

Canadian AIDS Society

Annual Report

2011-12



Advocacy

Throughout the year CAS staff focussed on the goal of protecting and increasing the funding resources available to community-based AIDS organizations. Culminating in calls for proposals late in the year, many organizations were able to secure funding before the end of the fiscal year. The Canadian AIDS Society is still examining the impact of this call for proposals, and has, along with the national partners, issued a survey of organizations to establish the impact of funding shifts. This information will be used to inform the 2012-13 advocacy agenda.

The Canadian AIDS Society marked its 25th Anniversary with a special public reception at the Ottawa Convention Centre. All federal political parties were present to bring greetings and offer CAS and offered the community-based movement hearty thanks for many years of service in the communities. Representatives from each party, including a newly elected Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party shared personal experiences encountering people living with HIV/AIDS in their lives, cementing their support for the community-based response in Canada.

Just prior to World AIDS Day, CAS hosted a Red Ribbon on the Hill event, inviting all members of parliament and senators to attend a reception hosted in the Parliament Building and meet the Executive Director, the Chair of the Board and representatives of CAS staff. The opportunity for a short meet and greet, a photo opportunity and the reception helped raise awareness of the issues faced by the community-based AIDS movement, and resulted in all party members receiving a red ribbon to wear during AIDS Awareness week.

AGM and Forum

In June of 2011 CAS hosted its Annual General Meeting and People Living with HIV/AIDS Forum in Ottawa, Ontario. This year marked the 25th Anniversary of the Society and included a special reception hosted at the Ottawa Convention Centre where Mr. David Hoe was presented with the Individual Leadership Award. Presentations at the Forum included a workshop on bereavement and resiliency and HIV and aging. There was a special session at the AGM on the role of media in responding to HIV/AIDS. The Open Spaces dialogue for the Forum and the AGM introduced the board to emerging issues in the community and outlined the responses needed.

Board and Governance

The Board of directors met monthly via teleconference and three times face to face throughout the year. This was an important year as it involved preparing and presenting changes to the bylaws of CAS to its membership. The board took great care in preserving the position of the Forum within CAS as an autonomous body, and followed up the new bylaws with changes to its membership policy. Also of great importance to the board was the direction to continue advocating for protecting the funding of community-based AIDS organizations; the board provided leadership and direction in this agenda.

Communications

Throughout the year CAS released four volumes of its quarterly newsletter *HIVolume*. This publication featured articles about CAS' work on projects and activities including Gathering of Spirit, New Prevention Technologies and Housing. The newsletter is mailed to all member groups and available to the public on our website.

In June of 2011 the new CAS website was launched. Throughout the year new resources and publications were made available, and the website featured centrally in our World AIDS Day campaign. Updates included a new cataloguing system for easier access to resources, member logos featured prominently on the banner bars and integration of social media links.

Digital Repository

The Canadian AIDS Society continued to work with CATIE and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network to set up a digital repository of reports and resources. The group worked on developing terms of use and designing the architecture of the site which will be hosted by CATIE and launched in the coming year.

Endemic Population Webinars and Resource Development

Throughout the year several webinars were held focussing on the provision of services within Endemic Communities in Canada, and introducing the work of CHABAC.

A call for submissions of resources resulted in several new resources being developed in partnership with CAS member groups. These resources include condom use cards in Spanish, English and French developed by AIDS Niagara, and two papers coming out of AIDS Calgary on their highly successful African Communities Project.

Gay Net Youth Forum

Working in partnership with the Canadian Federation of Students, CAS conducted a survey to determine where sexual health for gay men was available in Canadian colleges and universities to identify needed resources. Based on the results of the survey a number of fact sheet resources were developed and made available to colleges and universities across Canada.

Housing and Homelessness

The Canadian AIDS Society conducted an online needs and assets assessment survey with member organizations across Canada. The results of this assessment have been published in the document "A House is Not Always a Home".

In January of 2012 CAS attended the HIV, Housing and Health Research to Action Collaborative: National Blueprint Meeting. Through participation in this meeting and ongoing work, CAS will be involved in the development of a National Housing and HIV Framework.

NACASO

The Canadian AIDS Society participated in the International Coalition of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) strategic planning process. This process included a revision to the membership structure of ICASO which resulted in NACASO no longer being affiliated with ICASO. Through further meetings, it was decided that new, more strategic partnerships would be developed to ensure the engagement of NACASO members in ICASO programs and projects.

New Prevention Technologies

Building on our very successful partnership with the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and development, CATIE and the Canadian Public Health Association, CAS continued to develop training opportunities on New Prevention Technologies (NPTs). Beginning in April with a standing room only satellite at CAHR focussing on results of PrEP trials and other NPTs research, the partners followed up with a highly successful summer webinar series, with resources from the webinars made available on CAS' website. The MAG-Net listserv operated throughout the year, providing information and updates about NPTs to over 170 members. This partnership also organized a national summit on NPTs, supported by CIHR and the Canadian HIV Vaccines Initiative, in which a framework for action on NPTs was developed.

Positive Prevention

Following a literature review and needs assessment related to positive prevention, CAS developed a series of fact sheets on the topic which are available on our website.

Research Collaboratives

CAS staff participated in several research partnerships over the course of the year. Working with partners in REACH (Research Evidence into Action for Community Health) we helped develop two successful proposals with the HIV and Aging working group and the Aboriginal Health Program of Research. Staff represented CAS at The CIHR Social Research Centre (SRC) annual meeting as well, committing CAS to work closely with this group's research objectives as well.

Vaccines

With the support of funding from the Canadian HIV Vaccines Initiative CAS completed two projects in 2011. The first was the completion of a multi-year project which culminated in the publication of *More than Just Rolling up Your Sleeve: An HIV vaccine preparedness toolkit for Canadian communities*. This resource guide consists of 9 modules describing vaccine resources for various communities including: African, Caribbean and Black Communities, People who Use Injection Drugs, Gay Men and MSM, Positive People, and Young Women.

During the second half of the year our attention turned to developing curriculum for high-school aged students in Health, Science and Social Studies. These resources have been shared with teachers' organizations and are made available on our website. They are also available for order through CATIE.

Women

2011 saw the organization of *Gathering of Spirits* a collaboration of women's researchers, community members and policy makers at CAHR 2011. This two-day event brought together over 120 participants to develop and discuss a common research agenda for women. With issues such as research priorities, ethics, participant recruitment, community engagement and meaningful involvement of women in research projects, the agenda resulted in the creation of a number of working groups, who took up the banner of *Gathering of Spirits* and continued to work throughout the year.

CAS continued to act as the secretariat for the Blueprint on Women & Girls and HIV/AIDS, hosting regular teleconferences for the network, and discussion important policy issues, including the development of the 2012 report card.

World AIDS Day

The World AIDS Day Campaign for 2011: *Do Something* revolved around a video competition and a strong social media campaign. With daily tweets and Facebook postings, and Facebook advertising, CAS significantly made its presence known on the Internet. The theme allowed us to identify 25 actions that individuals could DO to help stop the spread of AIDS and improve the lives of Canadian living with HIV/AIDS. A print poster campaign of 4 vividly designed posters accompanied the social media campaign.

The Canadian AIDS Society also hosted its 3rd Annual World AIDS Day Gala in 2011 with it being the biggest success ever. Director Paul Saltzman was in attendance to preview several section of the Reignited film project he is working on with CAS. Evelyn Farha was the keynote speaker and Olivia Chow returned as the celebrity auctioneer. She was also presented with a leadership award for her husband Jack Layton, in recognition of all the work he did on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS.