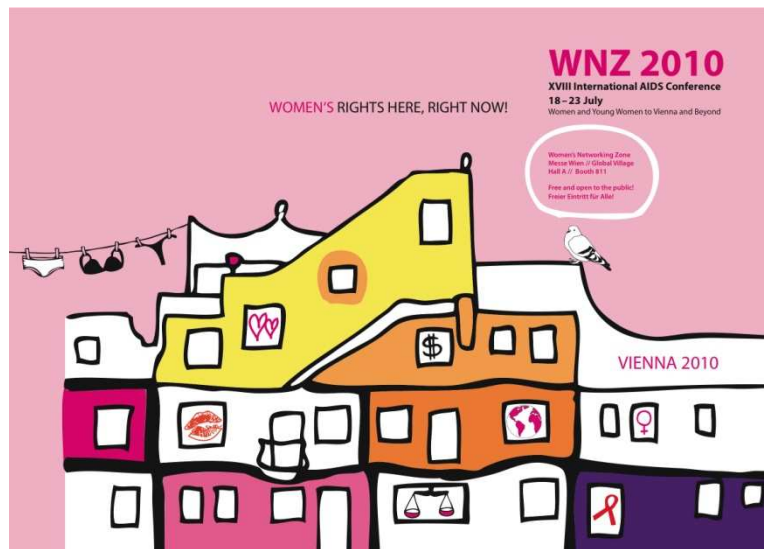




Women's Networking Zone 2010 Executive Summary

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Women and Young Women to Vienna and Beyond!

1. Introduction

The Women's Networking Zone (WNZ) is a dedicated area within the Global Village of the International AIDS Conference (IAC) to share issues and experiences that affect women in relation to HIV. Since the XIII IAC in Durban, 2000, there have been parallel fora with a Community focus at each International AIDS Conference. The ATHENA Network has led parallel women's organising since that time, and from the XVI IAC at Toronto, 2006, has convened the Women's Networking Zone (WNZ), at each successive Conference. This year marks 10 years of women's parallel organising at International AIDS Conferences, and the WNZ2010 was coordinated jointly with the Salamander Trust.

The WNZ2010 was built on a consultative process from 2009 to 2010 to identify key issues affecting women and young women in relation to HIV and AIDS in the Europe and Central Asia regions especially, including stigma and discrimination, motherhood, sex and sexuality, harm reduction and sex workers' rights. The process was led by and inclusive of women and young women living with HIV, whose leadership the WNZ seeks to promote, while encouraging linkages between positive, negative and untested women locally, regionally and globally.

The WNZ has always sought to include a diversity-rich agenda, to promote the leadership of women living with HIV and to facilitate cross-regional, cross-generational and cross-sectoral dialogue between women working at grassroots level to those working at national or international policy-making levels. This year, the WNZ placed a particular emphasis on the meaningful participation and leadership of young women, especially young women living with HIV, by partnering with the Young Women's Networking Zone coordinated by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts



(WAGGGS) to create a single integrated Zone. A further partnership with World Pulse Media (for the second successive WNZ running) enhanced our global networking potential.

The WNZ aims to be an inviting and inclusive forum for bringing together, local, regional, and global perspectives, as well as for bridging the gender, human rights, HIV, and sexual and reproductive health and rights communities. The WNZ slogan for AIDS2010 was:

WOMEN'S RIGHTS HERE, RIGHT NOW!

Specifically, the WNZ looked to the International AIDS Conference in Vienna as an opportunity to mobilize women regionally and globally, for innovative community-building and advocacy, in order to:

- i) Advance an inclusive, diversity-rich, engendered, human rights and women's rights response to HIV and AIDS;
- ii) Highlight emerging women's and young women's issues and our successful responses to them;
- iii) Ensure women's active, meaningful participation, especially of positive women, young women, and women across Europe and Central Asia in the Conference;
- iv) Link positive, negative and untested women; and,
- v) Hold European bilateral donors accountable, both for women's rights and HIV funding domestically and globally.

