



African Action on AIDS

AAA e-NEWS BRIEF – AUGUST 2012 HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND DRUG USERS

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Learn About African Action on AIDS (AAA)

AAA is a tax exempt non-profit organization registered in the USA and operating under section 501(c) 3 of the IRS code. It is also registered in Cameroon (auth. No 00174/A/MINAT/DAP/SDLP/SAC). It has special consultative status with the United Nations ECOSOC and the UN Department of Information.

AAA's work is based on 3 programmes:

“JUST KNOW” Campaign emphasizes:

- Knowledge of one's body
- Knowledge that leads to behavior change
- Knowledge that helps to visualize a future without AIDS

“Health before Wealth” Concept promotes:

- Testing for HIV
- Clean hands (hand washing stations)
- Clean water (drinking stations)
- Dignified toilets
- Fighting against Malaria (treated mosquito bed nets)
- Vaccination
- Anti worms medicine

“Women's economic autonomy” through our Scholarship Programme. This scholarship enables each teenage orphan girl to complete at least a secondary, general or technical education that will lead to financial and economic autonomy, greatly reducing the risk of being infected with HIV through sexual abuse and violence.

An optimistic feeling opened the July 2012 Washington Conference on AIDS with the WE SHALL OVERCOME HYMNAL!!! By the end of the meeting, it was clear that important problems must be taken care off before we see the end of the tunnel. These include among others the link between AIDS and drugs use. As Africa faces more drug traffic, this aspect of AIDS prevention has become one o f AAA focuses and our Representative in Vienna has been covering the UN Narcotic Committee. This year again, she draws our attention on the 55th Commission's conclusions – Please read her report below:

One of the documents available to the participants at the 55th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which was recently held at the Vienna United Nations Centre, dealt with the **response to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases among drug users.**(E/CN.7/201/16) It showed that remarkable results have been achieved in decreasing the number of newly diagnosed HIV infections in countries where human rights-based comprehensive drug dependence treatment services, including HIV policies and programmes, have been adopted.

However globally, only a limited number of people participate in such services, and only 4 percent of HIV positive people who inject drugs receive antiretroviral therapy. In addition, the specific needs of women drug users are not met by HIV prevention, treatment and care services.

During the session, information material was provided by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) according to which researchers from the Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies have presented results which show that in areas where **antiretroviral therapy** uptake is high (greater than 30 %), people who do not have HIV are 38 % less likely to acquire the virus than in areas of low uptake (less than 10 %). Consequently, UNAIDS encourages all countries and communities to achieve high coverage of antiretroviral therapy, both for the benefit of people living with HIV and for the communities in which they live. A study carried out in South Africa showed that if an HIV positive person adheres to an effective antiretroviral therapy regimen, the risk of transmitting the virus to their uninfected sexual partner can be reduced by 96 %.

One of the workshops dealt with **drug dependence, treatment and care**, and participants could hear the very moving testimonials of a former heroin addict from Kenya who cured himself with self-willed treatment and is now active in outreach work in HIV prevention, drug abuse prevention and related support services. Several workshops demonstrated very clearly that drug dependency was a treatable disease and that comprehensive treatment was the best harm reduction method.

During the session, a lot of emphasis was put on the **role of civil society**. They are now considered as key partners for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the fight against narcotic drugs.

For further information, please go to www.unodc.org and <http://retroconference.org/2012>



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