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December 6, 2012

Dear Friends,

When Dave Katz and Kerry Olson started Firelight Foundation in 1999, they chose to focus the foundation's resources to support children in Africa, south of the Sahara. This choice was made in recognition of children's vulnerability as AIDS and poverty impacted their lives. For millions of children, the essence of childhood was all but lost as their families struggled to survive the impact of this disease.

Today, the state of the epidemic has been transformed. The combined efforts of science, health systems strengthening, human rights activism, and community action have restored hope.

According to the 2012 UNAIDS report, new HIV infections have declined by more than 50% in 25 low and middle income countries. AIDS related deaths have fallen by more than 25%.

Thanks to the drop in costs of treatment, (from \$10,000 to now \$100) more lives have been prolonged through access to treatment.

Prevention of vertical transmission has expanded to a nearly 60% coverage.

And science has shown that when people are on treatment they are less likely to infect others.

While that progress is remarkable, given the state of the epidemic just a decade ago, enormous challenges remain before us.

According to UNAIDS, 2.5 million people were newly infected in 2011, and 1.7 million died from AIDS-related causes.

There are more than 7 million people who could be on treatment but do not have access to life-saving drugs.

Children remain at a great disadvantage. More than 72 % of children who could benefit from treatment do not have access to pediatric anti-retrovirals. And most of them live in Africa.

As we see the positive signs and hard-won victories, it is easy to relax. But now is not the time.

Much work remains, and in some ways maybe the hardest part of the work remains before us.

The hardest to reach, most vulnerable populations require new solutions and greater support.

Getting to Zero requires continued commitment and vigilance on all fronts - prevention, treatment, care and support.

We salute you, for your commitment to overcome the daily struggles and do so much with what you have on hand.

We remember all of those who have passed on and to those who are caring for those who are living with AIDs or affected by the disease.

We stand in solidarity with those of you on the front lines that are doing the hard work that it will take to Get to Zero.

For the children, their families, and the communities that are a source of strength and support...we journey with you.

Aluta continua!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call For Applications) MIUSA: 2013 Women's Institute On Leadership And Disability (WILD)

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(Call For Applications) MIUSA: 2013 Women's Institute On Leadership And Disability (WILD)

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) will host the next Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD) in August, 2013. WILD will bring together approximately 30 women leaders with disabilities from 30 different countries to strengthen leadership capacity, create new visions and build international networks

of support for inclusive international development programming.

WILD is a very competitive program and MIUSA expects to receive a very large number of applications for limited spaces. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to apply early. Also, applications for WILD 2013 will be available in Spanish, French and English.

Please disseminate far and wide with your networks, colleagues, friends and allies so that MIUSA can recruit the next generation of “WILD” Women. For complete program details, eligibility requirements, and to download the application, please visit:

<http://www.miusa.org/exchange/currentprogs/wild/wild13/wild2013>

Deadline for Submission: January 13, 2013

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#### (Call for Proposals) Commonwealth Foundation’s Grants for Civil Society Organizations

The Commonwealth Foundation has announced a new grant opportunity for civil society organizations for projects to be implemented in Commonwealth developing countries. The Foundation’s grants programme contributes to sustainable development in the context of effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation.

There are two types of grants: Commonwealth Theme Grants and Participatory Governance Grants. Commonwealth Themes grants will open for applications in 2013 while the Participatory Governance Grants can now be applied for. Grants will be given to selected organizations for a period of 3 years amounting up to £30,000 per year.

Objectives of the grant programme:

- Deliver an efficient and effective programme which is responsive to the development needs of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) across the Commonwealth
- Complement the effectiveness of the Foundation’s projects by providing grants to CSOs beyond those supported through the projects
- Generate knowledge and understanding of participatory governance and its benefits in promoting effective, responsive and accountable governance within the Commonwealth by supporting models of good practice

Registered civil society organizations in Commonwealth developing countries can propose projects (of no more than 3 years) that address one of the Commonwealth Foundation’s short-term outcomes. Applying organizations should have their project activity less than £30,000 per annum.

Organisations based in non-Commonwealth Foundation member countries

can apply for a grant, provided the activity or project is taking place in an eligible country.

Applications have to be submitted online through the Commonwealth Foundation's website.

Deadline for Submission: January 31, 2012

For more go to: <http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/grants/participatory-governance>

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(Blog) Everyone Should Know about World AIDS Day, Do You?

How many people know about World AIDS Day?

Three weeks ago, I didn't.

I'm a High School student and a communications intern at Firelight Foundation and I just learned that World AIDS Day, December 1st, is designed to raise awareness of the AIDS pandemic and acknowledge those suffering and those who have passed because of AIDS. The day shows the international unity against AIDS and encourages progress.

It's hard to believe I didn't know about the day considering I recently bought a new student planner that marks all holidays and even days like "Tell a Joke Day" and "Cotton Candy Day," but there was no mention of World AIDS Day. With 34 million people living with HIV and AIDS around the world, and millions more affected by the impact of HIV and AIDS, how could I not know about this day?

This World AIDS Day theme is "getting to zero" because the goal is to get to a point where there are zero new HIV infections and zero AIDS related deaths.

Firelight contributes toward "getting to zero" by funding 122 grassroots organizations in sub-Saharan Africa who work in their community to combat the effects of HIV and AIDS on children and families. Organizations such as the Luapula Foundation in Zambia that has helped over 15,000 children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS to cope and succeed in school and who also work to stop HIV and AIDS in its tracks through testing and counseling. Last year they tested over 14,000 people. Earlier testing saves lives and is an important part of ending AIDS, and AIDS can end.