2. Consultation and WNZ Partnership Development

The consultative process towards WNZ2010 began with a meeting in Cologne in May 2009 between Salamander Trust, the international Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (ICW) and German Foundation for Sexuality and Health, Gemeinnützige Stiftung Sexualität und Gesundheit (GS-SG), to discuss the formation of a European network of women living with HIV in time for Vienna 2010. This meeting gave rise to the identification (by Harriet Langanke of GS-SG) of two Austrian focal points – Sabine Lex, from the Women's Prevention Office of AIDS Hilfe in Vienna, and Wiltrut Stefanek, one of only two openly HIV positive women living in Austria, working through her support group in Austria, PULSHIV.

A broader consultative meeting was planned and held in Vienna in October 2009, to bring together a group of women from across Europe to both develop plans for the European network, and to plan towards Vienna2010, by identifying key issues for the region. This meeting was hosted by the AIDS Hilfe House in Vienna. Funding was obtained from Ford Foundation and IPPF to bring 15 women living with HIV from across Europe and Central Asia. Other women (both HIV-positive and -negative/untested) joined the meeting through self-funded organisations, including World YWCA and World Girl Guides Europe, the STOP AIDS Campaign, the ATHENA Network, the AIDS Legal Network, GS-SG from Germany, the Sophie sex-workers project from Austria and the IAS Women's Caucus. This brought the total number of participants to 29.

With subsequent funding from Abbott, a website in 7 European languages (www.womeneurope.net) was created, using a team of volunteer translators, providing information on preparing for the Conference and a wide range of useful resources in relation to women and HIV. The website has now been handed over to the first network



of HIV-positive women across Europe, WECARE+, which was registered earlier this year and officially launched in Vienna during the Conference.

The Vienna consultation identified 17 key issues from the region. Of these, 14 were represented on the eventual programme of the WNZ2010.

Regional Priorities for Europe and Central Asia:

- 1) Stigma and discrimination
- 2) Motherhood, and particular the right to safe and healthy motherhood
- 3) Sex and sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the rights of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women
- 4) Gender violence, including trafficking
- 5) A gendered approach and rights-based approach to harm reduction, with a focus on women who use drugs and/or alcohol
- 6) Legal and policy frameworks, including criminalization
- 7) Women in prisons and detention centers*
- 8) Sex work and the criminalization of sex workers
- 9) Migration and asylum*
- 10) Young women under 18
- 11) Issues affecting the aging population of women with HIV across the region*
- 12) Decision-making, including GIPA
- 13) Lack of adequate funding for issues relating to women's rights and HIV
- 14) Health systems and services
- 15) Media attitudes towards positive women in Europe and Central Asia
- 16) Public perceptions of women and HIV
- 17) Gaps and challenges in creating a formal "evidence base" related to these issues

(*issues not adequately represented in WNZ2010 programme)

Following this meeting, a call for input into the coordination and development of the WNZ was sent out in January 2010 on the ATHENA network. In total 26 entities joined the WNZ partnership. The WNZ partnership is made up of national, regional and international organisations, including positive women's networks and organisations, and organisations with either a unique or particular focus on HIV and AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and/or gender equity and women's rights. The partnership included representatives from North and South America, Europe and Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and India.

WNZ2010 Partnership

Aids Hilfe Wien, Austria
AIDS Legal Network, South Africa
All Around Women Special, Section of the German AIDS Society, Germany
ATHENA Network
Balance Promocion para el Desarrollo y Juventud, Mexico
Blueprint Coalition on Women, Girls, and HIV, Canada
European AIDS Treatment Group
Global Coalition on Women and AIDS
GSSG, Germany
IAVI
International AIDS Women's Caucus



ICW Global
 Netzwerk Frauen und Aids, Germany
 PULSHIV, Austria
 Salamander Trust, UK
 Sophia Forum, UK
 STOP AIDS NOW!
 UNDP
 UNIFEM
 WECAre+ (Women in Europe and Central Asia Region Plus)
 Women ARISE
 Women of Color United, United States
 World AIDS Campaign
 World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
 World Pulse
 World YWCA

Fundraising was successfully carried out by ATHENA network and Salamander Trust for all our efforts towards WNZ2010, including the Vienna Consultation meeting and the registration of the Positive Women in Europe and Central Asia Region network (WECAre+). We are immensely grateful to all our donors without whom so much of this work would not have been possible.

