

# Civil G8 Process

2007 Lessons Learnt and Future





## **Civil G8 Process - 2007 Lessons Learnt and Future**

This paper describes the findings from a review of the Civil G8 process coordinated by the World AIDS Campaign (WAC) during 2007.

The information is drawn from a meeting at the WAC National Campaigners Meeting in Nairobi of the main Civil G8 participants. In addition, information is drawn from the responses to a circulated questionnaire, which is attached in Annex 1 and finally telephone interviews with Mirjam Hageböling of Action Against AIDS-Germany.

The questionnaire respondents were not involved in the meeting in Nairobi so they provided an additional perspective to the process.

### ***Background:***

The Civil G8 group coordinated by WAC arose out of a request from the German, Italian and French groups that in order to be effective in responding to the G8 they needed assistance in information sharing and connecting with HIV groups in the other G8 countries. Help with funding to assist with key activities was one key aspiration which the WAC said at the outset it was not able to offer at present. A meeting was held with interested groups at the international AIDS conference in Toronto in August 2006 and it was agreed that the WAC would coordinate conference calls for the G8 countries.

WAC then discussed with Action Against AIDS Germany the areas where they needed assistance or back up in the build up to the 2007 G8 in Germany and organised the first conference call. Out of the calls there was some bilateral activities that emerged and about every 4 weeks the group reconvened.

Over the ensuing months links were made with other country groups. One of the major challenge is that apart from the groups in Germany, UK, Italy and to some degree Japan and Canada there are no "national" networks of NGO's and other civil society groups that has the remit for advocacy on international development issues which includes the G8 in the USA, France and Russia. This meant that WAC approached the groups it had worked with on advocacy initiatives and who had been active on the G8 in the past on the understanding they were not operating as a national coordinating body and not represented as such.

WAC also worked to increase participation from the global south by approaching organisations in the Outreach Countries of Brazil, South Africa, India, China Mexico and the UA President- Ghana. This was of limited success due to other commitments by groups in these countries and their limited capacity which inevitably led to some questioning of the value of focusing on the G8 especially when there was uncertainty on whether there were any real benefits coming out of the process for the global south.

As a result of the collaboration a joint sign on letters went to the Finance Ministers meeting (Annex 2) and the Development Ministers meeting (Annex 4). In addition a paper pulling together the range of issues that HIV organisations are seeking to achieve was produced and turned in to a joint letter organised by WAC and ITPC to all heads of government (Annex 3) which was widely supported and endorsed by HIV groups from around the world. The Civil G8 group also supported and promoted the Global AIDS Alliance petition (Annex 5) and several people from the group attended the Venro Conference. In addition, WAC was invited to send two representatives to the G8 Media Room during the G8 process. As a result of efforts by the group, the broader development organisations agreed to include an AIDS specific representative of Civil Society in the

meeting of the Sherpa's with Civil Society. The group was represented at that meeting by a member of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

## **Questionnaire Results**

As mentioned earlier copies of the questionnaire were sent to the Civil G8 list consisting of the key NGO contacts in the G8 countries plus broader Civil Society.

Responses were received from the Italian group, an NGO in the USA, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) and the Global Unions.

As indicated in the introduction, none of the respondents were present at the meeting held in Nairobi so there was an opportunity to see the degree to which their comments mirrored or differed from the comments and suggestions made in Nairobi.

### **1) G8 Activity 2007**

All of the respondents had been involved in advocacy aimed at the G8 before 2007 but to varying degrees with the Trade Unions having the most experience and history.

The activities that were common to all were petitions, letter writing- primarily to heads of government and finance ministers, plus meetings with Sherpa's.

The priorities were:

- Universal Access which was seen as being broad enough to encapsulate most issues needed to address the HIV challenge;
- Health care systems-including support to ensure sufficient health care workers;
- Financing and affordable medicines were also mentioned specifically.

Gender issues did come up from one respondent and another talked about including a call for a high-level permanent G8 working group on AIDS in their advocacy.

Most people found the Civil G8 process coordinated by the WAC supportive and helpful particularly in the area of sharing information and agreeing joint actions, but there was recognition that there needed to be some refinements to make it work more effectively.

