

Dear Friends,

Happy First of March! Enjoy this week's Newsflash!, and we wish you the best in your continued efforts working with children and communities affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty.

The Firelight Team

- Call for Applications: Moremi Initiative
- Call for Applications: 2010 AWARD Fellowships
- Call for Nominations: 2010 RFK HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD: MAKE A NOMINATION
- Memo to UNESCO Director from CGD VP
- Article: Aid 'shortfall' to poorer nations
- Article: Circumcision: Zimbabwe's latest anti-HIV weapon
- Article: Girls' Health: Kits to Aid in Menstrual Health May Cut School Absenteeism in Kenya
- Resource Highlight: Kopernik
- Report: WLLA Land Academy
- Article: Motorbike boost to Zambia's health hopes
- Article: Scientist Discover Origin Of HIV Transmission Among Male Partners

Call for Applications: Moremi Initiative: Moremi Leadership Empowerment and Development (MILEAD) Fellows Program for Young African Women Leaders

The MILEAD Fellows Program is a one-year leadership development program designed to identify, develop and promote emerging young African Women leaders to attain and succeed in leadership in their community and Africa as a whole. The one-year program targets dynamic young women interested in developing transformational leadership skills that help them tackle issues affecting women in their communities. Deadline for Applications: March 31, 2010.

Call for Applications: 2010 AWARD Fellowships

The Huairou Commission would like to announce that AWARD is accepting applications for the 2010 AWARD Fellowships. African women working in agricultural research and development from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia who have completed a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in selected disciplines are invited to apply. Applicants must be nationals of the above listed countries and be available in Africa throughout the fellowship

period.

The deadline for all applications is March 22, 2010.

Details and application forms can be downloaded here, plus answers to frequently asked questions:

<http://www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/resource/award.asp>

<http://fellowsupdate.wordpress.com>

Application forms can also be obtained by writing to AWARDFellows@cgiar.org

Please help us spread the word about this unique opportunity to qualified African women whom you know by forwarding this email and/or printing and posting the attached announcement.

All queries should be sent to AWARDFellows@cgiar.org

Call for Nominations: 2010 RFK HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD: MAKE A NOMINATION

Robert F. Kennedy believed that each individual holds the power to invoke change, that a single voice has the ability to declare an iniquity, and that each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. In the spirit of Robert Kennedy's ideals, The Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award was established in 1984 to honor these courageous and innovative individuals striving for social justice throughout the world.

The recipients are chosen through an extensive annual selection process. Every year from February until March, the public is invited to nominate creative and courageous non-governmental human rights defenders and organizations. A panel of five independent judges then selects the honoree. The recipients are awarded based on their dedication and accomplishments towards social justice and their non-violent and creative tactics used to achieve their goals.

www.rfkcenter.org/2010hra

Memo to UNESCO Director from CGD VP

February 17, 2010

To: Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO
From: Cynthia B. Lloyd, Population Council¹
Ruth Levine, Vice President, Center for Global Development, Washington D.C. ²
Miriam Temin, Center for Global Developments³

RE: Making 2010 a watershed year for adolescent girls' education

The Opportunity: In your acceptance speech on October 23, you boldly suggested that UNESCO launch an international campaign to increase budget allocations for secondary education for girls in all regions. We applaud this initiative because it recognizes that education investments in adolescent girls can fundamentally transform societies, with attendant improvements in health, civic participation, productivity, environmental sustainability, and poverty reduction. Major steps toward mobilizing more attention and resources for girls' secondary education are possible at two upcoming events: the Ninth Education For All (EFA) High-Level Group meeting in Addis Ababa and the September MDG Review Summit. These events offer a chance to demonstrate your leadership in venues where you will have a unique opportunity as part of the EFA Convening Group to center policymakers' attention on the potential of investing in adolescent girls' education.

The Action: Strategic and targeted investments in the education of girls will expedite the achievement of all six EFA goals, as well as of all the MDGs (Goals 2 and 3 directly and all others indirectly). We therefore urge you to call forcefully for global and national action, with a focus on marginalized and vulnerable populations, to increase the commitment, funding, and evidence to support adolescent girls' chances of attending and completing school and converting their education into long-term economic betterment for themselves and their families.

