

Population Action International
Final Report on Outcomes to PATH
December 2010

Through the support provided via this grant, Population Action International (PAI) produced an advocacy-oriented documentary film, *Empty Handed: Responding to the Demand for Contraceptives*, which puts a human face on the issue of shortages of critical reproductive health supplies. This film and the ensuing outreach successfully served as tools to inform policymakers and advocates worldwide about key advocacy messages in support of universal access to RH supplies. Key partners from the Resource Mobilization Awareness (RMA) Working Group and the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) were consulted throughout the film's development to ensure that its message was applicable to the diverse needs of the RHSC.

The original plan was to produce a film about supplies shortages that spanned various continents and cultures, but after doing exploratory filming and research, it was decided that the larger story of contraceptive shortages could be more compellingly told through several films, each one using a more targeted scope. In consultation with the Advisory Committee, under this grant, PAI produced a film that highlights the supplies crisis in Uganda, as a tool for advocates in sub-Saharan Africa, as this region has the highest unmet need in the world and increasing rates of maternal mortality and unsafe abortion and continues to be the focus for bilateral and multilateral donors. In addition to telling the compelling stories of individual women, the film documents the challenges at each level of the supply chain and identifies key areas for improvement. *Empty Handed* aims to provoke discussion and mobilize support for reproductive health supplies.

Production and post-production on *Empty-Handed* was completed in May and June of 2010, and the documentary premiered on the first day of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition's Annual General Meeting in Kampala, as part of the morning plenary session, entitled *Advocating for Supplies*. Copies of the DVD were made available to everyone in attendance. Later that day, the offices of Ministers of Parliament (MP) Hon. Sylvia Ssinabulya of Mityana and Hon. Sarah Nansubuga Nyombi, of Ntenjeru North hosted a screening with eight (8) fellow women MPs and Ugandan media. That weekend, staff from RHSC Secretariat and PAI were invited to attend the **CNN African Journalists Awards** ceremony and distributed more than 140 DVDs to journalists in attendance, including most of the nominees and winners. Other outreach efforts followed (funded by sources supplemental to this grant) and included:

- **In Zambia:** In partnership with Youth Vision Zambia (YVZ), PAI hosted a screening in a downtown Lusaka movie theater. 300+ people attended, representing NGO community, health care providers, government officials and media. Screening was co-hosted and moderated by Zambian colleagues representing international and faith-based NGOs, along with comments from PAI and USAID staff who were in attendance. Post-screening discussion was strong – attendees sounded several themes: government and individual responsibility; the need to document contraceptive shortages and stock outs; HIV/AIDS and malaria are prioritized over FP/RH in public hospitals and clinics

because that's where the money is. Several nurses in the audience spoke to low priority afforded RH supplies in the health system and the women they turn away daily. YVZ staff prepared talking points for putting the supplies issue in the Zambian context, educating the audience about contraceptive use, access, funding and availability in the country.

The screening was a catalyst for additional interest as well. The Swedish Ambassador to Zambia requested that YVZ organize a screening at the embassy for all staff. PAI proposed that the embassy also consider hosting a screening for the larger bi- and multilateral donor community to highlight RH supplies. DVDs of *Empty Handed* were distributed in meetings with the Ministry of Health, USAID/Zambia mission, UNFPA, Marie Stopes International/Zambia, and other local NGOs.

A few weeks after the screening, the Minister of Health requested permission to screen both *Empty Handed* and PAI's earlier film, *Silent Partner*, at their launch event for CARMMA (Campaign to Accelerate Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa), which she did in June with over 1400 people in attendance. CARMMA is a regional campaign requiring all countries to develop and implement a roadmap for reducing mat mortality. Zambia launched their plan in June and highlighted the role of FP in improving maternal and infant health. PAI and YVZ also met with a young Minister of Parliament who is interested in starting a parliamentary forum on population and development issues.

- **In Malawi:** *Empty Handed* was screened and discussed as part of the Malawi College of Medicine's annual conference. PAI's colleague, Andy Ngwira, with the college's Center for Reproductive Health, introduced the film and led the discussion. *Empty Handed* was also screened during an FP/RH briefing of the parliamentary health committee, where the surprise guest was the Minister of Health. The film was very well-received with the Minister mentioning the film on multiple occasions and requesting more DVDs. The College of Medicine, located in southern Malawi in Blantyre, is currently organizing two additional screenings – one for reporters in Lilongwe (capital) and another for MPs in the southern region. PAI has supported these activities with a small advocacy grant; Malawi is a Global Health Initiative country and we hope to continue to support locally driven FP/RH advocacy there.

