. It's freezing cold and I'm already missing home.

That evening we had a reception for the NGO delegates, which gave me the opportunity to meet all the great people I will be working with over the next 2 years as well as the outgoing delegates.

Saturday and Sunday 5-6 December

Over the weekend, an orientation was conducted for the NGO delegation to inform the incoming delegates and deepen the understanding of existing delegates about how the NGO delegation works and contributes to the PCB. The orientation included an introduction to UNAIDS and its Secretariat, Civil Society Partnership Unit as well as the Bureau, which, amongst others facilitates smooth and efficient functioning of the PCB sessions; facilitates transparent decision-making at the PCB; prepares the PCB agenda, and provides guidance on PCB documentation.

The orientation introduced the modus operandi of the PCB meetings and what is expected of the NGO delegates during the board meetings. We also discussed the ways of working between the NGO delegates. Each member of the delegation is expected to join various internal and external working groups in order to ensure that civil society voices are heard in UNAIDS policy and programming. Besides discussing the NGO Delegation's workplan for 2010, the second day of orientation focused largely on preparing for the 25th PCB meeting, which would be held in Geneva from the 8 – 10 December and would largely focus on the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS. Around 17:30, though thoroughly exhausted, we departed for Geneva to check in to the hotels we would be staying at for the rest of the meeting.

Monday, 7 December

On Monday, we started the day bright and early with a meeting with the various AIDS programme Co-ordinators of the UNAIDS Co-sponsors. In addition, we met with the UNAIDS Executive

Director, representatives of Member States delegations as well as the chair and vice-chair of the PCB. During the day, we also updated our talking points and interventions and briefed the civil society observers on our strategy.

Any inter-governmental or non-governmental organisation or a Member State of any of the Co-sponsoring organisations may observe the PCB meetings. They have access to the PCB background documents and may intervene in the PCB discussions that are of concern to them, upon invitation from the chair. However, they have to make their own arrangements to cover any expenses related to observing the meeting.

Tuesday 8 December – Thursday 10 December

The 25th PCB meeting commenced on a grey, cold morning in Geneva. The incumbent NGO delegates and the incoming delegates met every morning during the PCB meeting to finalise talking points and interventions as well as to strategise on the day's agenda items.

Throughout the day, meetings were held with NGO observers and Member States, to lobby them on our positions. Several times during the meeting, a drafting committee

met to negotiate language for key decision points of the meeting. Along with Member States and Co-sponsors, the NGO delegation was represented in the drafting rooms to ensure its concerns are taken into account in the drafting of decision points.

Most nights, the meetings and de-briefings would go until around 20:00, at which time we would have a hurried dinner and retreat to our hotel rooms to continue working and prepare for the following day. The discussions of the PCB were very technical and revolved around the recommendations of the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS. The pace of the meeting was quite fast, but the NGO delegation's positions were well received and supported by many delegations. In particular, we were very pleased with the level of support and endorsement of the Operational plan for UNAIDS Action Framework: Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV; the PCB's support of the inclusion of men who have sex with men and transgender persons in UNAIDS' priorities and the expansion of programs to reduce HIV transmission among MSM and transgender; and the call for a prevention revolution and increased focus of

UNAIDS on HIV prevention.

The meeting resulted in various outcomes aimed at improving ways of working, notably amongst the Co-sponsors at country level, several of which are important specifically for civil society. For more details on the outcomes of this meeting, please read the NGO Delegations Communiqué at http://www.unaidspcbngo.org/pcb/blog/UN-AIDS_PCB_NGO_Delegation_PCB_25_communique_final-1.pdf

Friday, 11 December

On Friday morning we met with staff from the UNAIDS Secretariat tasked with co-ordinating the 26th PCB meeting, to be held in Geneva in June 2010.

I was very keen to participate in this meeting as the thematic session will focus on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), which is a key area of advocacy work for the ARASA partnership. We have recently held 2 consultation meetings with partners to identify priority issues related to SRH and are currently implementing a sexual and reproductive health rights campaign across southern Africa. For more information on this campaign please visit www.arasa.info/SRHRcampaign.

Following a de-briefing meeting with the NGO delegates, which also charted the way forward for the delegation, I departed to Windhoek around 13:30 that afternoon.

Watch this space for more on my journey with the PCB NGO delegation!

Felícita



Felícita and two delegates working on talking points at the PCB meeting

ARASA's New Partners at a Glance

UNIT FOR BEHAVIOURAL STUDIES IN HIV/AIDS AND HEALTH (USBAH), DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

The Unit for Behavioural Studies in HIV/AIDS and Health (USBAH), Department of Sociology of the University of South Africa (UNISA) is engaged in the following activities for various groups in South Africa and SADC:

Capacity building training on HIV and AIDS using social behaviour change perspective;

- Advocacy campaigns on Human Rights, HIV and AIDS and Health;
- Social behaviour research and assessments on social policy and programmes;
- Strategic Monitoring and Evaluation Development;
- Placement of students at NGOs', Government and Private Sector; and
- Collaborations with different stakeholders.

Contact: Mr. Leon Roets, Programme Convenor (USBAH) or Ms. Rinnie Tlometsane
e-mail: roetshjl@unisa.ac.za / Tlomerm@unisa.ac.za
website: www.unisa.ac.za/usbah

WOMEN AND LAW IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION TRUST

Women and Law In Southern Africa, Research and Education Trust is based in Harare, Zimbabwe and is engaged in:

- Advocacy;
- Action research;
- Legal education and training;
- Information generation and dissemination;
- Networking;
- Legal aid and services targeting women, men, youth, law and policy makers, traditional and community leaders, CBOs, FBOs and justice delivery system personnel in Zimbabwe.

Contact:: Sylvia Chirawu, National Coordinator
e-mail: wlsazimbabwe@africaonline.co.zw

Welcome to the ARASA family!





Happy Holidays!

With best wishes from all of us at ARASA for a peaceful and restful break over the holidays and a healthy and happy new year!

The ARASA team will be taking a break between 18 December 2009 and 4 January 2010 when our offices will open again for the new year.

With kind regards to you all

Michaela Clayton
Director
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