1

Lloyd is author of *New Lessons, The Power of Educating Adolescent Girls* and coauthor of *Girls Count: A Global Investment and Action Agenda*.

2

Levine is coauthor of *Girls Count: A Global Investment and Action Agenda* and *Start with a Girl: A New Agenda for Global Health*.

3

Temin is coauthor of *Start with a Girl: A New Agenda for Global Health*.

We respectfully offer recommendations for follow-up actions to support accelerated progress for girls over the next five years (through 2015):

- Commence your leadership for adolescent girls at the Ninth EFA High-Level Group meeting by centering your welcoming address and opening remarks on the immediate and long-term benefits of adolescent girls' education and the challenges that remain, as they relate to the two themes of the recently released EFA report: marginalization and the financial crisis. Should you so wish, we stand

ready to support you in drafting.

- Launch a major campaign with the EFA Convening Group at the September MDG Review Summit, involving government, UN agencies, NGOs, and independent experts, to increase donor and national budget allocations for adolescent girls' education.
- Complement calls for increased financing with your commitment of technical and financial resources to develop case studies on successful investments in adolescent girls' education, emphasizing where countries have expanded and sustained activities as part of long-term education reforms.
- Make adolescent girls a major focus of the next EFA Global Monitoring report on the theme of skills by emphasizing the expanded benefits of educating girls, especially on their employability, income, and health, and on the education, employability, and health of the next generation. Include in that report estimates of the level and type of donor financing and technical support for expanding access to high-quality education for girls.

Article: Aid 'shortfall' to poorer nations

Developed economies will fail to fulfil aid pledges made five years ago at the Gleneagles summit, the OECD says.

Aid to developing countries from richer nations will fail to hit aid targets set five years ago at the Gleneagles summit, a study has suggested. Total aid will be \$107bn (£68bn) in 2010 against 2005 pledges of \$128bn, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has forecast. Many countries will hit their targets, the OECD added, but others, including Greece and Italy, will not. Aid agency Oxfam described such "broken promises" as "a scandal". "Rich countries have no excuse for failing to deliver the aid increases they promised five years ago at Gleneagles," said Max Lawson at Oxfam.

"The missing \$21bn could pay for every child [in the world] to go to school and could save the lives of two million of the poorest mothers and children." UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown echoed Oxfam's view when he said: "I do not believe there can be any excuse for denying money promised to the poorest people on our planet." Africa will suffer the biggest shortfall in aid, the OECD said. The continent is likely to receive just \$12bn of the \$25bn pledged.

Read more at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/business/8519773.stm>

Article: Circumcision: Zimbabwe's latest anti-HIV weapon

By Steve Vickers

BBC News, Harare

The operation is done under local anaesthetic
"It's numb, man, I can't feel a thing," he says.
"It reduces the risk of transmitting HIV, so whatever's needed for me to be safe, I've got to do it. But I intend to remain faithful to my wife."
Lovemore is one of about 3,000 men who have been circumcised since Zimbabwe's government launched a programme in mid-2009.
In the next eight years the government aims to carry out the operation on 80% of all young men in the country - three million people in all.
Circumcision is not widely practised among Zimbabwe's cultural and religious groups, but the centuries-old procedure is now regarded as a key weapon in the country's fight against the spread of HIV and Aids .
Trials in Kenya, Uganda and South Africa have shown that the operation, in which the foreskin is removed from the penis, reduces by 60% the risk of a man contracting HIV - the virus that causes Aids.

Read more at: news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8483116.stm

Article: Girls' Health: Kits to Aid in Menstrual Health May Cut School Absenteeism in Kenya

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.

Published: February 15, 2010

Tackling a problem that is widespread but rarely discussed, a new American-backed charity in Kenya has begun making and giving away kits containing washable sanitary pads, underwear and soap.

Many schoolgirls from poor families stay home up to five days each month when they have their period, according to a recent study in rural Ghana by Oxford University scientists. Disposable sanitary pads like those used in wealthy countries cut absenteeism, but poor families often cannot afford them; a Kenyan girl interviewed by the Voice of America said a box of pads costs about the same as a bag of corn flour, and her parents had to choose the latter.

