

SUSAN RICH
WALLACE GLOBAL FUND
PANEL VI

Wallace Global Fund Perspective on Adolescent Reproductive Health-Susan Rich, Focus End of Project Conference, November 19, 2001, National Press Club

The world of private philanthropy has grown tremendously during the last 5 years..... both the number and assets of private foundations have grown significantly. With the entrance of the Gates Foundation, the growth of Packard and Hewlett Foundations, in 1999 the total sum of private funds given for international population and reproductive health programs was 389 Million dollars ... rivaling that of USAID.

In some ways, the funding landscape changed fundamentally. In the old paradigm, private foundations gave money for the incubation and pre-testing of new or controversial initiatives...hoping that once they were “detoxified” or the kinks had been worked out, the bi-lateral or multi-lateral donors would “take the approach to scale”.

Of course the stock market performance of the last year has had a serious negative affect on the value of most foundations’ assets. A quick and dirty survey done in early October by the Funder’s Network revealed that foundations have lost an average of 21% of the value of their assets. Of course some have lost much more. One funder committed to this area lost 79%... and another lost 48% of the value of their assets.

At Wallace Global Fund we consider private funds to be precious because they are flexible and can be used in areas that are too controversial for public sector donors.

At Wallace Global we have moved from funding service delivery projects to giving core support to organizations that can conduct advocacy and move policy to make penetrating changes in key areas:

The first area is **Access to contraceptives and condoms for HIV prevention** Last year 63 countries reported shortages of contraceptives...and we know that even where contraceptives are generally available, adolescents often can't get them. This issue will continue as there is pressure for clients to pay for contraceptives and make programs financially sustainable.

Advocacy- We support advocacy in several forms. We support Advocacy for the facts-We give core support to Advocates For Youth because they stand firm on the tough issues, and promote a curriculum that gives accurate information in a time when "abstinence only" is the mantra of the Bush Administration.

And then there's Advocacy for resource mobilization-AFY has a group of international young people that conducts advocacy to increase the total funds available for international adolescent rep health work.

And there's advocacy by internet-Because over 66% of young women polled by Harrison Hickman in 2000 did not think that their right to have an abortion would be taken away during their lifetime, we support the Feminist

the dialogue about sexuality and will lead to better adolescent reproductive health.

But there are some real challenges to funding in this area.

First, we don't see many new initiatives that really grab us. It seems that we know a fair amount about peer-to-peer education and other approaches in discrete settings. What we don't yet grasp is how to scale-up successful approaches in any degree of magnitude. Probably because this is the hard slogging work of figuring out systems, structures and distribution. Perhaps because it entails the collaboration of donors, each with our own priorities, styles and turf issues.

Perhaps because it involves conducting sensitive work on a grand scale, such as the involvement of traditional authorities and parents..... and it means keeping the donors engaged during this hard slogging systemic work. And how do we get the necessary youth participation on a grand scale? And how do we work with youth... who by definition, are not a static population, but rather grow up and are replaced by a new group?

Some of the questions in the foundation community are: With the decline in private resources, should we support projects or give core support to implementing groups? Should private donors pool funds and collaborate and put out an RFP together? Should private foundations fund programs that are a strategic complement to US/AID programs?

Another question posed at our Funder's network meeting last week: Can donors begin to talk about sexuality and sexual topics in the way that we expect youth serving organizations and their societies to?