WNZ2010 Donors

Abbott
 European Commission
 Ford Foundation
 Global Coalition on Women and AIDS
 International AIDS Society
 IPPF
 Stop AIDS Now!
 United Nations Development Fund for Women
 United Nations Development Program
 Women for Positive Action



The Women's Networking Zone is coordinated by the ATHENA Network. Celebrating 10 years of parallel women's lives, WNZ2010 is co-chaired by Linda H. Ho Afton, the ATHENA Network, BSSD, PULSHIV, Salamander Trust, and WECAre+. For further details, see www.womenonorg.net and www.theathena.org. The Young Women's Networking Zone is co-chaired by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) www.wagggs.org.



3. Working Groups and Key Outputs

The organization and development of the WNZ was open to all members of the partnership, the majority of whom were represented by the 27 individual women who came forward to be part of the broader organizing team. This team was broken down into:

- a core Coordinating Team (led by Tyler Crone, ATHENA Network Coordinator), made up of 4 women from the ATHENA Network and Salamander Trust;
- a Steering Committee comprising the Coordinating Team and representatives from WECARE+, GS-SG, AIDS Hilfe, IAVI and PULSHIV; and,
- 7 voluntary working groups. Each working group had a lead member.

Working Groups were each led by a Steering Committee member and all of them, apart from the M&E group, involved women living with HIV, as did both the Steering Committee and core Coordinating Team. Efforts were made to ensure that young women and young women living with HIV took part in each of the working groups, and that there was a balanced regional representation where possible. The work of the Working Groups was staggered, and the number and frequency of meetings (held through skype) varied. Key Working Group outputs are summarized below.

i. **Logistics** (5 people, led by Sabine Lex of AIDS Hilfe)

- Development of WNZ logo (design commissioned by Jane Shepherd, an openly HIV positive woman living in the UK);
- Development of artwork for WNZ2010 – commissioned from Austrian artist Mirjam Schweigkofler;
- Design and printing of posters, t-shirts, postcards, stickers, Women and AIDS Delegates Guide, badges, programmes, flyers and 4 banners based on Mirjam's designs (extra design work carried out by American graphic artist Ann Sappenfield in last days);
- Design, sourcing and acquisition of furniture for Zone;
- Sourcing and acquisition of Audio-Visual equipment for Zone;
- Planning of party for Zone partnership and participants;
- Sourcing and acquisition of insurance for Zone;
- Sourcing and acquisition of translation equipment for Zone;
- Call for and formation of team of about 27 local and international volunteers, including volunteer translators, and 18 'hosts' for Zone, of whom 12 were women living openly with HIV;
- Coordination of setting up, decoration and dismantling of Zone;
- Provision of drinks and snacks for Zone during conference week; and,
- Oversight of all technical equipment.

ii. **Fundraising** (7 members, led by Alice Welbourn of Salamander Trust)

- Oversight and management of budget;
- Liaison with all donors for raising, management and administration of funds;
- Development of fundraising letter to be used locally and internationally;
- Funds raised for party from Women for Positive Action, Canada, by Shari Margolese, Canada;
- Sourcing of in-kind donations including translation equipment, voluntary translation, and furniture items; and,
- Negotiation with Global Village organizers for increased zone size (142 meters squared) on the basis of accommodating three combined Networking Zone entities, under the banner of a 26-organisation partnership.



