



ACORD's 'Condom Commandos' film awarded during 44th Chicago International Film Festival (Page 2)



Ending Impunity for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) The First Pan-African Conference - (Page 3)



Supporting Women's Groups and Food Security in Chad- (Page 4)



Newsletter March 2009

Mobilising a Pan-African Social Movement

The Power of ACTION

This quarterly newsletter published by the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) provides an overview of our innovative approach and involvement in Africa-wide development issues, programmatic activities and partnerships.

Warring Communities Sign for Peace

Following the post-election violence that left more than one thousand dead in Kenya, a community social contract was signed on 21 November 2008 in Kenya's Sotik and Borabu districts by two communities in an event held to symbolise a transition from protracted ethnic conflict to peaceful co-existence. The pact, witnessed by the Sotik Member of Parliament Dr. Joyce Laboso alongside other local representatives, marked the turning point towards unity and development between the communities. This was part of a project coordinated by ACORD and Cereal Growers Association seeking to create space for community dialogue and reconciliation.



Local leaders from Sotik and Borabu signed the community social contract

During the event, named in Swahili as 'Umoja ni Nguvu' to mean Unity is Strength, the signing of the peace 'treaty' by the affected communities was complemented by sharing food, participation in a friendly football match, traditional dance and music.

The violence sparked off by the December 2007 elections took widespread proportions. Lives were lost, houses, agricultural fields and property destroyed and over 500,000 people displaced. The agricultural sector was badly affected as farmers could not take part in the planting for fear of being attacked.

Ronald Okemo, a peace agent from Raitigo says, 'During dialogue sessions, people readily came to share their personal accounts of what happened during the violence. Although the situation has significantly improved, households continue to bear the brunt of the violence as food prices remain high. For example, the price of a tin of beans used to be 20 shillings before the chaos but now costs more than 80 shillings'.

With funds from Oxfam Hong Kong, ACORD conducted the recovery phase distributing fertilizers and maize seeds to the most affected households. A total of 1,000 households most affected by the violence received recovery assistance from ACORD. Each household received 25kg bag of fertilizer and 5kg of maize seeds.

Situation alert: Millions Starving !

Kenya is facing a major drought as a result of prolonged lack of rain. Government statistics estimate that at least 10 million people are at risk of starvation after crop failures, poor harvest and effects of the Kenya Post-Election Violence of 2007-2008.

With pasture and water shortages now starting to drive out local communities in Kajiado District and other arid parts of Kenya, the ongoing drought situation is having a widespread and devastating impact on pastoralist traditions, especially for the Maasai who depend on livestock for their livelihood.

The drought is also having a negative impact on several development projects in Kajiado: the migration of families away from Kajiado has reduced the number of children going to Indupa Primary School; an educational establishment located some 200 metres from an ACORD-sponsored water project.

During an ACORD visit to the area, the headteacher, Madam Phyllis said that academic performance has deteriorated as children are not eating enough at home. Many are only turning up at school because of the Government-sponsored school-feeding programme.

ACORD is appealing to its partners, supporters and well-wishers to contribute towards water provision in Kajiado and give someone a drop of relief.

STEPPING STONES IN BRIEF

Practiced in the global fight against the spread of HIV, the Stepping Stones methodology inspires a reflection on inequities that shape how men and women experience sexuality, permits the breaking of silence on violence, improves communication within households, strengthens solidarity and support and contributes to positive behaviour change aimed at minimising the spread of the HIV virus.

Mozambique: Anti-Retroviral Awareness, Access and Knowledge

In September 2008, ACORD in Mozambique held a forum on ARVs disseminating findings of a study carried out in Mozambique, Tanzania and Burkina Faso.

The participants, composed mostly of community based actors, recommended that civil society organisations, health service providers, Governments and the general public intensify awareness through information, education and communication, improve health services in line with working with traditional healers, revitalise workplace councils for AIDS and intensify awareness interventions especially in rural areas to revisit harmful socio-cultural practices.

The forum demonstrated ACORD's commitment in the struggle against the pandemic, increasing awareness on ARV treatment and mobilising stakeholders in the fight against HIV.

The compendium report summarising the research done in Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Mozambique is titled '**ARV Community Knowledge, awareness, accessibility and the Policy environment**'. This report is available at: www.acordinternational.org.



