

25 October, 2010

Dear friends,

This week's Newsflash! has several resources and examples of policy-level issues that can be influenced from the ground. Attached is a resource book for advocacy around HIV and AIDS. The book is specifically written for civil society in Zambia, but can easily be used in other country contexts as well. Also, there is a resource for LGBTI rights reflected in country policies, and a story about how communities can reclaim their human rights with personal drive and cooperation, eventually influencing policy. Finally, there is an article about Rwanda's recent shift in financial support from secondary/tertiary to primary education. This is a hot topic in many countries and platforms, including at Firelight. As many of you experienced during our last grant round, we were curious how your communities and organizations prioritize education to help us answer a common question: should we be prioritizing support to primary or secondary school? This questions most likely does not have ONE answer, but should be carefully considered by communities supporting vulnerable families.

We hope these resources are helpful to your work. Enjoy,

Firelight Team

- An Advocacy Resource Book for HIV and AIDS in Zambia
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
- (Call for papers) Research Grant Program for Young African Scholars
- Kenyan slum dwellers map their way out of oblivion
- Outcry as Rwandan Govt Shifts Money to Primary Education
- (Call for applications) OSI Disability Rights Initiative Grant
- Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings

An Advocacy Resource Book for HIV and AIDS in Zambia

This is an advocacy resource book for individuals, community groups, PLWHA, youth and school pupils, district level organisations, teachers associations, church groups, (local) government leaders and others concerned and wanting to make a positive contribution to the response to HIV and AIDS in Zambia.

Specifically, this book is about what influences the national response to HIV and AIDS and how we can advocate an improvement to the response. Improving the response means reducing infection, providing the best possible access to treatment, care and support, reducing stigma and discrimination that surrounds HIV and AIDS, and helping people whose lives and families are threatened by the impact of the epidemic.

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For the book, see the attached document

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

This resource website helps you find out more information about your regions' support (or lack of support) to gender and sexuality minorities. You can search by question, by country, and by peer organizations for more resources. Find out what rights are offered or denied, what laws are in place, and what social movements are occurring in your country.

For more, go here: <http://ilga.org/ilga/en/organisations/ILGA%20AFRICA>

(Call for papers) Research Grant Program for Young African Scholars

The H.F. Guggenheim Foundation makes grants for scholarly research into problems of aggression and violence. One program is reserved for African Scholars under the age of 35, educated and living on the African continent. Selected applicants will attend a methods workshop to refine and improve their research plans in Accra, Ghana, in March 2011, and after submitting revised plans, will receive grants of \$2000 each to support their fieldwork. In 2012 they will be funded to attend a professional conference to present their findings and will receive assistance in finding a publisher for their work.

Applications are due by December 1, 2010 for the 2011-2012 awards. Awardees will be announced before the end of the year.

This year's theme is "Spirituality and Violence." Proposals are invited to investigate how aspects of religion, ideologies, and traditional cultures and beliefs work either to mitigate conflict (conflict resolution and reconciliation, personal values, community and family strength, etc.) or to encourage conflicts (religious conflicts, subjugation of women, sorcery killings, bias against sexual and other minorities, etc.)

Proposals should be around ten pages in length, include a description of the problem to be investigated, specific research questions and plans to pursue the answers to those questions, and a c.v. for the applicant including proof of age and residence.

Send them to Karen Colvard, Program Director, as email attachments to kjcolvard@aol.com, or by mail to her at the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, 25 West 53rd St. New York, NY 10019, USA.

For more information, go here: <http://www.hfg.org/index.html>

Kenyan slum dwellers map their way out of oblivion

NAIROBI (AlertNet) - How much state attention and help can you expect if the area where you live is not even marked on official maps? Not a lot, decided the residents of one of Africa's biggest slums and designed a digital map of Kibera - a great help in all too familiar emergency situations.

For the full article, go here: <http://www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/65712/2010/08/22-133722-1.htm>

Outcry as Rwandan Govt Shifts Money to Primary Education by Aimable Twahirwa
IPS Africa

KIGALI, Oct 20 (IPS) – In an attempt to meet the development goal of universal access to primary education by 2015, Rwanda's government has decided to reallocate a large part of its tertiary education budget to the primary education sector.

As a result, thousands of students who rely on bursaries fear that they will have to abandon their studies if their allowances and merit-based college scholarships – which cover students' tuition fees, accommodation and living expenses – are scrapped.

Cedric Kavamahanga, an engineering student at the Institute of Science and Technology in Kigali, says many of his fellow students might have to drop out of college.

"The livelihood [and access to tertiary education] of a number of students from poor families are depending on this amount allocated to them," he explains.

But the Rwandan government has made it clear that it believes the new focus on improving access to and the quality of primary education justifies the sacrifices that will be made in the tertiary education sector.

"The resolution to cut allowance for university students was taken after observing that there are other levels of the country's education system, which are still lagging behind," says education minister Charles Murigande.