Overall there was disappointment in the G8's response to HIV and AIDS in 2007 and some scepticism about the final statements and concern about underlying trends. What was recognised as a possible aspect to build on is the recurrence of a reference to "regular reporting to the G8", which out of the Russian G8 was in the form of an "accountability mechanism" and in 2007 was focused on reporting to inform of "activities and commitments".

In terms of priorities for 2008 advocacy universal access was seen as providing a useful platform or umbrella, but several groups are still considering the issue

### **2) Key messages and joint action for 2008:**

In terms of the specific ideas that are currently under consideration by groups as a focus for 2008 health care systems and financing. Financing covers a broad spectrum and ranges from funds for the Global Fund to increasing the overall pie, plus making sure that increased AIDS funding is about growth and additionality.

In terms of key messages, universal access came through well with Leadership being linked in to universal access, but also as a stand alone aspect to link to financing. Reference was made by 2 of the respondents to gender and highlighting some specific issues in respect of women possibly under the UA umbrella. Coordination and improved governance were also mentioned along with speedier action.

There was broad consensus that working together adds value and benefits with the caveat that the planning and thinking needs to start earlier so that things are not done in a rush, but also to provide the opportunity to engage others.

In terms of working better together, the main issue that emerged was to try and use web based tools to exchange information and use the calls for more specific discussions or to agree joint actions.

The WAC is acceptable to groups to assist with the coordination. What seems clear is that working together in this way and to this extent across national borders is relatively new and questions about how you determine representation to key meetings and how you deal with issuing statements, if the collaboration offers these types of opportunities, were not easily addressed or ignored. Another key point raised was the need for the WAC to determine if this support is a higher priority over other activities and if it has the necessary resources.

The concerns raised in 2007 over the links with broader development agencies were regarded as being mainly due to a lack of clear dialogue with the Civil G8 group and early enough for the AIDS Civil G8 to be factored in to any discussions and planning that groups like GCAP were involved with.

### **3) The WAC led Civil G8 Process**

On the whole the participants were felt to be the right ones recognising that the selection was not a perfect process. One aspect that was appreciated and welcomed was the inclusion of groups outside the NGO hub such as faith based groups and trade unions

The inclusion of voices from the global south and possibly GCAP were suggested as additions.

There was a shared view that for the future the group needs to make sure its activities are shared and known to the wider community at the same time there was also a clear view that in order to work effectively together within the constraints that exist the numbers on calls and the items covered need to be tight. To that ends it was felt that updates need to be dealt with either in advanced information or on a shared web based system or list serve.

The bilateral collaborations on areas of common interest or priority that took place between the national groups were valued and there was a sense that this may offer a way for the group to work in the future by delegating pieces of agreed work to be led by one or more of the Civil G8 group.

### **Nairobi Discussion**

The other part of the evaluation took the form of a discussion at the WAC Campaigns meeting in Nairobi. As well as the participants in the process a number of other participants sat in to hear more about the initiative.

The main issues that were covered are summarised as follows.

#### ***The benefits of the Civil G8 process were seen as being:***

- Systematic discussion;
- Sharing of material and information e.g. draft communiqués;
- Coalition worked well;
- Open exchange of information.

#### ***The deficits were seen as:***

- Lot of effort spent on some initiatives and questions around the value e.g. joint letters;
- Calls sometimes led to duplication going over the same information;
- Policy discussions good, but too late;
- Lack of capacity both for coordination and follow up;
- Calls need to be tighter with more directive chairing.

#### ***Issues for future collaboration:***

##### **Planning**

- Need to start the planning process and agree ground rules on who does what as early as possible;
- WAC needs to decide if this role is a priority.
- Look at opportunities to meet to discuss how to work together and agree the priorities before the start of 2008.
- Agree the key issues/messages well in advance.

- Identify key dates and determine if any action is to be carried out on a specific date e.g. could the GFATM Replenishment meeting be used as an opportunity to approach Finance Ministers;
- Share tasks and have a timetable ready before Dec 2007.
- Develop a web based source for information such as any petitions, key e-mail addresses and the list of Sherpa's etc along with ways to feed discussions e.g. threaded discussion on web sites and reduce e-mails and time spent on conference calls.
- EAA and unions need core asks earlier in order to promote through and to their membership structure.
- Ensure basic tools such as names and addresses are available.
- Provide information on the G8 structure and process as a reference point.
- Ascertain from the G8 outreach group their views about being involved in the Civil G8 process and what they would be looking for from their participation.