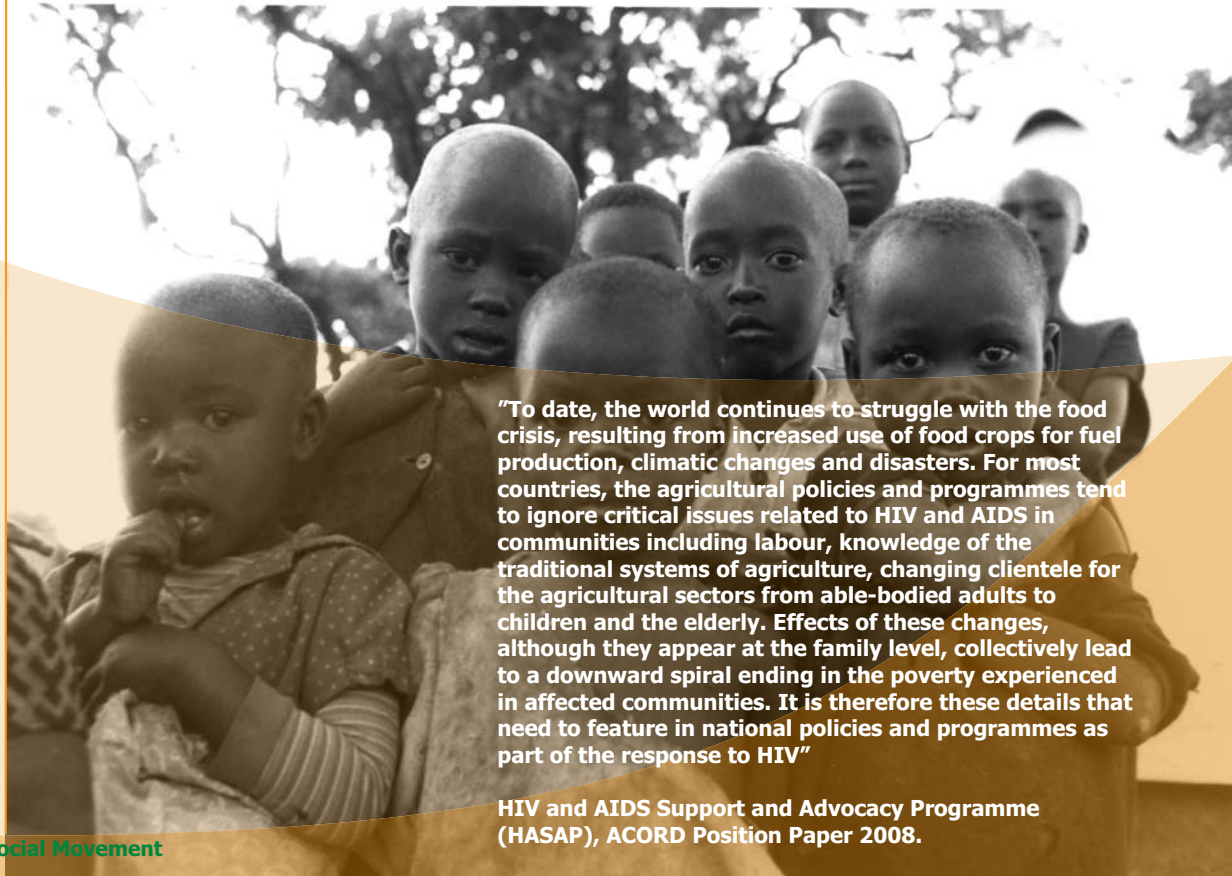
"Condom Commandos" Film awarded Intercom Gold Plaque!

"Stepping Stones transformed my personal life. I never imagined HIV and AIDS could be approached this way. I have seen it work, watch this film (Condom Commandos) and find out how", Dr. Andre Chimuco, Angolan Army Major.

ACORD was pleased to learn that its film titled 'Condom Commandos' commissioned in 2007 had won an award in the 44th Chicago International Film Festival held in the United States from 16-29 October 2008. Condom Commandos was nominated under the Chicago International Film & Video INTERCOM category. The entry earned the 24-minute documentary film the Intercom Gold Plaque.

The Condom Commandos film uses intriguing settings and unique characters to demonstrate the Stepping Stones approach to addressing HIV and AIDS and Gender. The presence of the Angolan Army and women from the Canjanguiti village adjacent to the barracks sets it apart from typical films on HIV. ACORD has experience in working on HIV/AIDS in Angola since 1999 and has demonstrated that the Stepping Stones methodology can be very effective in a post-conflict situation, helping people to overcome the brutalising effects of war and sew together divided communities.

Condom Commandos was commissioned by Angola Area Programme of ACORD from the UK production company Media Co-op, with support from Oxfam Novib and Oxfam GB. The film is currently being used widely across Africa and beyond, to promote the 'Stepping Stones' Participatory approach to HIV and AIDS education. The video, an advocacy tool is available in English and Portuguese and copies can be purchased through ACORD. All profits will be allocated to our HIV and AIDS programmes.



