

# Global Strategies for HIV Prevention



*Newsletter*  
*December 2007*

## **Conflict and Hope**

**Democratic Republic of Congo** Looking back at our Goma, DR Congo programs in 2007, the title “Conflict and Hope” seems to sum up the year. In spite of increasing political instability, we started a number of new programs, bringing hope through your donations and the dedication of amazing health care workers.

This year we began a nutrition program for 300 HIV-infected children receiving antiretrovirals (ARVs) through the Clinton Foundation. Treating HIV-infected children in the US results in miraculous health improvements, but with food as scarce as medicines in Congo, the mortality rate in children starting ARVs changes little unless they receive proper nutrition. We visited the pediatric HIV clinic in September and saw firsthand the benefit of nutrition and medicines—children with fewer illnesses growing taller and gaining weight.

Heal Africa Hospital and Clinic, our partner in Congo, was encouraged by a dramatic increase in volunteers this year—nurses, doctors, educators, engineers, architects, teachers, pastors, and palliative care workers, building on the work of other partners and volunteers from Christ Presbyterian Church in Minnesota, bringing hope to Heal Africa staff and embattled patients who seek refuge and healing in Goma. In August, a team from First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley joined us in Goma to evaluate how they could partner with Global Strategies and HEAL Africa to address the needs multiplying from war and conflict. Later, we were joined by Congressman Jim McDermott, his wife Therese Hansen, our Chairman Morgan Davis and his wife Sandy, there to assess issues faced by eastern Congo as it experiences ongoing conflict. The next team consisted of an urologist, pediatrician and nurse who provided clinical care and education to health care workers. One patient had waited seven years for an urologist with the necessary skills to perform his needed surgery.



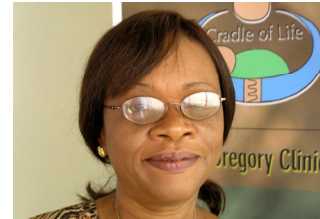
Global Strategies participated in and cosponsored a training workshop with the Congo National AIDS Program and our partner HEAL Africa to train 27 healthcare workers and 10 technicians from health zones outside Goma in preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission. In spite of renewed fighting that delayed the health care workers' departures, all arrived home safely. Since that time, seven clinics have begun Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programs – the only PMTCT programs we know of in a rebel-held territory. Dr. Bonane, the Congolese doctor at HEAL Africa who oversees our HIV programs, said, “We are waiting impatiently for peace.” We join in their hopes and prayers for a peaceful Congo in 2008.

**Liberia** Several years ago, eight or more adults crowded into one van, for a daily two- to three-hour drive to Buduburam, a Liberian refugee camp in Ghana. There we trained healthcare workers about HIV/AIDS. Each morning and afternoon there would be a scramble to sit next to Dr. Lily Sanvee, a doctor from Liberia. Born into a family of twelve children, Dr. Sanvee learned she had been accepted on a full scholarship to medical school in Spain less than a week before classes began. She arrived in Spain penniless and not speaking a word of Spanish, but succeeded in her studies and surprised many by returning to Liberia. Illness

and a brutal civil war briefly drove Dr. Sanvee out of Liberia, but she returned to care for her patients. She knew what she had to do, though she had lost her home, her land, and all her possessions.

Today Dr. Sanvee is back in Liberia showing compassion to the sick and destitute. She speaks as eloquently to street beggars as she must have when she successfully implored rebel leader Charles Taylor, now on trial for war crimes, to save her hospital.

Out of past conflict comes hope, Dr. Sanvee now speaks frequently with Liberia's new President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first woman president, on issues related to HIV in Liberia. Recently appointed as hospital director, Dr. Sanvee leads with quiet confidence and advocates for her patients' needs and hopes. She models her life after teachings of Jesus, accepting and caring for anyone in need, including soldiers on any side, changing lives physically and spiritually. Her hospital is now the country's designated leader in preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission.



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Having survived the 12 years of conflict in Liberia, Dr. Sanvee now lives with hope and freely provides it to others. She dreams of finding and testing all children born to HIV-infected mothers, and providing those infected with lifesaving drugs. A trained nurse now helps locate children, who are often hidden in the slums, but transportation is difficult. We have been able to supply a vehicle this year—something hard to get in a country that does not even have running water. Along with Dr. Sanvee, we dream of Liberia becoming the first resource-poor African nation to implement country-wide prevention of HIV mother-to-child transmission. It can be done; and with some new donors' help, we are taking steps in that direction.

**Hope Walks** What an incredible first year for Hope Walks! After organizing seven walks around the country and in Uganda and raising more than \$274,000 for orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda, DR Congo, and India, we are thrilled by the ongoing enthusiasm from churches and other organizations for



continued support and advocacy for these children. It has been a privilege to collaborate with individuals and groups who want to know more about the issues these vulnerable children face (there are now an estimated 15 million orphans worldwide) and to teach their own children about these challenges, providing them with the opportunity to raise funds and become advocates themselves. Thousands of children have walked in Hope Walks events this year to support imperiled children around the world. The attention they have

brought to the issues and the funds they have raised have already made tangible differences in the lives of others. Children are taking the lead on behalf of other children—this is truly hope walking.

**Thank you to the Friedland, Robert James Frascino, Winifred Stevens and Frontline Foundations, the many faith based organizations, and to all of you for your donations and continued support.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arthur J. Ammann'.

Arthur J. Ammann, M.D., President