#### Style/Approach

- It is important to recognise some groups are well resourced and organised and some are not and that difference needs to be accommodated in the process in order to avoid the danger of "parachuting" in to countries and creating a sense of telling them what to do.
- There is a need to improve reporting back mechanisms so that follow-up and feedback from those attending key meetings on behalf of the group need happen immediately.

#### Evaluation

- The group should develop a way to examine whether the group or the members of the group individually did effect change or influence the Sherpa's and/or the G8 process.

#### Evidence base

- Then group needs to collate or establish good data to support their advocacy efforts.
- Linked to the above, the UNAIDS resource needs documents should be ready and available in good time to assist with the advocacy process and provide the basis for common messaging.
- The links between HIV and the current high profile issue of climate change should be explored in a briefing/policy paper.

#### Messages/Demands

- The group needs to refine the list of things to ask for in 2007 to achieve more focus and prioritisation.
- If the priorities are agreed and adopted the content of individual campaigns communication does not have to be exactly the same as long as they adhere to the priorities agreed.
- Direct approaches to the heads of government should be different to any earlier actions aimed at finance ministers and Sherpa's etc.
- The group needs to look at how it manages any joint press or media work.

#### Other Partnerships/Key Contacts

- The group needs to discuss if it should be a sub group of GCAP and, if not, at least engage with the GCAP process in a more consistent way.
- The group should establish a link with DATA and Oxfam.
- The group should involve thematic and specialist groups in Africa and look at a strong delegation visit to the host G8 country.
- The group needs to involve UNAIDS more directly.
- The group needs to develop access to key ministers e.g. finance and the Sherpa's group.

#### ***In respect of the next G8 in Japan there were specific needs identified:***

- The translation of materials will be important if we are going to engage with broader CS groups
- Climate change will be one of the main issues along with investment and security with the current Japanese PM focused on climate change.
- The group needs to consider its position on the possible promotion by the Japanese government to launch a new financing initiative for climate change to mirror the launch of the GFTM in 2002 out of the last G8 in Japan.
- The group needs to recognise it is going to be a major challenge to get space in the discussions.
- A key event is in April 2008 – the Tokyo International Conference on AIDS and Development (TICAD) involving invites to African Presidents and Prime Ministers.

- Link the Civil Society process of Africans to the African Union events related to the Abuja Declaration commitments with the TICAD Conference and the G8 in Japan.
- The Japanese government does not really talk to civil society.

### **Host Campaign Perspective**

As mentioned at the outset as part of the evaluation there was a discussion with Action Against AIDS Germany. The feedback reflects many of the comments covered above.

Action Against AIDS has limited resources and only has 2 people working directly on advocacy and campaigning activities so the development of the Civil G8 group came very late in the planning and preparation that the group had initiated. Consequently, involvement in the Civil G8 process and the activity that came from the conference calls was mostly in addition to the agreed strategy.

At the same time, the German group found the telephone calls too long, but helpful especially the information from other groups who had established solid links with key players in the G8 process particularly the national Sherpa's. The information was helpful in influencing their plans. One idea that was suggested was that the Civil G8 group could split itself into working groups to have more detailed discussions and using a web based "chat room" on one specific subject.

As mentioned earlier, the issue of capacity at the national level was a key issue and so assistance with areas where there were gaps would have been helpful and the main example quoted was support in working with the media. It was suggested that having a media plan around the Civil G8 group's activity and the key messages to promote in the build up to the Japan G8 would be very valuable and add something extra certainly to the capacity of the German group.

One other aspect that was mentioned was the benefit that was derived from the networking and informal face to face discussions that arose out of the Civil Society meeting in Bonn. The German campaign believes a meeting of the group would have many benefits apart from the opportunity to do some concrete planning in preparation for the 2008 G8.

The other main area that was highlighted was a desire to see some coherent messaging or some priorities in the messaging. The Action Against AIDS Campaign does not have total unanimity on where HIV and AIDS fits in the broader development agenda especially the issue of Universal Access and its relationship to the priority of many groups for health system strengthening which for many of the campaigns members is the foundation on which so much can or needs to be built. The final issue was the benefit of forming broader alliances and picking up one of the areas in the questionnaire around "are you the right organisation to be involved". There is a view from Germany that maybe there is a need to have broader participation.

### **Executive Summary**

There was considerable consensus in the responses that were received. The participants felt that the planning needed to start earlier and that there should be agreement in that process of the key messages that the group were adopting and the priority targets for action. In this context having the best evidence available to support the advocacy was seen as essential and the timely involvement of groups like UNAIDS and the Global Fund to provide the evidence was seen as critical.

The information exchange was found to be useful, but the telephone calls were felt to be long and needed to be more focused and were not the best way to debate and develop plans for joint action and that a web based formula would be more useful.

The groups appreciated the role of the WAC in facilitating the process, but would like to see more resources available that would assist national groups. Whether this is in the form of direct funds or support for key activities such as press and media activities would depend on the capacity in each national campaign.

Making better links with other networks and ensuring the participation of AIDS groups in the outreach countries was felt to be a vital for 2008.

An agreed clear calendar of key events such as the Sherpa's meetings, Finance and Development Ministers meetings along with focal points for actions whether petitions, joint sign on letters or demonstrations need to be established at the outset.

***Attachments:***

Annex 1 Circulated Questionnaire.

Annex 2 Joint sign on letter to the German Finance Minister for the G7 Finance Ministers meeting February 2007.

Annex 3 Sign on letter to G8 leaders on demands from HIV organisations for G8 action.

Annex 4 Joint letter to G7 Development Minister meeting March 2007.

Annex 5 The Global AIDS Alliance petition.

Annex 6 Core Civil G8 Membership.

## **World AIDS Campaign (WAC) Evaluation of Civil G8 Process**

### **Introduction**

This year for the G8 in Germany the WAC agreed to facilitate a regular conference call process for campaigners from the G8 countries to share information, provide support to the Action Against AIDS campaign in Germany, and to identify joint actions in support of the shared advocacy and campaigning goals.

WAC would like to assess how useful this process was to AIDS campaigns; how it could be improved or developed and what form it should take to be of value in the build up to the G8 in Japan in 2008.

Outlined below is a series of questions that we would welcome your comments on along with any other thoughts you may wish to add and at the meeting in Nairobi next week we will have a discussion session where people can share their views and ideas and help to shape the way collaboration around the G8 on AIDS can be approached from here on.

We hope that the discussion next week may help people in their reflections on the process so we would still appreciate a written reply to the questions so we can have a clear reference point for our future planning. If written replies can be sent back by the 27<sup>th</sup> July it would be appreciated. I recognise there are quite a lot areas covered but as this is the first time there has been an attempt to coordinate the AIDS advocacy on the G8 in quite this way we believe it would be valuable to get as much feedback as we can.

Please be as honest as you want as we have been quite challenging ourselves on the process and it will be helpful to compare your comments with those we have made internally.

Name:

Name of Organisation:

Description of Organisation:

Contact Details:

### **1.0 G8 Activity**

a) Have you always been involved in advocacy around the G8?

a1) If YES- what sort of activity have you been involved with e.g. petitions, letter writing, meetings with Sherpa's etc?

## ANNEX 1

- b) What were your priorities to advocate for in the build up to the 2007 G8?
- c) How supportive was the Civil G8 process in adopting or backing your priorities?
- d) If you have already identified priorities on the G8 for 2008 what will they be?
- e) If the Civil G8 group continues what actions would you prioritise for 2008 e.g. joint letters to Heads of Government, Finance Ministers; Petition; meetings with Sherpa's etc.
- f) What was your assessment of the effect or impact on the response to AIDS of the decisions coming out of from this years G8?

### **2.0 Key Messages and Joint Action:**

- a) What do you see as the top 5 messages that AIDS groups should be promoting and advocating around aimed at the G8 and other key meetings?
- b) Do you see value in AIDS organisations working together under an agreed over arching “umbrella” message?
- c) How useful do you think Universal Access is as an umbrella advocacy focus or rallying point for AIDS groups?
- d) Do you think rallying around another focus or message would work better for your group such as accountability, leadership or some other title if so please indicate your suggestion?