Also in Malawi, JSI Malawi staff are using *Empty Handed* in their logistics trainings with staff. Early feedback suggests that the film has helped get the issue of supplies chain out of the technical sphere and into a more personal realm – it has enabled trainers to refocus program staff on the individual at the end of the line who is relying on them. JSI training staff reports that country staff are talking about contraceptives differently, almost as a human right rather than as a logistics issue, a development which PAI hopes to track and pursue.

- Advocacy partners in **Namibia and Kenya** are poised to organize similar screenings for their target audiences.
- *Empty Handed* was screened at the 2010 membership meeting of Countdown 2015, at the Women Deliver Conference in June in Washington DC, as well as the September meeting of the DC-based International Family Planning Coalition.

- PAI staff has led screenings with staff of EngenderHealth, Population Services International, and other implementing agencies. Several organizations -- USAID, AFP and JSI, for example -- provided field offices with DVDs for trainings and workshops.
- Most recently, *Empty Handed* received the Population Institute's global media award for best film or miniseries.

Regarding media, the film has generated various media pieces, especially in Zambia and Uganda. Examples of media include:

- Op-Ed “In Uganda, Condoms Hard to Come By” published on GlobalPost on June 15 with embedded film trailer
- *Grist* article: “Women Who Can’t Get birth Control Spotlited in New Film – Watch It Here” posted June 26 with embedded Vimeo of trailer and full film, plus link to GlobalPost op-ed
- RHRealityCheck blog post: “Coca-Cola Trumps Condoms – How Can We Help?” posted June 24 with embedded Vimeo of full film.
- *Empty-Handed* was featured in the Materials section of the Soul Beat Africa website (<http://www.comminit.com/en/africa/materials.html>) and in the Soul Beat newsletter.
- *Times of Zambia* newspaper has published 4 articles on different SRHR issues within the country
- *New Vision* newspaper has introduced a weekly column dedicated SRH issues in Zambia.
- *The Zambia Daily Mail* newspaper and *The Post* newspaper have each published 3 articles on different SRH issues
- *Radio Phoenix* has carried 4 interviews and 1 live phone in program on different SRH issues
- *Hot FM Radio* station has conducted 2 interviews with YVZ staff on different SRH issues
- *Hone FM*, *Yastani*, *Joy FM* and *Christian Voice* radio stations have allocated a weekly 1 hour live phone in program on SRH issues.
- *UNZA* radio station has been conducting weekly live interviews with YVZ staff on SRH issues
- *ZNBC Tv2* has conducted 3 live television programs with YVZ staff and staff from other institution working in the area of SRH as panelists.

As for looking ahead, feedback about the usefulness and impact of the film from country-level audiences has been extremely positive, and PAI will seek additional funding in the coming year to continue distribution efforts. Such efforts will emphasize tailoring the messaging around the film – and possibly even the film itself – so that *Empty-Handed* can serve as a cornerstone tool to advance national advocacy strategies around supplies. PAI adapted the ending of the film for use in the RHSC’s HandtoHand Campaign, and given the relative easy and effectiveness of that approach is open to replicating that strategy so that the film is of the upmost relevance in myriad country contexts.

To that end, *Empty Handed* DVDs are now subtitled in five languages -- French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swahili, and English -- to further enhance the film's reach and impact in sub-Saharan Africa (also to be made available on the website). This represents our third and final print run of DVDs under this grant. We are currently exploring the possibility of

featuring *Empty Handed* in the West African family planning meeting next February in Burkina Faso. PAI is in discussions with AFP staff about incorporating *Empty Handed* into their focus country advocacy strategies, such as in Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria and Senegal. And, we are looking ahead to regional meetings and conferences in 2011 where RHSC members can screen and disseminate *Empty Handed* to local partners, such as the next Gates Institute conference on family planning, the Union for African Population Studies conference, etc.

Additionally, PAI hopes to pursue films that highlight the supplies crisis in both Asia and the Latin America/Caribbean regions as well.

One other point worth noting is that soon after the film's premiere, the micro-site, www.empty-handed.org, went live. The site features both the film and its corresponding Advocacy Guide, for use by in-country advocates in their own efforts to promote the film and the larger issues it portrays. Since the site's launch in June, there have been 16, 125 loads of the trailer and 7,944 loads of the entire film. Interestingly, Facebook continues to be the leading referring site for the film, meaning that people continue to share the film with friends via Facebook. *rhsupplies.org* and *populationaction.org* are the second and third referring sites, respectively. *Other specifics on web analytics are provided as an attachment to this report.*

Empty-Handed: Meeting the Demand for Contraceptives is proven as a powerful tool for advocates in their outreach efforts to policymakers throughout Africa. We are extremely grateful for the financial support and partnership that you have provided to this project, and indeed, to all of PAI's work around reproductive health supplies. We feel confident that your investment in this outstanding advocacy tool is a strategic and worthwhile one, and look forward to continuing to work together to ensure universal access to reproductive health supplies.