"To date, the world continues to struggle with the food crisis, resulting from increased use of food crops for fuel production, climatic changes and disasters. For most countries, the agricultural policies and programmes tend to ignore critical issues related to HIV and AIDS in communities including labour, knowledge of the traditional systems of agriculture, changing clientele for the agricultural sectors from able-bodied adults to children and the elderly. Effects of these changes, although they appear at the family level, collectively lead to a downward spiral ending in the poverty experienced in affected communities. It is therefore these details that need to feature in national policies and programmes as part of the response to HIV"

HIV and AIDS Support and Advocacy Programme (HASAP), ACORD Position Paper 2008.

Events: Knowledge - sharing for development

ACORD is facilitating a tour of Europe from 2 to 14 March 2009 for African farmers, leaders, parliamentarians and policy makers.

Dubbed the 'Speaker's Tour', this will enable African representatives to discuss pertinent issues of Economic Partnership Agreements and Common Agricultural Policies to forge favourable economic ties between Africa and Europe.

During the tour, participants will visit Berlin, Brussels, London, Madrid and Paris. Latest updates on the tour will be available at www.acordinternational.org

Regional Economic Capacity Building

ACORD's Pan African Programme convened the Eastern and Southern African meeting for Members of Parliament in Nairobi from 14th to 15th November 2008.

The meeting was aimed at strengthening the role of parliamentarians already engaged in related issues such as culture, finance and trade'. Participants had the opportunity to share their relevant experiences, gain information on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations, and together brainstorm on ways to respond and more fully engage in trade negotiation processes.

"Reclaiming the role of parliamentarians in trade negotiations"

Parliamentarians assembled from three EPA negotiating blocks were urged to organise and make use of web-portal network to embrace initiatives with continental umbrella to help create an Africa-wide Parliamentary Trade Network with the Africa Trade Network (ATN) and civil societies supporting parliamentarians.



First Pan-African Conference on Ending Impunity for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

ACORD hosted the first Pan African Conference on Ending Impunity for Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in Nairobi from 21st to 23rd of July 2008. The conference was organised in partnership with ActionAid, International Planned Parenthood Federation, African Women's Development Fund, the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum, Amani Forum, the Kenya Human Rights Commission, Urgent Action Fund-Africa and Fahamu. The conference brought together 140 participants and experts including members of parliament, regional and multi-

lateral organisations, government representatives, Civil Society and activists in the Pan African women's movement to concretely map out action points at a Pan African and Regional level to end impunity for SGBV. The conference identified six strategies: **accountability and implementation; centering on women survivors of SGBV; mobilising popular support; securing adequate human and material resources; building bridges across sectors and within movements; and developing a new cadre of leadership.**

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES ABOUT SGBV

The conference report was launched on 25 November 2008 on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. During a public forum organised on 'Security Sector Reforms - Rethinking Security Forces', organised, participants raised issues of attitude and behaviour change at the side of institutional security reforms, need for concerted efforts to stem impunity and the cycle of gender-based violence, attention to signals; early warnings that flag impending and/or ongoing conflict, and strategic alliances within Civil Societies and Governments. Participants advocated for mechanisms to ascertain state accountability and access to justice for survivors.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION: ACORD has been awarded a Euro 2 million grant by the Dutch Government's MDG3 Fund for the programme 'The Hidden War Crimes: Challenging the Impunity for Sexual and Gender Based Violence in countries of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region'. The initiative is geared towards combating violence against women with a focus on women and girls in situations of conflict and will contribute to progress on Millenium Development Goal 3 on gender equality and empowerment of women. Countries of interest for the grant's implementation which runs from 2009 until June 2011 include Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

ACORD in Chad: Supporting Rural-Based Women Groups and Food Security



ACORD's Sahel II Area Programme will benefit from support From the European Union's 9th Fund for Development to implement a project on Gender and Food Security in Chad's Guera and Hadjer Lamis regions, departments of Guera, Dabab and Abyatouyour for a period of 18 months. Overall, the project seeks to improve existing conditions for rural women in order to eliminate the practice of exclusion that women are often subjected to and which leads to increasing challenges of food insecurity.

By training women leaders on effective advocacy, technical support to women (as shown in photo, left) and promoting advocacy initiatives for the benefit of rural-based women, this project is expected to enhance better positioning of women's organizations to address issues of agricultural development, develop proactive advocacy mechanisms and bring significant improvement in food security among rural women.