It occurred to me that I'm probably not the only one who hasn't heard about World AIDS Day so I decided to ask around at school. I asked everyone in my class if they knew when or what World AIDS Day is. The results were exactly what I thought they would be. No one knew about World AIDS Day.

So this World AIDS Day, let's spread the news. AIDS isn't gone and it can be so let's tell everyone about World AIDS Day and "get to zero."

I can think of 4 things you can do right now...

- Tell a friend about World AIDS Day.
- Download and set your profile picture to Firelight's World AIDS Day graphic and tell everyone What World AIDS Day means to you in your status update on December 1st. Download the graphics [here](#).
- Make a donation to Firelight Foundation. Donate [here](#).
- Wear red on Saturday, December 1st in honor of World AIDS Day.

There are so many more ideas, but what's important is that we're in this together. I'm asking everyone to join together and do something that signifies World AIDS Day. What will you do? Share your ideas on the Firelight Foundation Facebook page, upload your photos, and be sure to mark your calendar for DECEMBER 1st!

Together, let's get to zero.

For more go to: <http://blog.firelightfoundation.org/>

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(Article) An HIV-Free Generation: What's Holding Us Back

**As we mark World Aids Day 2012 we do so with the knowledge that, if new opportunities are seized, for the first time in the global HIV response, achieving an HIV-free generation is possible.**

Game-changing research and scientific breakthroughs are providing the opportunities. However, political commitment is required to tackle the epidemic in the most effective way to make an HIV-free generation a reality.

These possibilities would not have been imaginable on the first World AIDS Day, 24 years ago.

The biggest risk to the response now is allowing this opportunity to be missed. The technology and evidence alone are not enough, what is also needed are the right programmes, at the right scale, in the right places††.

**Most marginalized at risk losing out**

Nearly 60% of people living with HIV live in countries now classified as middle income. And key populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people, sex workers and people who inject drugs are all at significantly

higher risk of HIV infection.

While a continued focus of international assistance for the HIV response in low income countries is critical (particularly in basic infrastructure), the role of donor governments' support to middle income countries – where international aid is being withdrawn or significantly reduced - must be addressed in a way that does not punish the poorest and most marginalised. As Marcela Romero, regional coordinator of REDLACTRANS, a strategic partner of the Alliance in Latin America and the Caribbean, says: “We’ve got the skills to reach those that are most at risk. What’s holding us back is the environment we work in. International donors are pulling out and most national governments would sooner ignore the murders of transgender women than fund programmes for us.”

Although for the first time in 2011, domestic funding for HIV surpassed the contributions of international donors, many have not yet prioritised sufficient resources for effective health services. And national governments are less likely to be encouraged to fund programmes aimed at politically isolated groups whilst international donors are disengaging. As international aid reduces the fear is that the gap in services for key populations gets larger, and the goal of an HIV-free generation moves further away. In order to scale up a smarter and more targeted response, funding for international and national civil society organisations will be vital. Civil society’s ability to engage marginalised groups is critical to achieve an HIV-free generation.

“Through peer-led approaches we address the needs of MSM and other key populations. If we didn’t we would lose the gains that have been made.” says Uyapo Ndadi, Director of BONELA, Alliance Linking Organisation in Botswana, a middle-income country with an HIV prevalence of 24.8%. “Vulnerable groups don’t exist in isolation, by having targeted services for key populations we expect Botswana’s HIV prevalence rate to continue to decrease, not just among key populations, but the overall population.” The rate of new infections in Botswana has decreased by 71% since 2001.

### **Vietnam: How international aid helps to leverage a more effective HIV response**

The impact of international aid can be seen in Vietnam, which has been classified as middle income since 2010. Since 2004, a large-scale harm reduction programme, supported by UK aid and World Bank, has been providing clean needles and syringes for people who use drugs and condoms to sex workers. “This programme is a shining example of what international aid can help achieve and why it is so important for key populations in middle income countries” says Khuat Thi Hai Oanh, the Executive Director of SCDI, the Alliance’s Linking Organisation in Vietnam, “Without this funding the project simply wouldn’t exist and those who it has reached would be at much higher risk of HIV infection”. Due to Vietnam’s middle

income status this programme is likely to end in 2013. The possibility of a continuation plan is currently being explored.

### **What we're calling for**

This success story in Vietnam, the future of which now hangs in the balance, highlights the importance of our World AIDS Day ask to international donors. Do not let the goal of an HIV-free generation slip away.

Turn the opportunities into a reality by:

- 1) Ensuring that the poorest and most marginalised are not the ones who pay the price when specific HIV programmes are ending**
- 2) Making a human rights based approach central to HIV programming, and ensure the inclusion of key populations**
- 3) Recognising the key role of international and national civil society organisations as being the key mechanism for scaling up services for the most marginalised**
- 4) Fully funding the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria to ensure smart cost-effective investments in the HIV response.**

For more go

to: [http://www.aidsalliance.org/NewsDetails.aspx?Id=291469&dm\\_i=J95,12G2W,31A0RO,3AIC1,1](http://www.aidsalliance.org/NewsDetails.aspx?Id=291469&dm_i=J95,12G2W,31A0RO,3AIC1,1)

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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](mailto:newsletter@firelightfoundation.org).

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