



Evaluation Summary

EuroNGOs Conference 2009

“Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Times of Economic Crisis”

7 September 2009, Riga, Latvia

Background

The purpose of this year's conference and AGM was to develop a common understanding about the impact of the economic crisis on SRHR and SRHR funding among the EuroNGOs members and partners as well as to update participant on the outcomes of the Global NGO ICPD@15 Forum 2-4 September in Berlin, Germany, and to agree on appropriate action as a follow up of this forum.

The specific objectives were as follows:

1. Learning about the ways in which the economic downturn may affect SRHR spending, programmes, services, and health outcomes;
2. Increasing the capacity of the EuroNGOs to make the case to governments and financial institutions regarding the economic, medical and social benefits from investment in SRHR/Family planning, without forgetting that SRH care is an entitlement in its own rights;
3. Identifying actions that can support civil society in their watchdog role towards the commitments of governments, donors and international agencies;
4. Developing an action plan following the Global NGO ICPD@15 Forum 2-4 September in Berlin, Germany, with a special focus on the global economic crisis.

Attendees

More than 100 conference attendees and speakers included:

- Civil society and NGO representatives from both the 'old' and new Member States, the "developed" and the "developing" countries - European countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Ecuador, New Zealand, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Thailand, the USA, Uganda, Zambia;
- Experts from a variety of disciplines, including economics, research and advocacy, applying their expertise to the specific aims and challenges faced by the SRHR sector
- UNFPA and WHO;
- Private foundations.

Summary of Evaluation Results

To allow participants to assess the EuroNGOs Conference, evaluation questionnaires were distributed and returned after the conference. The response rate was around 20%, and thus can't be considered as representative. Anyhow, findings

allow drawing some conclusions of the overall assessment, and taking into account the rather low respondent rate, this report gives a special focus on individual comments and suggestions.

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on both the content of the meeting and the logistics. Overall, the conference theme was assessed as highly topical by all participants, and the overall assessment of the conference was rated as “excellent” or “very good” by 81% of the respondents, and “satisfactory” (14%) by respondents, with only one respondent rating it as “unsatisfactory”.

Especially the key note speeches and plenary sessions on the economic crisis were evaluated highly positively, and respondents valued the broader scope of the conference, reaching out to and embracing a broader health and development cooperation perspective, putting SRHR in a more general context. But in general, all sessions, including the session on outcomes of the Global ICPD@15 NGOs Forum in Berlin and the working groups dealing with both the outcomes of the conference as well as with SRHR and the economic crisis in more depth were generally rated in the “excellent” to “satisfactory” range.

Many respondents welcomed the numerous networking opportunities, information sharing, the excellent speakers on highly topic issues, and the involvement of more participants from the “Global South”. The main area of improvement to enhance future conferences mentioned was more time for discussion and Q & A and a less squeezed agenda. A number of suggestions were formulated as a continuation of the conference, with a focus on looking beyond 2014/2015 and to discuss, strategize and develop joint advocacy plans regarding the “post ICPD and MDGs era”.

Evaluation results by question

Overall assessment of the conference

50% of respondents rated the conference as “excellent”, 31% as “very good”, and only one respondent rated it as “unsatisfactory”. Those who expressed criticisms mainly stressed that the conference programme was a bit overloaded, not allowing for enough time for Q & A, and several urged on stricter time-keeping by the moderators. Several participants suggested inviting more representatives from the “Global South”, and one participant to increase the presence of politicians, especially MPs and MEPs (Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament.)

Quality of the hospitality, accommodation, and the suitability of conference facilities

Feedback regarding the conference venue and facilities was twofold. Although 81% of respondents indicated that the hospitality, accommodation and conference facilities were “excellent” or “very good”, and 14% rated them as “satisfactory”, many comments included the fact that the conference room was too small and sometimes lacking ventilation, there were some challenges regarding the microphones and sound system, and internet access was difficult in some rooms. On the other hand, many respondents praised the hospitality and the style of the conference venue.

