

Forum 2006: TREAT AIDS NOW Session Summary

The session

The Treat AIDS Now consultation began with a presentation giving a brief overview of the campaign. It introduced different campaign areas that the support office had identified as obstacles to the 2010 target. The presentation was based on the recent TREAT AIDS NOW briefing update that is available to read at peopleandplanet.org/go/AIDS01

Following the presentation people were split into three groups based on levels of experience campaigning on AIDS. Each of these groups then discussed:

- what areas/topics of the campaign they found most exciting and would most like to campaign on.
- what campaign tactics and actions they enjoyed taking part in.
- what materials they thought were useful for campaigning on AIDS treatment.

During discussions, groups were asked to specifically bear in mind the following questions:

- How best can we engage student campaigners with varying levels of AIDS campaigning experience?
- How best can we ensure the campaign's access to treatment message is retained?

Campaign areas/topics

The topics that were discussed are listed below in order of preference:

1. Access to Generics
 - Targeting Pharma
 - TRIPS
 - Trade rules
2. Funding
 - targeting EU
 - 'global funding'
 - sources for additional devp finance
3. AIDS as a development issue

Broadly, the groups were most enthused about campaigning to increase access to generics. The interest around this particular campaign direction split fairly equally between the need to campaign on TRIPS and other trade rules and the need to tackle the actions of brand-name Pharmaceutical companies. Significantly, the feeling appeared to be that for a successful campaign both of these areas need to be addressed simultaneously.

The need for sustainable and increased funding also featured in discussions. A comprehensive approach was adopted with the EU, private companies and the UK government all popular potential targets.

Therefore, the main conclusion that can be drawn from this session is that participants were not happy to concentrate solely on one campaign area/topic and would like the Treat AIDS Now campaign to continue to offer possibilities to campaign on all barriers to access to treatment. The support office therefore should refrain from channelling resources into only one area.

Tactics and materials

Most tactics identified could be separated into two categories

- those designed to raise public awareness and support of the campaign
- those targeting specific actors mainly through specific lobbying tactics e.g.. Letter writing.

Perhaps the most telling conclusion to be drawn from the discussions about preferred tactics and materials was that individuals appeared to like a variety, as opposed to clustering their preferences. This was particularly apparent in the less experienced group, indicating that to engage new people the campaign needs to include a variety of tactics and actions.

Where next for TREAT AIDS NOW?

Considering the outcomes of the forum session the AIDS team back at the support office will be spending the next few months:

- continuing research into the campaign.
- working up a more comprehensive policy position on all campaign areas
- looking at the feasibility of targeting different actors i.e. Big pharma, EU and Private funders
- continue consulting on the on-going campaign development and receive input for the development of a new campaign pack to be ready for the Autumn term.
- writing, designing and publishing a new campaign pack subject to funding.