



2007/08

CANADIAN
AIDS
SOCIETY



SOCIÉTÉ
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Annual Report

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ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Canadian AIDS Society will continue to strengthen its role in serving as the lead organization in providing a strong, collective voice on behalf of the Canadian HIV/AIDS movement. Advocacy will continue to be linked with effective and thorough policy analysis and be based on broad consultation. This work should involve effective partnerships with member groups, provincial networks and national partner organizations.

CAS will diversify its approach in order that advocacy goals are met through a broad range of coordinated strategies. CAS will work with members and stakeholders to identify 3-4 key themes that will serve as the focus for its advocacy work. This work will include opening doors in other key government departments to achieve a pan-Canadian response that involves an increased number of federal ministries.

CAS will increase its capacity to provide comprehensive and specialized public policy analysis and to conduct professional lobbying efforts on its members' behalf. CAS will build its skill base to provide in-depth and focused policy analysis. CAS will expand its role in order to provide increased support to member groups and to integrate its approach at the regional and provincial levels. CAS will play a role in supporting members on these issues where resources and infrastructure for provincial networks is lacking. Strategic alliances with other national organizations and active provincial networks are an effective way to create a stronger collective voice.

FEDERAL INITIATIVE ON HIV/AIDS IN CANADA

Continuing with the single priority focus set out by the membership at the 2007 Annual General Meeting, CAS has continued pressuring the federal government through various actions to restore the funding of community-based organizations through the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS. Working with the assistance of professional lobbyists, CAS has been working behind the scenes to secure a review of what has happened to community-based funding, as well as ensuring that it is reinstated immediately. While difficult to itemize the conversations and outcomes of a year's worth of focussed efforts, we remain optimistic that this approach is working as progress is being made on this issue. The following areas provide a glimpse of some of the work carried out to meet this objective:

- Collaboration with national HIV/AIDS organizations to recruit lobbyist
- Internal coordination of membership response and meetings with local Members of Parliament
- Strategic communications and responses to media enquiries
- Executive Director was named to the Ministerial Council as an individual representative
- Developed letters and communications kits for members

In the meantime, CAS has continued to provide support and guidance to community members, recruiting them to have meetings with their elected officials and ensuring that their front-line service is clearly identified as the value for all Canadians that is being supported through AIDS Community Action Program funding. A letter-writing campaign has ensured that the Minister of Health's Office and Prime Minister's Office are aware of our concerns and the impact that funding cuts are having on individual Canadians and community-based organizations.

Following the 2007 AGM the "Day of Action Committee" was established, providing community activists and volunteers the opportunity to coordinate nationally to deliver a unified message on World AIDS Day.

GOVERNANCE

The Board of Director's Advocacy Committee has been working closely with the Executive Director to plan measured responses to programs and announcements in the political arena. This committee has been monitoring and assessing different advocacy methods and their impacts on the federal government and use this information to inform their decision-making process.

Other board committees, including the Finance and Audit Committee, the Planning and Priority Committee and the People Living with HIV/AIDS Committee, meet regularly to inform the development of the work-plan with responses to resolutions passed at the Forum and AGM and to plan these annual gatherings. The People Living with HIV/AIDS Committee also worked closely with staff at CAS to develop necessary resources identified by the People Living with HIV/AIDS Forum resolution process.

This year a Fundraising committee was also struck to provide voluntary support to the efforts of the Executive Director in meeting fundraising goals. In addition to improved relations with existing funders, this group has opened up many new opportunities for 2008-09.

TESTIFYING AT COMMITTEE AND SUPREME COURT

Building on the positions set by the Board of Directors and based on experience gained through research and communicating with our members, CAS has been called upon several times to provide expert testimony at House of Commons Committees and before the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Staff representing CAS presented to the Standing Committee on Justice to present our position on the proposed Age of Consent changes. While these passed eventually, the concern that the new legislation did not cover all sexual activity or fully address concerns regarding enforcement and education were raised and supported by CAS and other allies, including Egale.

Later in the year, the Standing Committee on Health held a consultation on the rules around organ and tissue donation exemptions that had been announced in December of 2007. While these rules essentially entrenched existing practice, the issue that the rules represented discriminatory practices towards gay men was raised and the potential for a Charter Challenge raised. CAS, along with other non-government organizations used this opportunity to voice concerns over the cessation of the Court Challenges Fund, which supported groups in making such challenges. Once again, we took the opportunity here, as we have with Canada Blood Services in the past, to recommend using risk behaviours, as opposed to risk groups, to help exclude potential donors.