ACORD is supporting groups engaged in promotion of women's involvement in Food Security. They include the Union of 30 Women's Groups established at Al Nour in Bokoro, a total of 40 groups that make up the Women's Association of Moukoulou, an association made up of 40 groups of women's associations of Mongo, referred to as CELIAF de Mongo, as well as the Women's Association for Development of Guera (AFGDR). For this project, ACORD is partnering with the Association Raid Al Chabab in Bokoro.

This project is aligned to the Chadian Government's policies drawn from the National Strategy on Poverty Reduction (SNRP) and thus serves to strengthen implementation of Government poverty reduction plans as well.

ACORD obtains Consultative Status with UN-ECOSOC

Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development was officially granted a special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in September 2008.

Special consultative status is granted to non-governmental organisations which have a special competence and interest in some of the fields of activity covered by the ECOSOC. Agencies may therefore engage effectively with ECOSOC, commissions and other subsidiary bodies of the council in consultations aimed at enabling the Council or one of its bodies to secure expert information. It will also enable ACORD express its views in important elements of public opinion.

To enhance implementation of programmes and support its partnership development, ACORD intends to engage broadly with ECOSOC in relation to social and economic issues relevant for development and social justice in Africa and specifically contribute from its expertise and research in the areas of conflict, HIV/AIDS, gender and livelihoods.

Strategic retreat held in Kenya



Participants from ACORD Area Programme representation in Africa.

After the second year of implementation of the strategic plan (2007 - 2010), ACORD convened a one-week annual retreat to take stock of progress made and revise activities and targets for 2009, building on the review process of 2007 and 2008. The event was held at Thayu Roundvales in Tigon, Kenya from 1st to 5th of December 2008 and assembled programme managers from a total of ten Area Programmes: Rwanda, Burundi, Sahel I (Mali, Burkina Faso Guinea & Mauritania), Sahel II (Chad and Cameroon), Mozambique, Uganda, North and South Sudan, Tanzania and Ethiopia as well as a majority staff at the secretariat.

Participants used select tools designed to provide solutions and offer an effective team-building and learning through questionnaires, discourse

and debate, intensive group work, learning games and networking. Participants were happy that more Area Programme Managers attended and that the 2008 event was more interactive compared to 2007.

The issues discussed during the week were pertinent and culminated in a joint planning process for 2009 that bode for an exciting year to come where ACORD will continue to tackle challenges and deliver its ambitious agenda for Africa.

Recent ACORD Publications

"Unfinished Business - Transitional Justice and Women's Rights in Africa" - Occasional Paper No.1 (ISSN 1812-1276 Development Research Series)

Addresses issues on the human face of armed conflict with focus on female survivors of conflict in North Uganda, transitional justice SGBV in Central Africa and Sudan and security sector reforms.

"Compensating an Assault on Dignity - Ending Impunity for Sexual and Gender Based Violence"- A Pan African Conference Report

Deals with pertinent issues surrounding impunity for sexual and gender-based violence such as security sector reforms, access to justice and governmental, parliamentary and institutional approaches to SGBV.

Both publications can be downloaded from the ACORD website.

ACORD is a Pan African organisation working for social justice and development. Our mission is to work in common cause with people who are poor and those who have been denied their rights to obtain social justice and development and be part of locally rooted citizen movements. ACORD is present in 17 countries in Africa, working with communities on livelihoods and food sovereignty, women's rights, conflict and HIV/AIDS. We also campaign and advocate at national, regional and Pan African levels.

Subscribe to 'The Power of Action' Newsletters:

Here you have the chance to sign up for ACORD's quarterly newsletters free of charge. To subscribe, please send your request and contact details to the address below:

ACORD Secretariat:

Kenya: ACK Garden House, tel.+254.20.272.11.72/85/6, fax.+254.20.272.11.66

United Kingdom: Development House, 56-64 Leonard st, London, EC2A.4LT, tel.+44.207.065.0850, fax.+44.207.065.0851/ E-mail: info@acordinternational.org



6 Pillars of Food Sovereignty

Focuses on food for people:
Food sovereignty protects the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, people and communities.

Values food providers:
Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights of all people.

Localises food systems:
Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers closer together.

Puts control locally:
Food sovereignty places control over territory, land, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations on local food providers and respects their rights.

Builds knowledge and skills:
Through research systems, food sovereignty seeks to improve local knowledge and capacities

Works with nature:
By utilising the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agro-ecological production and harvesting methods.

Editorial Team and Contributors

Editor - **Nashon Tado**
nashon.tado@acordinternational.org

Associate Editor - **Margaret Wamukoya**
margaret.wamukoya@acordinternational.org

Design and Layout - **Christine Okila**
christine.okila@acordinternational.org

Editorial Review - **Caroline Testud**
- **Kristin Seljeflot**

www.acordinternational.org