Substitutes like cloth, mattress padding or newspaper may leak or raise the risk of infection. Not only are the girls embarrassed, but as soon as it is clear they are ovulating, pressure for sex from men — often including their male teachers — steadily increases, the study found.

Huru International, in partnership with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Elton John AIDS Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, Sunflag Steel, Warner Brothers and other backers, developed large but soft terry-cloth pads that can be washed and reused. They are sewn and packaged at a Nairobi community center supported by AmericaShare, the charity arm of Micato Safaris, a New York travel company. The kits also contain information about safe sex and

avoiding AIDS. AmericaShare hopes other African women will use microfinance loans to buy the machines needed to make the pads and sell them.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/health/16glob.html?ref=africa>

Kopernik is an on-line store of innovative technologies designed for the developing world – or the ‘base of the pyramid’ (BOP) - that also provides crowd-funded financial subsidies.

Through an on-line platform, Kopernik allows the most progressive technologies to reach poor people in developing countries. The goal is to accelerate development through ‘leapfrogging’ or skipping inferior, less-efficient technologies and practices and moving directly to more advanced ones. Kopernik show-cases innovative products (such as solar powered products and water purification devices) and thereby provides a menu of options accessible to local organizations in developing countries. The organizations then develop short proposals explaining how they can utilize the products to overcome development challenges and impediments to growth. The public in turn funds the most promising proposals in order to make them a reality.

At the core of this idea is our realisation that:

- Development challenges are immense, yet the pool of ideas within the ‘development community’ remains limited. Many ‘solutions’ are recycled from place to place, and often yield limited results. It is surprising that innovation and technology play only a small part in solving complex development problems.
- Extraordinary technologies and innovations exist out there, and these are rapidly increasing in number. However, there is little awareness (by those that actually need them) about the existence of these products. As a result, they are rarely used in solving development problems.
- The cost of these products is also often too high for local communities to be able to afford them. In addition, technology providers frequently lack the means to scale and reach more communities in need of these solutions.
- Local organizations know best what the concerns of their communities are. However, they frequently lack the necessary tools and resources to be able to address them.

www.thekopernik.org/

Report: Grassroots Evaluate Successes and Leaders Shape the Way Forward at the 2010 WLLA Land Academy

On Feb 8th through 12th of February, 40 grassroots women leaders and NGO

partners from 22 organizations from 13 African countries, organized in community-based grassroots groups, women's savings clubs, NGOs and women's alliances, came together for the 3rd Annual Land Academy organized by the Huairou Commission, through the Women's Land Link Africa Initiative, held in Lusaka, Zambia.

Land Academies provide an opportunity for all participations to share and exchange experiences, challenges and strategies to strengthen women's ability to claim, gain and maintain land and housing. The format of the Land Academy particularly focuses participants to take time to carefully assess and evaluate the long-term success of their own ongoing work as on land and housing, as grassroots women leaders and NGO partners within and across their countries. Monitoring and evaluation techniques were shared that allow for a capture of the important work and that is also adoptable and adaptable in grassroots communities. The Academy featured a Partner's Day Dialogue, whereby representatives of the Zambia Land Alliance, the Zambia Law & Development Commission, Zambia Times, YMCA, and Department of Community Development participated in an in-depth discussion with participants about the controversies surrounding the difference between customary land inheritance and state land, as well as the elements to successful and strategic partnerships.

A new addition to this year's Academy, Huairou Commission partnered with the Institute for Housing & Urban Development Studies for a Land Court Simulation exercise, whereby participants acted out three mock Land Court Tribunals "deciding" contentions land and inheritance issues to prepare participants to understand and advocate for the issues.

Finally, the Academy served as an organizing and planning platform, in which grassroots women and their NGO partners determined their desired long term accomplishments , and the organizing and strategies necessary to achieve them.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The overarching theme throughout the Land Academy was 'Monitoring and Evaluating from a Grassroots Women's Perspective'. Participants were asked to unpack a number of important questions, such as What does success look like? What change do we want to see, for ourselves and for the WLLA? How do we measure this? How do you know you have achieved this? What are your measures of success? These questions led participants to develop grassroots indicators for success. Some examples of success were:

- Building the capacity of grassroots women to advocate and speak up for themselves;
- Grassroots women gaining back their land and property after being evicted;
- Increasing women's level of confidence, presence and participation in decision-

making processes and positions; and
--Economic empowerment for grassroots women.

Identifying how to measure these changes was the following task. This was to support their capacity to develop indicators. Indicators of this success included: increased number of women accessing land, housing and property; increase in the number of women who are actively involved in decision making; improved access to information on land, housing and property rights; increased confidence of grassroots women within WLLA groups communities, and an increased number of reported cases on land rights violations. Through continually revisiting specific aspects of M&E, participants were able to gain a deeper understanding of how to develop objectives related to their land and housing goals, to develop easily monitored and measurable indicators, and to document these in a way that will be helpful for their monitoring to show significant change against objectives.

Partners Day Dialogue

The Huairou Commission and Katuba Women's Association invited a number of strategic partners to the Partner's Day Dialogue, including the Zambia Land Alliance, the Zambia Law & Development Commission, the Zambia Times, the Zambia Widows Network, YMCA, and Department of Community Development. The representatives of these organizations came to the Academy to engage in an in-depth discussion about the land situation in Zambia and how to strengthen partnerships between grassroots groups and government or NGO groups. Honorable Member of Parliament Shakafuswa pledged to support women's issues around land and housing, and praised the success of the Katuba constituency has had for women's access and control over land. Annette Nhekairo from the Zambia Law & Development Commission urged the MP to advocate for other constituencies where women were being denied their rights to land, particularly after the death of their husbands. She said, "We are proud of the constituency of Katuba, but success of one constituency is not enough for the whole country. ."

The Partnership Dialogue debated the difference between constitutional reform processes and how their translation on the ground, as well as the elements of cooperation needed for strong partnership to advance grassroots women's work and access to land and improving women's economic empowerment.

Land Court Tribunals

The Institute for Housing and Development Studies, based in the Netherlands, facilitated three innovative 'Land Court Simulations'. Participants were first surveyed about their opinions about contentious and controversial statements regarding land and inheritance issues. Once their answers were compiled, participants were placed into teams on the opposite side of the argument they had originally agreed with. This gave the session an exciting twist, by

encouraging participants to develop arguments, points and tactics to defend their argument against the opposite team. The participants acted out the roles of jury, defense, the opposition and the judges. The three statements were "Land titling ensures equal access to land", "Women should be the recipients of subsidies to the household to have access to land", and "Only women can defend, advocate for and protect for women's issues and rights to land." All the courts produced convincing arguments on either side, and the outcome of the winning teams illustrated that effective preparation is critical to convince others especially around often contentious issues related to land.

Land Academy Site Visit

Following the Land Court simulations, the Land Academy participants paid a field visit to the Chawama Compound to learn about one of the projects of the People's Process and the Homeless and Poor People's Federation of Zambia. The Federation is a national network of grassroots and community groups that have come together through women's savings schemes and income-generating activities. The Federation has a national network of 45,000 members, and the Chawama project was established in 2006. The Land Academy participants visited the model house that the Federation has built as well as sustainable toilets. Prior to this visit the participants held a focus group discussion meeting with a delegation from the Federation, consisting of women from four different saving schemes from Kalikiliki, George, Chipata, Chawama Compounds, as well as those involved in the toilet building process. The focus group discussion focused on the different activities of the Federation, such as daily savings, the Swalisano Urban Poor Fund, income generating activities, health activities, and land, training & skills development and exchanges.

To date, the savings group has amassed a total of \$75,000 US from daily savings of approximately 10 cents US of each member. They were using some of the funds for house and sustainable toilet building, community health issues, such as funeral costs, medication and doctor visits. Many of the women were also trained to be constructors so that they would not need to hire builders from outside the community. They built a model house for a formerly homeless woman, and have plans to build many more. The community also set out to improve sanitation conditions by building sustainable toilets, whereby waste is later converted into manure and fertilizer. The Land Academy participants learned a great deal from the work of the Poor People's Federation of Zambia.