Finally, CAS was called upon twice to present to the British Columbia Supreme Court as an expert witness in a challenge around right to access medical marijuana. This case was left undecided after the untimely passing of the Supreme Court Judge hearing the case.

INCREASED PUBLIC AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND COMMUNICATION

The Canadian AIDS Society will take a leadership role in ensuring that effective federal initiatives are in place to raise public awareness of and engagement in HIV/AIDS issues. CAS will work in partnership with other national groups and member organizations to coordinate a national prevention framework that addresses the determinants of health for vulnerable groups.

When necessary, CAS will advocate for a renewed Federal Initiative that provides appropriate resources for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. CAS will develop the capacity to increase its communications with the Canadian public, the media, its partners and members.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK AND WORLD AIDS DAY

Building on the momentum from last year's red ribbon event on the Hill, once again, CAS partnered with GlaxoSmithKline to host a reception for MPs to visit, learn about changes in the response to HIV/AIDS for the past year and pick up their red ribbon pins for AIDS Awareness Week. This year's event was much less hurried, allowing representatives the opportunity to visit with the staff and Executive Director and learn more about how they can support the community's response to HIV/AIDS. Many of the MPs reported having met with their constituents and had improved knowledge about how HIV/AIDS is impacting their communities. Offers of assistance were plentiful and well-met by the CAS team present at the event. This event tied neatly into the efforts of CAS members who had been meeting with their elected representatives, allowing local issues to translate to national responses through calls for accountability around the funding that has disappeared from community programs.

With news of the Canadian HIV Vaccines Initiative and varied opinions and trial results making headlines throughout the year, CAS elected to focus on the community's role in vaccine development as the theme for the World AIDS Day Breakfast. The Delta Hotel sponsored breakfast was opened by a First Nations elder who shared his perception of the impact of HIV/AIDS in his community and offered up thanksgiving for the work being done in our community-based organizations. Keynote speaker Anjali Nayyar, Vice President, Country and Regional Programs from the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), presented on the partnership between community and researchers in the ongoing search for a vaccine.

Another original design from McMillan was developed to be featured in print magazines *McLean's* and *L'Actualité* and *The Globe and Mail* and *La Presse* newspapers on World AIDS Day. The campaign challenged Canadian readers to show their support for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in their own communities.

PUBLICATIONS

CAS' two serial publications, *InfoCAS*, and *In Focus*, were re-established respectively as a quarterly publication and a single special issue. These resources, available to the public electronically and in hard copy for members and special order, reflected the organizational mandate of representing the community-based AIDS movement and people living with HIV/AIDS. *InfoCAS* our electronic journal, features articles targeted for public information, as well as features highlighting the work of CAS and its members. Alternating issues of the online newsletter also featured articles on issues of interest and importance to people living with HIV/AIDS. Encouraging public subscriptions to *InfoCAS* also helps to raise awareness of the issues featured in the publication.

In Focus, featured the topics of Youth and Immigration and Diversity. The publication provides an opportunity to feature innovative programs from member groups, and explore a single issue more completely.

MEDIA PRESENCE

Following a year of high exposure of HIV/AIDS issues and the International Conference, media exposure was somewhat reduced, although interest continued in coverage of research announcements. At each opportunity, CAS capitalized on media attention to raise awareness of the important role of community in responding to HIV/AIDS and the need for leadership to come from all of society to help address HIV/AIDS in Canada. Several major issues impacting the community-based AIDS movement describe the significant portions of media coverage handled by CAS and its membership. These issues were:

- Harm reduction – from safe injection sites to safer inhalation programs, a lot of energy and debate at municipal levels garnered national attention as the debate about drug use and harm reduction continued. While there is polarization on the issue, there is an increasingly well-informed position being formed through increased understanding of the continuum of approaches being used.
- Criminalization – this issue is one that keeps coming up as stories about men and women being charged with transmission of HIV. While the specific details vary, the consistent message of individual responsibility, personal safety and reduced stigma and discrimination are raised with each occurrence.
- Age of Consent and Organ Donation – based on Federal Government consultations, interest in these two topics peaked at various times through the year due to Parliamentary Committee focus.
- Funding – as efforts to lobby the federal government for a return to the original commitment of resources to community-based organizations continued, the occasional story made it into the media. Exercising strategic thinking CAS responded to these issues through the year with careful measure and guidance from its leadership.