Relevance of the conference theme

The relevance of the conference theme to their work was strongly endorsed by respondents, who in the majority rated it as a very actual and interesting topic relevant to their work (62% rated the conference theme as excellent, and 38% as very good.) Remarks from respondents included the fact that the presentations were

very good, but that it would have been useful to have more time for Q & A and more time for interaction around the main topics.

Quality of the documentation

The quality of the documentation was rated as “excellent” by 29%, “very good” by 40% and “satisfactory” by 26%, with one respondent rating it “unsatisfactory.” Criticism included the fact that the copies of the PowerPoint presentations provided were very difficult to read due to small letter types and too much information at one page, and that copies were not available for all presentations.

Key Note Speeches and Plenary sessions on the Economic Crisis

Respondents viewed all of the presentations related to the economic crisis as “valuable,” with nobody rating any session “unsatisfactory” or worse. Especially the key note session (53% “excellent,” 43% “very good”) and the session dealing with the impact of the economic crisis on SRHR (62% “excellent,” 33% “very good”), were rated extremely positively by the respondents. Many respondents especially appreciated the keynote speech on poverty and SRHR by Sara Seims, stating that it was excellent and set the scene for conference.

Comments regarding the session on the impact of the economic crisis on SRHR included “excellent presentations”, “I liked the critical approach”, “putting SRHR in the general context”, “they really brought new issues forward to our community – excellent panel”, “really interesting and good to hear from a broader health and aid perspective”, “more analysis needed to be done by us”.

The session dealing with evidence and the way forward was rated “excellent” to “satisfactory” (33% “excellent,” 52% “very good,” 14% “satisfactory”), although some respondents – once more – referred to the fact that more time should have been provided for discussion and one respondent stated that it was difficult to follow due to all the information provided already.

Plenary session on Outcomes of the Global ICPD@15 NGOS Forum in Berlin and ways forward

This session was overall rated as very good to satisfactory (15% “excellent,” 40% “very good,” 35% “satisfactory”), with however two respondents rating it as “unsatisfactory.” Participants valued the fact that this session provided a good opportunity to get an overview of the conference outcomes for those who could not attend the Berlin forum. However, it was noted that the participants would have preferred to focus on the conference theme of the economic crisis during the whole day, and others stated that it would have been good to have some visual on the main outcome points per region, since it was difficult to follow the oral summaries.

Working groups

Three working groups in the afternoon dealt with: 1. The Berlin declaration and Strategic Options for NGOs to achieve the ICPD Program of Action – South/North collaboration (rated “excellent” by two participants, “very good” by five and “satisfying” by two) 2. The Berlin declaration and Strategic options for NGOs to achieve the ICPD Program of Action – focus on European Collaboration (rated “excellent” by one participant, “very good” by three and “satisfactory” by one), and 3. SRHR and the economic crisis – Argumentation and making the case. (rated “excellent” by two participants, “very good” by three and “satisfying” by four).

In general, participants considered the working groups as having been interesting, allowing for interchange and providing good opportunities for exchanging ideas and structuring strategies. Anyhow, two respondents stated that they were wondering if

there would be ever be a follow up on a lot of good wording, and another respondent stated that the discussions were not really focussing on outcome discussions.

What should be the continuation of the conference?

A variety of respondents felt that there was a great need to look beyond 2014/2015 and to discuss, strategize and develop joint advocacy plans regarding the “post ICPD and MDG era”, and climate change was again mentioned by some respondents as a topic that needed further attention. All suggestions for a continuation of the conference are listed below:

- Looking how the lessons learned were adjusted to our everyday SRHR advocacy work.
- I would be interested seeing a coming thematic conference on climate change and SRHR as a new challenge and opportunity to take on.
- Discussing/strategizing/developing plans beyond 2014. Setting up a task force including South + Youth on the same topic.
- Information sharing on regular basis.
- Follow up of good ideas from present conference.
- To be sure we will go beyond Countdown 2015, to have the unified message to donors: “We sell health, and we do it fine/are the best.”
- Recommendations delivered from the last sessions should be included in the working plans and strategies of the attending organizations.
- Thinking about what’s coming after the MDGs.
- Towards Cairo plus 20 (or what comes next)?
- Taking advantage of the conjuncture.
- Greater focus on climate change negotiations/Copenhagen outcomes.
- A meeting of interchange between the North and South to continue with the agreements and discussions about the economic and environmental crisis and SRHR.