- iii. **Programming** (13 members, led by Luisa Orza, Salamander Trust Associate)
- Development of WNZ announcement and call for proposals;
 - Development of Principles of Participation to provide framework/guidelines for proposal assessment;
 - Receipt of 53 proposals;
 - Development of process for assessing and scoring proposals; (10 members of the group submitted scores);
 - Development of final programme including a total of 50 main stage and 15 parallel activities;
 - Pre- and post-conference liaison with presenters;
 - Oversight of programme roll-out during WNZ week; and,
 - Development of Resource Pages on www.womeneurope.net to create a lasting and sustainable resource featuring papers and presentations linked to the WNZ2010 programme (currently over 60 documents specific to the WNZ are available on the site)
- iv. **Young Women** (7 members, led by Bernadette Fischler of WAGGGS)
- Development of Young Women's Networking Zone (YWNZ) programme areas carried out through a daily 'Young Women's Hour';
 - Consultation and publicity for Young Women's Hour through participation at Youth Pre-conference;
 - Development of Young Women's flyer to advertise zone;
 - Input into press releases and messaging around Young Women's issues; and,
 - Staging of Young Women's Resource and Networking Corner.
- v. **Media** (6 members, led by Harriet Langanke of GS-SG)
- Development of Media Road-Map to guide media campaign among Austrian and German press with focus on: prevention, motherhood, criminalization, sex workers' rights, young women, and human rights;
 - Delivery of six press releases prior to and one following the Conference;
 - Formation of Media team to cover conference including one young woman living openly with HIV from the UK;
 - Coordination of 23 articles and blogs for on-line journal Open Democracy;
 - Production and distribution of 100 media packs in Conference Media centre based on initial press-releases;
 - Production and distribution of 6 daily editions of Mujeres Adelante newsletter focusing on women's issues covered at the IAC and in particular by the WNZ;
 - Provision of numerous press and audio-visual interviews during conference week, including to Austrian press and radio and international media.
 - Use of Facebook and personal blog to disseminate news from the WNZ.
- vi. **Visibility** (7 members, led by Amandine Bollinger of Salamander Trust)
- Liaison with the Human Rights Networking Zone and the Women ARISE coalition to ensure a visible women's contingent in the Human Rights March and Rally
 - Successful submission of nominations for two HIV positive women: Moderator (Rolake Odetoyinbo) and Speaker (Silvia Petretti) for the rally
 - Submission of key messages and background notes for Annie Lennox, highlighting key advocacy issues around criminalization, sex workers' rights,



- HIV and motherhood, violence against women, gendered harm reduction, positive women's and young women's leadership
- WNZ delegation to participate in the official Global Village opening, including HIV positive women and young women
- Collaboration with Women ARISE coalition to produce cohesive messaging, printed materials, and strong, visible women's contingent in the March.

vii. **Monitoring and Evaluation** (3 members, led by Luisa Orza, Salamander Trust Associate)

- Development of M&E plan including short-answer and in-depth evaluation tools for WNZ content and activities, recording and transcription of eleven short interviews among participants of the WNZ, production of progress report, final monitoring report (including manual and archive – approx 100 pages), final evaluation report (approx 30 pages) and executive summary.
- Development of M&E plan and tools for Twinning Project including pre-conference and post-conference questionnaires, case study interview guideline, and final report.

4. Achievements and Challenges

The Women's Networking Zone space was a beautifully designed, colour coordinated, large, open and welcoming space. Due to the extra space we were allocated (142 square meters in total) we were able to divide the space into several distinct areas:

- a private booth for daily relaxation sessions and female condom demonstration and counselling sessions
- a main stage area with floor cushions, chairs and couches, a fully comprehensive sound system and large plasma screen for power point presentations and video screenings
- a comfortable networking lounge with sofas, bookshelves and low tables;
- an audio-visual lounge with sofas, and a tv with four headsets, and a selection of 9 film and audio documentaries
- a young women's networking and resource corner

A washing line of women's panties and bras adorned the Zone, attracting a great deal of attention. The 'Panting Line' started out as a somewhat frivolous and irreverent decoration with serious underlying connotations about women's sexuality, diversity and reference to public/private personal/political dichotomies. It also gained meanings and created further thought-provoking discussion through the course of the week through the ways in which visitors to the zone responded to it; for example, one man from South Africa spoke about how it was taboo for men from his community to see women's underwear hung out, so to walk underneath the panting line constituted a challenge to traditional values.

50 sessions were scheduled for the main stage or parallel networking areas, starting at 9.00 am and running through to 8.30 pm each day. These comprised formal presentations and more informal group discussions, workshops, networking events, a 'Town Hall' event, performances of poetry and story-readings, showcasing activities and the launch of the network of HIV positive Women in Europe and Central Asia Region (WECARe+). Of all the scheduled sessions, one session didn't take place due to the presenters not showing up, and two daily sessions (a contraception 'drop-in' and a



'conference round-up') fell through, due to lack of planning and time of day. 'Lighter' sessions were scheduled for morning and evening time slots, but these were nevertheless often undersubscribed. During core hours (10.00am – 5.30 pm) the WNZ was constantly busy and the sessions were well attended, averaging 20 – 30 audience participants in each session.

The WNZ in collaboration with the Women ARISE movement mobilised to create a visible women's contingent in the Human Rights march, wearing t-shirts and carrying banners and short lengths of the 'panting line'; the group devised a chant to further draw attention.

The WNZ2010 was felt by visitors, presenters and organizers to be a huge success. The WNZ objectives are not quantitative in nature, so can never be said to have been wholly achieved. The following summaries show how the activities of the WNZ contributed to each of our five core objectives.

j) Advance an inclusive, diversity-rich, engendered, human rights and women's rights response to HIV and AIDS

The WNZ2010 programme was designed to facilitate cross-regional and cross generational dialogue, and to bring marginalised and controversial issues to the centre. While emphasising issues affecting women in Europe, the programme also included sessions and presentations from North America, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia-Pacific regions. The WNZ provided a platform for issues that are often neglected in mainstream fora included drug use and harm reduction, women's sexuality, abortion, forced / coerced sterilisation of HIV positive women, provider-initiated testing during pregnancy, and violence against HIV positive women. The use of a gender and/or human rights lens to view these and other issues, such as Medical Male Circumcision, Criminalisation of HIV Transmission, the Evidence Base, Harm Reduction, and Testing meant that issues that are more widely discussed in general, received a unique treatment and analysis in the WNZ. Approximately half of the sessions in the Zone constituted 'facilitated dialogue'-type sessions, and all of these used a gender and human rights framework as the basis for the presentation and discussion, to address women's rights in responses to HIV and AIDS. Linkages were made with the Human Rights Networking Zone on a number of sessions, and the WNZ contributed messaging to the Human Rights March and Rally, and ensured the participation of two women living with HIV as moderator and speaker in the rally.

Responses to our quick visitor feedback form showed that the WNZ attracted women and men from all over the world and from many different fields. Of the 45 respondents, 28 different countries were represented, and respondents identified themselves as community activists, NGO workers, media representatives, women living with HIV, researchers, medical professionals and policy makers.

Transgender people and sex workers were less well represented in the Zone, both through our programme and visitors/participants in the Zone. One film from Latin America ('Ahora Toca a Me') addressed issues affecting transgender people, and two films ('Zindalash' and 'You must know about me: sex worker rights in Macedonia') and two sessions addressed sex worker rights. Austrian organisation Sophie, and the Network of Sex Worker Projects were participating entities in the Zone.



Most of the activities in the Zone were conducted in English. However, 4 sessions were conducted partially or wholly in German, 4 partially or wholly in Russian, and one in Spanish. Of the films available to view in the zone, one was in Swedish, one in Spanish, with English subtitles, one in German with English subtitles, and one in Russian with English subtitles. The WNZ flyer was in English and German for local awareness-raising, and two of our banners for the Human Rights march used multiple languages. The Criminalisation campaign for which the WNZ provided a platform was in English, Russian and German. Translation presented a huge challenge for the Zone, being extremely costly to provide. Most of our translation, both in the preparation for and during the WNZ was provided by volunteers, often spontaneously. Several of the Steering Committee group spoke English and German. Two young women graduates from the UK acted as volunteer translators in the Zone providing Russian-English and German-English translation. However, it was more challenging to find people who could provide German-Russian translation.

'We consider WNZ to be a very important component of the global village's activity and a unique platform for communication and exchange of experience between representatives from different countries or professional sphere, who have various backgrounds,'
(WNZ2010 participant, Ukraine)

ii) Highlight emerging women's and young women's issues and our successful responses to them

A principle *raison d'être* of the WNZ is to highlight emerging women's issues, and this was successfully carried out through the WNZ2010, for example through sessions that looked at the impact on women of recent moves to criminalise HIV transmission, and drives to scale-up medical male circumcision, new prevention technologies, and provider-initiated opt-out testing. The launch of the new network for Women living with HIV in Europe and Central Asia Regions (WECARE+) highlighted issues affecting HIV positive women in the region (see paragraph iii below).