AIDS WALK FOR LIFE

The AIDS Walk for Life saw several changes over the year, leading to the recruitment of a national title sponsor for 2008. With over 14,000 walkers and volunteers raising about two million dollars, the Walk was a great success this year. Under the national umbrella of the AIDS Walk for Life movement, CAS, entered into a partnership with the AIDS Committee of Toronto and British Columbia Persons with AIDS Society. A new national incentive fund saw for the first time the disbursement of cash resources to walk sites to help improve their next walk.

As always, every cent raised in pledges for the AIDS Walk for Life stayed in the communities to provide programs at AIDS Service Organizations. While these programs vary across Canada, much of the money raised is used to provide direct supports to people living with HIV/AIDS, giving much needed assistance to individuals living on low incomes and facing increased cost of living needs to meet nutritional and quality of life requirements.

Each year, the AIDS Walk for Life selects a piece of artwork from a different Canadian HIV-positive artist to grace all of our national promotional materials. To honour his role as a pioneer in the Canadian HIV/AIDS movement, and to celebrate the significant contributions he has made to the history of the AIDS Walk for Life, we chose a piece of artwork from acclaimed Canadian HIV-positive artist Joe Average to inaugurate our new creative concept for 2007. The piece is called *My Thinking Cap (Life with HIV)*.

The AIDS Walk for Life serves a dual purpose, as this annual event helps to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in Canada, in addition to raising funds. With a new video sponsor, *The Garden*, we were able to shoot a new public service announcement using community members sharing their reasons for walking. With approval from the Television

Bureau of Canada we were once again able to ensure that the promotional video was broadcast as a public service announcement, free of charge, on cable and satellite companies such as Cogeco, EastLink, Rogers, Shaw, and Star Choice Satellite. The announcement was also run in Cineplex theatres in Canadian cities and featured on many other local television networks.



PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

The Canadian AIDS Society will affirm its role as a leader in the Canadian HIV/AIDS movement and within the global response. CAS will continue to develop its strategic niche in the areas of Communication, Coordination and Community Development.

CAS will take the initiative in developing and maintaining effective strategic alliances with the other national partners, provincial networks, at the regional level and with networks of PLWHIV/AIDS when appropriate.

OVERVIEW

The Canadian AIDS Society operates as a generalist organization, representing our membership at the national level on a broad range of topics. As our understanding of HIV/AIDS grows, we recognize that HIV/AIDS affects many areas in which we need to represent our members' interests. We have also learned that strategic partnerships help to strengthen our voice as we champion issues that reach beyond HIV/AIDS or beyond our borders to effect people living with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS in other countries.

NATIONAL HIV/AIDS ORGANIZATIONS

There are nine organizations working at the national level in different areas of HIV/AIDS. Each of these groups has its own unique mandate and serves distinct interests within the HIV/AIDS response in Canada, yet it is essential at times for these groups to act as a body, often informally referred to as "The National Partners". As a coalition, we worked throughout the year on issues of importance to all of these groups. Throughout the year the national partners responded to challenges facing the delivery of harm reduction services, including the Insite Safe Injection Site in Vancouver, and responded to inquiries on the criminalization of HIV/AIDS transmission. Most significant was the decision to work together to recruit and work with a lobby firm to begin to address concerns around the release of funding and administration of the Federal Initiative. CAS also participated on advisory committees and groups with these organizations and their projects.

SUPPORTED PARTNERSHIPS

CAS houses several project funding envelopes and/or memoranda of understanding which define specific pieces of work that are carried out by CAS.

The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) supports the work of CAS to provide regional training opportunities on vaccines and the development of tools to promote awareness of the research process and the progress towards developing an HIV Vaccine. The support provided by this project gives CAS the opportunity to represent the needs of community in research and planning processes, including the roll-out of the Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative. It also provides the project consultant with resources to attend international conferences and network with community actors and researchers from around the world on vaccine development and community's role in the research process.

