



Advancing HIV Prevention Research Requires 'Spirit Of Global Collaboration'

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"Microbicides, vaccines and other new approaches will one day join proven HIV-prevention strategies, including condoms, male circumcision and clean needles. How soon that day comes will depend on whether funders and the scientific community can develop the more collaborative approaches to [HIV](#) prevention research needed to address this fast-moving epidemic," Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise leaders Alan Bernstein, executive director, and Peter Piot, chair, write in a [Globe and Mail opinion piece](#). While noting the importance of boosting support for HIV treatment, Bernstein and Piot write, "Treatment alone will not end this pandemic. Smarter, more nimble, better-funded research is needed to build on recent successes and develop practical tools that can slow and one day end this epidemic." To accomplish this goal, the authors propose new collaborations between funding organizations and scientists. "Many countries with the scientific, financial and social resources necessary to invest in prevention research are still not doing so," they write.

"HIV-prevention research requires systematic, strategic approaches that maximize the scientific value of public-private partnerships, minimize risk for industry and permit the sharing of research findings and data," Bernstein and Piot add. "This requires a new spirit of global collaboration among funders, researchers, communities, local and national governments, and trial volunteers, as well as a new generation of HIV researchers, encouraged to enter this field by the conviction they can help end this epidemic" (8/10).

Foreign Aid Is In Decline

Writer Joshua Kurlantzick examines foreign aid in [Newsweek](#). After highlighting the most recent G8 summit, Kurlantzick writes, "The issue that had dominated the summit just five years ago, foreign aid, got little mention. Perhaps that's not surprising, given how many rich nations are busy bailing themselves out of the debt crisis, but it is emblematic of a wider malaise: the death of generosity itself." He notes Western countries' major aid pledges and the lack of follow up on these promises. Kurlantzick then opines on why foreign aid is not currently popular: "One big obstacle to aid is the politics of spending money on other nations' problems. ... What's more, Americans are not in a generous mood," he writes, citing a December poll.

"Recipient nations have not exactly helped themselves," he adds, highlighting examples of broken promises in the developing world. "Slashing foreign aid might seem like a necessary evil when countries such as Italy or Britain could need bailing out. But reversing the G8 pledges will have severe consequences," according to Kurlantzick. "In Afghanistan, and in many other countries, failed development can create failed states, which can breed radicalism and militancy. In Foreign Policy magazine's annual [Failed States Index](#), the three 'winners,' Somalia, Chad, and Sudan, all happen to be humanitarian disaster zones. They are also places where instability has allowed powerful militant organizations to establish themselves and eventually threaten local institutions and Western ones. That could necessitate the use of more hard power by G8 nations,

which is many times more expensive, in dollars and lives, than a proper investment in foreign aid," he concludes (8/9).

Small Organizations, Including Private Sector, Can Improve Developing World Sanitation

"The lack of access to sanitation is a huge challenge to the 1 billion people living in urban slums in Africa, Asia and Latin America," Danielle Nierenberg and Daniel Kandy, both with the Worldwatch Institute, write in a [Star-Ledger column](#) that examines how groups are working together to overcome this problem. "The dangers of inadequate sanitation infrastructure are well known - contaminated drinking water and disease transmission become difficult to avoid," Nierenberg and Kandy write. "Even more unfortunate is the fact that these dangers are often lethal to children, the elderly and the sick, the most vulnerable members of communities."

They continue, "While large intergovernmental organizations such as U.N. Habitat are working to help slum dwellers gain access to sanitation, there is also a role for smaller organizations, including those in the private sector, to address these issues," before pointing to the impact such products as the [Peepoo](#) bag, which breaks down waste and turns it into fertilizer, and collaborations between the nonprofit Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods ([SOIL](#)) and Oxfam to build dry toilets, can have on improving public access to clean sanitation in regions of the world (8/6).

Foreign Assistance 'Should Lead To Self-Reliance'

In a [Christian Science Monitor blog post](#), magazine editor John Yemma reflects on the value of "hands-on assistance" in development, following an [investigation](#) into two aid projects in Afghanistan by the Monitor's South Asia correspondent, Ben Arnoldy. Yemma contrasts the results of the aid projects Arnoldy examined, writing, "One - a shoddy, half-built canal [made possible by USAID funding, according to Arnoldy's piece] - is a fiasco. Consultation was minimal. No one's lives have been made better by it. Local residents are angry at Kabul and Washington," Yemma writes. "The other - a micro-hydro turbine that generates electricity - [funded by international donors, including the U.S., according to a [second piece](#) by Arnoldy] works. Villagers were part of the project from the outset. People are happy. They like the government," he adds.

"[A]s long as there has been foreign aid, there have been questions about whether it helps or hurts," Yemma continues, before noting, "Foreign aid is under scrutiny now in Afghanistan, where corruption runs deep." He adds, "For all its problems, however, development assistance has achieved notable successes during the last half century: the 'green revolution,' the fight to eradicate [malaria](#), the frequent fast deployment of relief shipments after a natural disaster like the Haiti earthquake. ... Aid should lead to self-reliance" (8/5).

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