Additional comments or suggestions

This space was used by many respondents to thank the organizers for hosting the conference and for their hospitality. Additionally, some of the themes already suggested in earlier questions were taken up again, mainly the suggestions to have less speakers and allow more time for discussion and Q & A and to invite more participants and speakers from the “Global South.”

Responses were as follows:

- I valued the space to meet with many of our grantees on 1/1.
- More speakers from the south on the panel.
- Invite (more) people from the “global south”, in particular from Asia + Sub-Saharan Africa to learn from them.
- I thought the theme “Economic Crisis” was very interesting! But I would hope it would be a clear theme going through the whole conference. The first part was most interesting and relevant but the second part of conference did not really have any reference to the “Economic Crisis,” which was disappointing
- Time schedule less “full.”
- Chair must be stricter on time-keeping.
- Lunch on day 1 should have been buffet to keep us on schedule.
- I would like us to be more brave, angry and creative in our messages. Make sex sexy!

- Speakers should be advised to be to the point and leave out the obvious, they do not need to use the arguments on us.
- I would be glad to see that Eastern Europe and Central Asia are still a priority for the “north.”
- Thank you for the great organization and the wonderful hospitality and great day.
- Great meeting! Thank you!
- As always, a really high calibre conference with excellent speakers and sharing of information. It was really well-organize and a beautiful venue. Thank you for all your hard work.
- Thank you for all/everything.
- I just want to thank the organizers for organizing this conference, for the hospitality, for offering this opportunity to network. Great job!
- I’m glad I came.



EVALUATION FORM EURONGOS CONFERENCE

7 September 2009

Riga, Latvia

The organisers thank you for your participation. In order to evaluate the relevance of this conference, and to improve the quality of future initiatives, we would be grateful if you could fill out this brief questionnaire, and return it to the EuroNGOs Secretariat. If you do not return this form immediately after the conference, please send your completed form to the EuroNGOs secretariat by fax # +32 (0) 2 250 09 69 or electronically, email: mirja.leibnitz@eurongos.org by 21 September 2009. A summary of the responses will be appended to the final report and published on the EuroNGOs website. Thank you!

About the person completing this form (optional):

Name:

Organisation and Title:

Email address:

Please use the following rating scale

- (1) - Excellent
- (2) - Very good
- (3) - Satisfactory
- (4) - Unsatisfactory
- (5) - Poor

Questions: Please circle

1. Summarize your overall assessment of the conference. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

2. Please provide us with your opinion particularly with respect to hospitality, accommodation, and the suitability of conference facilities.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

3. Is the main theme of the conference relevant to your work? Would you add anything to the conference agenda? Please provide us with any other comments about the agenda.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

4. Quality of the documentation:

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

5. Please evaluate the following sessions. Explain why you think they were important/not important; relevant/not relevant:

Key Note Addresses

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Impact of economical Crises on SRHR

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

The Way Forward – Challenges and Opportunities

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Session III – The Global ICPD@15 NGO Forum in Berlin – Outcomes and Ways Forward

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Session IV - Working Groups

Theme 1: The Berlin declaration and Strategic Options for NGOs to achieve the ICPD Program of Action - focus on North – South Collaboration

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Theme 2: The Berlin declaration on Strategic Options for NGOs to achieve the ICPD Program of Action - focus on European Collaboration

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Theme 3: SRHR and the Economic Crisis – Argumentation and Making the Case

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

6. Feedback from the working groups and closing session

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

7. In your opinion what should be the continuation of the conference?

8. Do you have additional comments or suggestions?

Thank you for your cooperation!