The integration of the Young Women's Networking Zone (YWNZ) also ensured that young women's issues took centre stage in the WNZ, both through integration throughout the main programme, in which at least half of the scheduled sessions were either led by, and/or of particular relevance to young women, and through young-women specific spaces (the young women's networking and resources corner) and activities (the daily Young Women's Hour, and Contraception Drop-in for young women). The YWNZ adopted a 'by and for' methodology for these spaces/activities, leaving them as loosely programmed as possible so that the young women involved would have the space to bring their priorities to the table.

'I think if you are interested in women's issues this is the place to be,' (WNZ2010 participant, Netherlands),

iii) Ensure women's active, meaningful participation, especially of positive women, young women, and women across Europe and Central Asia in the Conference

Working in collaboration with positive women's networks and organisations, the WNZ remains the only significant space within the International AIDS conference that specifically and actively promotes HIV positive women's meaningful participation and leadership. Women living with HIV have been at the centre of the planning and execution of all the events in and around WNZ2010.



At least 50% of the presentations and activities in the WNZ had a particular focus on issues affecting – or were led by – women living with HIV. These included: five sessions by or about the importance of networking, including the launch of WECARE+ and results of the pan-European survey of HIV positive women; a platform for the campaign to end forced sterilisations of HIV positive women in Southern Africa; a focus on harm reduction and violence against HIV positive women; growing up with HIV and coming to terms with an HIV-positive diagnosis; and, planning around the neglected sexual and reproductive health rights of women living with HIV including motherhood and abortion. Positive women were also strongly represented at the Human Rights March and Rally.

The WNZ2010 also saw a special emphasis on promoting the leadership and participation of young women, including young women living with HIV (see details in paragraph ii above), and on women from the Europe and Central Asia region. Approximately one third of the Zone activities had a specific focus on issues affecting women in Europe and Central Asia, and 14 of the 17 issues identified by the consultative meeting held in October 2009 in Vienna were addressed through a combination of sessions, parallel activities, media campaign and messaging for the Human Rights March and Rally. In addition, both the WECARE+ launch, and the Twinning Project session attempted to create East-West links within the Europe and Central Asia region; these sessions, and two sessions based in storytelling ('A Garden Full of Life' and 'Read my Story') as well as the two Lifeboat films, brought the representation of young women, HIV positive women and European and Central Asian women together in especially dynamic and rich ways.

Young women, including young women living with HIV, older women living with HIV and women representing the Europe and Central Asia region were involved in the WNZ working groups, as volunteers, hosts, coordinators and media representatives in WNZ.

'If we are talking about HIV and AIDS (or anything!) the people who are infected and affected need to be given space to speak for themselves, and need to be brought into decision-making and agenda setting in a meaningful way,' (WNZ2010 participant, USA)

iv) Link positive, negative and untested women

The WNZ links women working in the field of HIV and AIDS, gender, and sexual and reproductive rights, often in conjunction with a number of different or related areas, in multiple ways. First, it provides an obvious physical space in which women meet and interact; as well as a dedicated networking lounge, the WNZ promotes participation and facilitated dialogue through the presentation, and the potential for participation is one of the criteria for the evaluation of WNZ proposals. The WNZ partnership and consultative process is another way in which strong linkages are formed between individuals and organisations of women around the world, and the WNZ principle of local organisation means that this partnership, and leadership within the partnership, changes from one conference to the next. Partnerships and alliances are also kept alive between WNZ events, through the ATHENA Network and other listservs. Linkages from WNZ2010 were and are being promoted beyond the conference realm through an extensive media campaign in Austria and Germany prior to the conference; through the distribution of *Mujeres Adelante*, daily submissions of 23 blogs and articles to Open Democracy, numerous press interviews, and personal social networking through electronic media during the conference; and through the development of a resources page on the Women in Europe website (www.womeneurope.net), currently hosting 60



presentations and papers from the WNZ2010 programme, so as to provide an on-going resource beyond the conference.