A truly innovative partnership, consisting of collaboration between government departments, community groups and industry brings together stakeholders for an annual Microbicides Symposium. CAS provides secretariat support for this partnership, coordinating the logistics for the meeting, as well as participating in the proceedings by representing the perspectives of Canadian community-based organizations.

The Global Campaign for Microbicides provides support for the work of the Microbicides Action Group Network (MAG-Net), which is mandated to set the stage for community preparedness and awareness of the development of microbicides.

A reinvigorated North American Coalition of AIDS Service Organizations (NACASO) came together to develop a strategic plan for this network and identify areas of work for the coming year, thanks to the support of a grant from the Until There's A Cure Foundation. The issues identified included the travel policy for people living with HIV/AIDS attempting to visit the US and universal action within a North American perspective. The group also discussed opportunities for expansion and its representatives have participated in the International Coalition of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) information sharing and planning meetings.

In 2006-07, the Canadian Harm Reduction Network and CAS partnership project began work on a project funded under Health Canada's Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund to carry out a project examining the delivery of harm reduction programs in smaller cities and communities across Canada. This project brought a team of researchers to nine communities to conduct site visits and focus groups with service users and service providers. The outcome of this project includes a compendium of the results of the visits, highlighting innovative responses to harm reduction in diverse settings and a summary document that highlights needs and recommendations for integration of harm reduction services into AIDS service organizations. Perhaps one of the most difficult findings was learning that some service organizations do not fully integrate inclusivity in their services, leaving people who use drugs feeling under-served.

NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The federal government houses various committees, advisory groups and working groups that have varied mandates and terms. As the voice of the community-based AIDS movement, CAS is often asked to participate and bring the perspective of the community to their discussions. This perspective is gathered through ongoing engagement of our membership through advisory committees, networking groups and shared resources and communications. A small team of program consultants work to remain up-to-date on current literature and programs in the community, linking local realities with a push for systemic change at the national level. Areas where this expertise has been called upon during the last year include: international issues, the development of The Canadian Microbicides Action Plan, and the Canadian HIV Vaccine Action Plan, the Leading Together Championing Committee, Social Marketing Advisory Group, and population-specific status report working groups (women, people living with HIV/AIDS, people who use drugs, and men who have sex with men) at the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Of equal importance is the development of new partnerships within the broader voluntary sector. These partnerships represent opportunities to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS issues within various communities and build strategic alliances within both the HIV/AIDS movement and the broader voluntary sector. For example, the Adult Learning Committee of the Canadian Council on Learning has identified HIV/AIDS as an adult learning priority and CAS participated in recruiting focus groups for this coalition and reviewing the results of these consultations, which are being published in a paper this year. The National Association of Children and Youth is helping to promote the health education priorities of children and youth including priorities related to HIV education. The Blueprint for Action on Women & Girls and HIV/AIDS is a coalition co-founded by CAS to address inequality of response to HIV/AIDS as it relates to women. The National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases hosted several knowledge sharing meetings throughout the year which CAS participated in, sharing the results of our projects and activities to help inform future prevention interventions targeted at population-specific responses.

AIDS WALK FOR LIFE

The national branding and promotion of the AIDS Walk for Life has developed through partnerships with walks hosted in Toronto and Vancouver. This national platform has brought forward many new opportunities for promotion and national support for the activity. Perhaps most important, though, is the partnership entered into each year between CAS and community hosts of AIDS Walk for Life. Participation in this national event and the partnership between AIDS Service Organizations and CAS help to raise the profile of this event to a national level, allowing CAS to secure national media coverage and promotional opportunities.

In 2007, we saw the implementation of a new partnership plan that involves the investment of collective resources in a Corporate Sponsorship and Donations Manager, along with the development of an incentive fund and a growth fund. These funds provide a further investment of cash into local walks through a proportional calculation of the "top walk sites" and investment in growth opportunities, such as increased advertising exposure from a national level and production of new print materials, such as "save the date" cards.



COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The Canadian AIDS Society will champion the determinants of health approach to HIV/AIDS issues within the Canadian community based movement. CAS will model this approach at all levels of the organization and will promote and support its membership to do the same.

CAS will serve as a leader in reaching out and engaging the full breadth of people affected by HIV/AIDS including people using injection drugs, women, gay men, youth, new Canadians, and aboriginal people. The membership and governance structure of CAS will be addressed to accommodate the increasing diversity of those affected.