The Way Forward

The final two days of the Academy were forward-looking planning, debate and advocacy formulation. Participants first broke into regional groups, from Eastern, Western and Southern Africa, and looked back on their achievements since the 2008 and 2009 Land Academies. They used their successes and obstacles as a base to develop 2010 action plans, that included monitoring and evaluation

indicators and plans within them. The plans included for example, on further building grassroots women's capacity to claim their rights to land and property through Peer Learning Exchanges, improving community justice processes through increased community paralegal trainings, holding a greater number of grassroots forums, and increasing the use of media as an awareness raising tool, and increasing communication between and among the groups and countries. The groups closed the day by agreeing to form committees around three leading themes of the Academy, Land Titling research, Land Court replications and Coordination and Communication. The Land Academy was successful for both reviewing past activities and achievements, and finding new ways of moving ahead. There was lots of excitement in the closing moments of the Academy, as participants left with ideas about the upcoming learning exchanges and land gaining strategies they planned to engage in upon their return home.

Forging strategic partnerships to advance the capacities of grassroots women worldwide to strengthen and create sustainable communities

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Article: Motorbike boost to Zambia's health hopes

By Ashley Morris
Alvin's Guide To Good Business, BBC World News, Zambia

Africa's health systems are in crisis. Could motorbikes be the answer?

Zambia is the latest country to benefit from Riders For Health's operations. Social entrepreneurs Riders for Health think they are. They are striving to transform health delivery in Africa, using business principles and motorbikes. Founded by two motorcycling fans, Riders For Health now works in partnership with health ministries in seven African countries. And Chadiza district in rural Zambia is the latest place to be transformed by their initiative - providing speedier healthcare for sick people for whom transport can be the difference between life and death. The district has very few motorised vehicles. The red dirt road carves its way through scrub and over steep hills. Cyclists veer left and right, struggling through a maze of potholes and ruts.

Alongside a small village of grass-roofed huts is the remote Bwanunkha rural health centre.

This tiny cluster of bright blue concrete buildings sits 30km away from the nearest town.

It may not seem far, but it's a journey that takes an hour-and-a-half by car, let alone by bicycle or on foot.

Perhaps a hundred people sit on the floor outside, waiting to see the nurse.

Read more at: news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8504921.stm

Article: Scientist Discover Origin Of HIV Transmission Among Male Partners

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- A team of scientists, led by a virologist from the University of California, San Diego's Center for AID Research (CFAR), has discovered the origin of strains of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) among men who have sex with men. The study, which may be important in developing prevention strategies for HIV, will appear in Science Translational Medicine on February 10, 2010, reported China's Xinhua news agency. Using a method of comparing genetic characteristics, called phylogenetic analysis, the researchers studied a group of men who had sexually transmitted their HIV virus to other men. "If we want to stop the HIV epidemic, then we must know the mechanisms by which HIV uses human sex to spread," said principal investigator Davey Smith, MD, MAS, associate professor of medicine in UCSD's Division of Infectious Diseases and in the Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System, and director of the CFAR Viral Pathogenesis Core. It is known that most HIV infections worldwide result from exposure to the HIV virus in semen, made up of seminal cells and the fluid around these cells, called seminal plasma. HIV virus particles contain RNA and exist in the plasma, while infected seminal cells contain HIV DNA. Phylogenetic models allow researchers to estimate the dates of origin of various groups of viruses; in this way the team was able to determine the source of rapidly mutating HIV viruses by analyzing the viral sequences extracted from the blood and semen of HIV transmitting partners. The team found that recipients shared a more recent common ancestor with virus from the seminal plasma than with virus found in the seminal cells of their source partner. Until now, it had not been established whether HIV RNA or DNA is transmitted during sex," said Smith. "By analyzing the genetic differences between these two forms and the virus that was ultimately transmitted to newly infected individuals we found that it was the HIV RNA form present in seminal plasma that was transmitted." He added that the findings from this study will help direct prevention strategies to address the virus in the seminal plasma. "By knowing the origin of the transmitted virus, scientists may be able to develop new vaccines, vaginal microbicides and drugs to prevent the spread of sexually

transmitted HIV."Smith notes that because the study involved pairs of men who have sex with men, the findings do not comment directly on HIV transmission to women."Since the vast majority of women are infected with HIV by exposure to the virus in semen, HIV RNA in the seminal plasma is the likely culprit, but this needs to be confirmed," he said.-- BERNAMA

www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsworld.php?id=475043

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.