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Building Local-Global Alliances to promote women's full participation in the XVII International AIDS Conference in 2008 Mexico City Consultation, May 7-11 2007

Goal for meeting:

The goal for the international consultation was to strengthen local-global alliances between Mexican women living with HIV and AIDS and national and international civil society in order to advance the work of women living with HIV and AIDS and to promote the full participation of women in the XVII International AIDS Conference to be held in Mexico City in 2008, and beyond.

Specific objectives:

- 1) Identify and reach consensus on the **priority needs and gaps in the response to women, HIV and AIDS** as input for a public policy agenda and action plan.
- 2) Increase our skills to **influence the conference and to ensure that gender is a cross-cutting theme** in AIDS 2008.
- 3) Create and strengthen **alliances with national NGOs** that are experts in gender, sexual and reproductive health and advocacy.
- 4) Increase the **visibility of and awareness around the priorities of women living with HIV and AIDS related to the national epidemic in Mexico** for decision makers, related sectors of civil society and the general public.

Desired outcomes:

- An up to date agenda of needs and priorities around women and HIV and AIDS
- Definition of expectations, themes and spaces for AIDS 2008
- Development of strategies to influence AIDS 2008
- Foundation for internal and external dialogue
- Draft action plan that addresses local, regional and global issues

Principles for our work leading up to AIDS 2008 and beyond:

- **Equity:** includes equity in representation and participation (as speakers, physical space, on the conference committees) and equality in women's participation (scholarships for women).
- **Inclusion:** of different sectors, different ages, HIV positive and HIV negative women working together, diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Local-global linkages:** "The Conference is in Mexico, but it doesn't belong exclusively to Mexicans."



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COLECTIVO SOL

ICW Latina



Comunidad Internacional de
Mujeres viviendo con VIH SIDA



International Community of
Women Living with HIV and AIDS



ATHENA

Thematic priorities

The overarching framework included the importance of promoting and ensuring gender equity, human rights (including sexual and reproductive rights), as well as addressing poverty and gender based violence in the response to HIV and AIDS. There was strong support for making visible the gaps between international agreements, government statements about the pandemic and the realities faced by women with respect to accessing and shaping prevention, treatment and care. We want to ensure that research and the presentation of research results responds to women's needs.

How do we want to participate in the conference?

We had extensive discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of working within the conference structure or creating a parallel conference. The level of integration with the "official conference" shared by our colleagues who participated in Durban, Barcelona, Thailand and Toronto varied widely. We developed a vision that conceives of the conference as a vehicle and an opportunity, not as an end in itself nor a straightjacket that limits our field of action. The action plan developed proposes a three pronged strategy:

- Influencing the official program and increasing women's participation as speakers, rapporteurs and delegates;
- Women's Networking Zone in the Global Village; and
- Organizing outside events that are linked to the Conference but which involve the larger community.

Specific areas for action include:

- Advocacy in the official program to promote equity, inclusion and relevance
- Mentoring for community-based women to increase their participation and skills
- Women's Networking Zone in the Global Village
- Cultural events outside of the Conference (concert, women's march)
- Development of a communication strategy prior to and during AIDS 2008

What do we want after the conference: Sustainability

- Strategic visibility that results in increased risk perception among women, supporting prevention, reduction of stigma and discrimination, and increased dedicated resources for women
- Greater numbers of women involved in the WLHA movement and networks
- Increased financial support for advocacy and activism, and the women who are carrying it out

We invite women who want to collaborate to contact us at:

Alianzaslocalglobal2008@yahoo.com.mx



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