All programs and structures will ensure consideration for this diversity and for the inclusion of different voices. CAS will increase its capacity to offer fully bilingual services in order that all its members may participate equitably in the organization's work.

NATIONAL PROGRAMS – POPULATION AND ISSUE SPECIFIC RESPONSES

A team of creative and intelligent individuals work on issues grouped generally under the title of *Programs*. This team provides member supports through capacity building, networking, supporting alliances with other groups and facilitating communications both in formal and informal settings. Additionally, this group is responsible for carrying out policy analysis and development of positions, background information and development of learning modules for use in the community.

Shifting opportunities and priorities set based on direction from the membership and Board of Directors has helped CAS to make strategic investments in human resources when it comes to responding to the myriad of issues that we see affecting our communities. With precision and sincere thought, the following priority areas were identified and pursued during the year. These program areas provide a foundation for action and activity for the organization in coming years, helping to meet the targets set out in this strategic direction.

HARM REDUCTION

The Harm Reduction Project, conducted in partnership with the Canadian Harm Reduction Network, provided CAS the opportunity to reflect on the link between determinants of health and health service delivery. The project gave voice and focussed attention on innovative programs from across Canada, targeting interventions based in smaller cities and communities. From housing concerns to peer-training to prevent adverse effects from overdose, these programs show some of the most innovative work being carried out in Canada today. The report draws attention to the methodology and impact of such programs and makes recommendations around how to support and encourage similar programs and activities. Most importantly, this project looked at the impact on service users, seeking to explore their experiences through focus groups and site visits, ensuring that their voice is clearly represented in the report.

GAY MEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH

The Pan-Canadian Gay Men's Health and Wellness Network is hosted by CAS and provides coordination on issues of importance to gay men. During the year the steering committee met and developed five goals which form the focus of this network. Prevention and awareness remain central to these goals and are a key areas where CAS has been involved. Policy issues have been high on the agenda, and during the past year, CAS has been asked to present on the impact of homophobia on HIV transmission through issues related to the safety of Canada's Blood

Supply and, more recently, organ donation. Additional support of the network includes maintaining a list-serve and hosting meetings of the steering committee. Ongoing involvement in government reference groups, community advisory groups and related committees helps maintain a balanced approach to this central portfolio.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

An ongoing effort to champion meaningful and relevant education on HIV/AIDS in schools is being supported by a grant from the MAC AIDS Foundation. Working with Angus Reid market researchers and a community advisory committee, a public opinion poll was developed and data collected. The results of this survey were released on World AIDS Day in a joint press release between CAS and Angus Reid, giving CAS the opportunity to raise awareness of the need for improved curriculum across Canada. The results of this survey confirm the needs suspected and provided evidence of overwhelming public support for increased HIV/AIDS education in Canadian schools. Building on this data, a national survey, targeting teachers, parents and students was developed and promoted during the month of December using Internet advertising. The results of this survey have been compiled and are helping to guide the next steps of this project – the development of core curriculum for various age groups and the identification of resources and programs that work for different age groups.

WOMEN AND HIV/AIDS

CAS continues its participation in the Blueprint for Action on Women & Girls and HIV/AIDS by participating in the National Steering Committee and supporting regular meetings of the national steering committee, providing logistical support and attempting to raise awareness of issues impacting women's lives in Canada. Building on the 2006 Report Card, the national steering committee contacted provincial governments to seek commitment to action on relevant issues in each region of Canada. This process was met with some success, as meetings were held in several provinces with varying levels of commitment to action. The Blueprint Coalition also worked through the year to develop International Partnerships, building on its relationship with Oxfam Canada, ATHENA and the YWCA.

PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS AND NEW PREVENTION METHODS

Mentioned previously, CAS has developed partnerships with vaccines and microbicides groups focussed on advocating for and supporting research into these essential prevention methods. CAS participated in various stakeholder meetings throughout the year, taking an active role in both the Canadian Microbicide and Vaccines Action Plans. These plans, while setting research and development targets, also highlight the important role of communities in supporting and preparing for acceptance of potential new prevention methods.

CAS continues to support the traveling exhibit *In Her Mother's Shoes*, an exhibit promoting the need for new prevention methods, and the role of Canadians in supporting this work. The exhibit features a number of bilingual panels which can be set up and used as a presentation.

ETHNOCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Working with researchers and community members CAS has been able to provide some capacity building opportunities via teleconference within these communities. As has been witnessed in the past, there is a great deal of interest from "mainstream" service providers who are often called upon to provide services and programs that are sensitive to ethnocultural needs. While there is a lot of growth of services within these communities, there

remain many organizations who are seeking to build skills and programs, and who are participating in these training sessions.



GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

The Canadian AIDS Society will strengthen its role as the lead organization in promoting the Greater Involvement of People with Living with AIDS Principles within the Canadian HIV/AIDS movement. This will include reaching out and promoting the empowerment of vulnerable groups including people using injection drugs, women, gay men, youth, new Canadians, people involved and engaged with the justice system and aboriginal people.

CAS will take the lead in facilitating a stronger, more independent and diverse PLWHIV/AIDS Forum that will serve as an authentic national voice for all people living with HIV/AIDS. Whenever possible, CAS will work to increase the resource base for the PLWHIV/AIDS Forum and ensure that the response at the national level is being informed by the grassroots.

CAS will facilitate a widespread discussion regarding the potential of the formation of a PLWHIV/AIDS network that would be independent, broad-based and could be involved in setting the agenda for PLWHIV/AIDS in Canada.

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS FORUM

The annual PLWHIV/AIDS Forum is a unique structure in Canada and is considered a critical component of CAS. The Forum fulfills many important roles within CAS: it helps keep the organization connected to the grassroots, it plays an essential role in empowering future leadership and it informs CAS' policy and advocacy work.

GIPA TRAINING TOOLKIT

Throughout the year, a small working group has been guiding the development of a GIPA Training Toolkit which will be piloted during the 2008 People Living with HIV/AIDS Forum. This tool kit consists of six component chapters and guides individuals through various means of engagement and the supports required.

GLOBAL NETWORK OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS – NORTH AMERICA (GNP+ NA)

CAS offers continued support for Canadian activities with this group, including the support for membership list maintenance and improved communications throughout the year.

SUPPORT FOR ACTION

The greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS has also been supported by the hosting of a group of advocates who together with AIDS Action Now! developed a series of events and communications around World AIDS Day 2007 to draw attention to the needs of individuals and communities when it comes to support for community-based programs. These actions worked to complement the policy message being delivered through more formal mechanisms of CAS.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS PLWHIV/AIDS COMMITTEE

The board committee assisted with planning the People Living with HIV/AIDS Forum.

STRENGTHENED INFRASTRUCTURE

The Canadian AIDS Society will strengthen its role in advocating for and supporting the infrastructure that exists within the AIDS movement to deliver effective prevention, awareness, education, treatment, care and support programs. CAS will support its members to capacity build in order to attract and sustain appropriate financial and human resources. CAS will take a leadership role in partnership with other national organizations in monitoring and influencing the level of government resources available to respond to HIV/AIDS.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS

CAS maintains its finances and books in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and is directed in its financial decision making by a financial policy and procedures manual and the Finance and Audit Committee of the Board. The management team oversees the organizational work plan and carries out financial and narrative reporting as required by funders.

MEMBER RELATIONS

In addition to the opportunities to participate in programs and CAS activities, CAS has a member relations program which encourages contact at the national office through board and staff representatives. The board's membership committee also works to conduct a regular review of member files, including ensuring that we have up-to-date documents and contact information for each organization.

This year the board accepted Bras as an associate member.

Our monthly mailings to members include documents and resources developed by CAS and its partners.

In March of 2008 CAS was able to secure resources to support a scholarship program for CAS member groups to attend the annual Canadian Association of HIV Researchers Conference in Montreal.

FUNDRAISING

Nurturing new relationships with funding partners has become an important task of the Executive Director, as CAS seeks to expand its network of financial supporters. This year's focus was on working with national corporations, piloting a neck-tag program with Corby Distilleries' Polar Ice line in Ontario (expanded nationally in 2008) and working with Kiehl Cosmetics on a shop and give program around World AIDS Day. An individual giving program was also launched on World AIDS Day, promoting planned and monthly giving.

EVALUATION OF THE SKILLS BUILDING SYMPOSIUM MODEL

In efforts to determine community need and provide evidence of success of past symposia, CAS undertook an in-depth evaluation of the skills format, seeking input from past participants, funders and potential participants. The results of this evaluation will help to frame the development of future skills building gatherings.