At WNZ2010 networks and networking formed a significant sub-theme of the programme, with five sessions dedicated to the importance and potential of networking as a civil society mobilising and change tool. While not all of the networks involved in these sessions were specifically networks of women living with HIV, all of them involved an essential positive women's component around which other dialogue-building, learning and collaboration took place.

One of the principle aims of the WNZ is to 'bring the margins to the centre' – to ensure that those who are often left out of the decision making fora are not only given a place at the table, but should also be those who set the menu and invite the guests. Hence the central part that women living with HIV, young women and women from the local community and broader region, as well as other marginalised women, have played in the leadership and carrying out of WNZ2010. But the aim is not to speak to ourselves. While the WNZ already attracts women and men from many different regions, ages and sectors who work in related fields, the challenge remains to bring these 'margins' and marginalised issues to an even wider conference audience and beyond.

'The WNZ is a special place in the conference and the Global Village where women from all ages and all countries have a safe space for networking, discuss, engage and feel renovated and re-committed with the response to HIV,' (WNZ2010 participant, UK)

v) Hold European bilateral donors accountable, both for women's rights and HIV funding domestically and globally.

Having the IAC hosted by a Central European nation opened up an opportunity to highlight Europe as a mirror of the world, and offered us a chance to shine a mirror on the world. Issues facing women with HIV globally are all relevant in Europe, and issues facing women here in Europe in relation to HIV are *affecting* women globally also. Although the WNZ was able to effectively highlight the issues affecting women in Europe in relation to HIV and illustrate how these are often under-represented, under-funded, and under-addressed by policy makers, programme makers and donors alike, it was a challenge to hold European donors to account, and this objective was only partially met.

Several sessions were held at WNZ2010 that explored issues and methods of accountability to women, including a Town Hall session on Exploring the Evidence Base: Rights and Justice for Women that examined the ways in which 'evidence' can be pitted against 'rights' approaches and explored how to ensure an evidence base approach that is inclusive of both women and rights. Another session introduced assessment, accountability and advocacy tools, recently redeveloped and trialled (including in Norway) by Blueprint for Action on Women and Girls. Another session addressed accountability on the issue of funding for women's programmes, asking whether donor talk about the importance of addressing gender inequality is 'Rhetoric or Reality'?

Two sessions on Universal Access and Human Rights, and Discrimination and Criminalisation, involved a multi-disciplinary panel including parliamentarians from Austria and Germany, but it is evidence of the lack of European donor and government commitment to the issues affecting women in Europe and globally around the world, that engagement in the WNZ from these stakeholders was so low. From the response of



two Austrian parliamentarians who did participate in the Zone, this was clearly a lost opportunity.

'[The WNZ] gives a low-threshold access to a lot of very important information... Concerning the issue of criminalization of hiv/aids in our society I got much more sensitized.' (Austrian parliamentarian on participating in WNZ2010)

'I will at least speak more, and more often, on this subject than I have up till now,' (Austrian parliamentarian on participating in WNZ2010)

5. Conclusion

A more in-depth analysis of the data collected for our M&E to gauge the response to the WNZ2010 revealed that there is still a strong perceived need for a women's networking space, and that the WNZ promotes learning and exchange through several specific overlapping and mutually reinforcing roles that remain, at best, partially duplicated elsewhere within the realm of the International AIDS Conference. The WNZ:

- ✓ Promotes positive women's leadership and celebrates diversity;
- ✓ Creates a safe space for women to meet, share and analyse issues;
- ✓ Focuses on women's rights issues;
- ✓ Is underpinned by feminist agenda and analysis;
- ✓ Provides advocacy platform for selected issues;
- ✓ Is committed to addressing marginalised and controversial issues;
- ✓ Builds partnerships and alliances; and,
- ✓ Facilitates networking, dialogue-building and problem-solving.

'Keep this space – there's nothing else like it here!' (WNZ2010 Visitor)