## ANNEX 1

- e) If the group feels that developing joint action on AIDS around the G8 would be appropriate do you think this needs more coordination than was possible to do in 2007?
- f) If the group needs more coordination would you want to see WAC devote more resources and dedicated time to support the process or look for another approach and if so what would you propose?
- g) How should a joint group ensure in advance representation for an AIDS perspective at key Civil Society meetings such as the meeting with Sherpa's prior to the summit?
- h) In those situations how do you think issuing comment and statements to the media should be dealt with?
- i) Does an AIDS specific advocacy message aimed at the G8 create any problems with other groups you work with in the development field?
  - i1) If YES how do you overcome them?

### **3.0 Civil G8 Process:**

- a) Some of the groups involved were national with memberships and others were groups that WAC identified as active on the G8 agenda. Do you think yours was the right organisation to be involved in the Civil G8 process?
- b) Do you think there should have been an alternative organisation approached and if so which one?

## ANNEX 1

- c) Do you think there needed to be another organisation(s) involved and if so which ones and why?
- d) How useful were the regular conference calls for information exchange and/or agreeing joint action?
- e) If they were to continue for 2008 how would you like to see them structured or changed?
- f) Originally the calls were just for groups in the G8 countries and later groups from those countries like South Africa who were attending the G8. Do you think it is better to keep the numbers small and use a website to share information more widely or should the calls be open to anyone who wants to participate?
- g) What do you think the website should contain that adds extra value to current information sites?
- h) Did we have the right groups on the Civil G8 calls and if not who was missing and why?
- i) What approach would you suggest to manage more participants on the calls?
- j) Do you think the Civil G8 process helped AIDS groups to improve their action around the G8; made no difference or made it more complicated?

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### **4.0 Other Comments:**

Please add any other comments you would like to make about the process; the role of the WAC in the process; and anything else you think would be useful.

## **ANNEXES 2 -5**

### **Annex 2 - Joint sign on letter to the German Finance Minister for the G7 Finance Ministers meeting February 2007**

Letter and related links can be found at -

[http://www.ua2010.org/index.php/en/g8\\_aids/country\\_g8\\_campaigns/civil\\_society\\_letter\\_to\\_g7\\_finance\\_ministers](http://www.ua2010.org/index.php/en/g8_aids/country_g8_campaigns/civil_society_letter_to_g7_finance_ministers)

### **Annex 3 - Sign on letter to G8 leaders on demands from HIV organisations for G8 action**

Letter and related links can be found at -

[http://www.ua2010.org/index.php/en/g8\\_aids/country\\_g8\\_campaigns/civil\\_society\\_letter\\_to\\_g8\\_heads\\_of\\_state](http://www.ua2010.org/index.php/en/g8_aids/country_g8_campaigns/civil_society_letter_to_g8_heads_of_state)

### **Annex 4 - Joint letter to G7 Development Minister meeting March 2007**

Letter and related links can be found at -

[http://www.ua2010.org/index.php/en/g8\\_aids/country\\_g8\\_campaigns/civil\\_society\\_letter\\_to\\_g7\\_finance\\_ministers](http://www.ua2010.org/index.php/en/g8_aids/country_g8_campaigns/civil_society_letter_to_g7_finance_ministers)

### **Annex 5 The Global AIDS Alliance petition**

Petition found at –

<http://action.globalaidsalliance.org/page/signup>

## ANNEX 6

### Annex 6 Core Civil G8 Membership

Michael O'Connor	Canada ICAD
Khalil Elouardighi	France - Act Up Paris
Mirjam Hagebölling	Germany- Action Against AIDS Germany
Stefan Jankowiak	Germany- Action Against AIDS Germany
Birte Rodenberg	Germany- Action Against AIDS Germany
Paola Giuliani	Italy - Osservatorio Italiano sull'Azione Globale contro l'AIDS
	Italian - Network Against AIDS
Masaki Inaba	Japan - Africa Japan Foundation
Sergey Smirnov	Russia - Positive People's Network
Shona Schonning	Russia - Positive People's Network
Steve Cockburn	UK - Stop AIDS Campaign
Paul Zeitz	USA -Global AIDS Alliance USA
Alan Leather	Global Unions
Thabo Sephuma	Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
Marcel van Soest	World AIDS Campaign
Derek Bodell (facilitator)	World AIDS Campaign