The minister promises the bursary will be abolished gradually. He said, for a while, government will continue to support students financially, but for shorter

periods, with students being required eventually to carry all of their university costs.

In 2009, Rwanda's Ministry of Education spent \$11.4 million on bursaries for about 27,000 students in public universities and higher institutions of learning. Government says this is far too high and recommends rather using the money to ensure that every citizen receives up to nine years of free basic education – six years in primary school and three years in secondary school.

Murigande promises, however, not to let university students fall by the wayside. He says those students who are unable to complete their studies without financial support from government, will be somehow considered in the reshuffled education budget. But up until now, no specific plan has been put into place to solve the issue.

Ultimately, government hopes that public and private universities will start to finance bursaries for their own students from money generated by research produced at their institutions. Others will have to apply for loans and pay those back after their studies.

"The government emphasizes transforming higher learning institutions into autonomous universities capable of generating their own income from their research," notes Murigande.

He believes it is government's first obligation to ensure that everyone has access to basic education, while tertiary education is important, but not a necessity. Since Rwanda introduced free primary education in 2003, learners' enrolment numbers have risen throughout the country. But poor infrastructure, lack of equipment and a shortage of qualified teachers have been jeopardizing progress made.

"Rwanda has pledged to achieve universal education by moving ahead step by step, and so far, the country's free primary education is only slowly becoming a reality," explains Rwandan prime minister Bernard Makuza.

"From now on, 25 percent of the total budget [of \$92.1 million] of the education sector, which used to be allocated as allowances to university students, will be injected to finance basic education for all", he adds.

Makuza believes that cutting the allowances of public university students is the best way to close financial gaps in the primary education sector. The money will not only be channelled into primary education but also be used to improve the first three years of secondary education.

By 2012, 40 percent of the country's children will have access to free primary and secondary education, and this number will be more than doubled by 2015, the deadline for meeting the MDGs, government promises.

"Despite our modest resources, we have allocated more than 25 percent of our annual national budget to education, helping us to realise 98 percent enrolment target for primary education, well ahead of 2015," President Paul Kagame announced during the United Nations MDG Summit, which took place in New York in September.

This will be a huge improvement from eleven percent of children attending

primary school in Rwanda in 2007.

But the country's education experts are concerned that shifting budgets away from tertiary education will mean that, in the long-term, Rwanda will not be able to grow an intellectual elite that can help foster the poor central African nation's economic growth.

They also believe it will undermine Rwanda's widely perceived position as role model for the implementation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (Unesco) 'Education for All' initiative that aims to meet the learning needs of all – children, youth and adults – by 2015.

"It would be important to carefully assess the trend of this change in educational finance to avoid that Rwanda ends up lagging behind when it comes to its competitive academic offer and economy," warns a senior lecturer at the National University of Rwanda in Butare.

For the article, go here: <http://www.ips.org/africa/2010/10/outcry-as-rwandan-govt-shifts-money-to-primary-education/>

(Call for applications) OSI Disability Rights Initiative Grant

The OSI Disability Rights Initiative seeks to address discrimination against people with disabilities and promote their inclusion in society by supporting a rights-based approach to disability. Building on the momentum and opportunity created by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the initiative supports civil society to build networks and mobilize campaigns that advance disability rights through advocacy for ratification and for implementation of this new human rights instrument. The program provides funding for national and global advocacy efforts that galvanize constituencies and engage new partners to develop rights-based strategies to implement the CRPD. The initiative gives priority to efforts that envision collaboration across movements and sectors, combine monitoring and documentation with advocacy and litigation, and seek to strengthen rights protections and remedies.

For more information, go

here: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/special/focus/disability/grants#b>

(From AWID Newsletter: <http://awid.org/eng/Women-in-Action/Newsletters-Sign-Up>)

2010 Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings

The 2010 Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings is an update of the 1999 Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations: An

Inter-agency Field Manual, the authoritative guidance on reproductive health interventions in humanitarian settings.

The 2010 version provides additional guidance on how to implement the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Reproductive Health, a minimum standard of care in humanitarian response. It also splits the original chapter on HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) into two separate chapters to accommodate new guidance on HIV programming. A new chapter on Comprehensive Abortion Care has been developed to cover more than post-abortion care. The chapters on Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation and Adolescent Reproductive Health have been placed earlier in the manual to address the cross-cutting nature of these topics. Information on human rights and legal considerations has been integrated into each of the thematic chapters to ensure that program staff can address rights-related concerns.

The updated information is based on normative technical guidance of the World Health Organization. It also reflects the good practices documented in crisis settings around the world since the initial field test version was released in 1996. The latest edition reflects the wide application of the Field Manual's principles and technical content beyond refugee situations, extending its use into diverse crises, including conflict zones and natural disasters.

The document was released on 14 September 2010 by the Australian Government, in partnership with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Bangkok. This was the first regional launch for the global rollout of the Manual.

For more, go here: http://www.iawg.net/resources/field_manual.html

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.