

# AFRICA NEEDS RECTAL MICROBICIDES TOO

## STRATEGIES TO ENSURE AFRICA IS ON THE RECTAL MICROBICIDE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY MAP

**AFRICAN LED, AFRICAN INSPIRED—AFRICA FOR RECTAL MICROBICIDES**

### BACKGROUND:

Unprotected anal intercourse (AI) plays an important role in African HIV epidemics. Until recently, rectal microbicides (RMs) have not been part of the broader HIV prevention agenda in Africa, due in part to the denial that AI takes place among heterosexual men and women and to the pervasive homophobia that has criminalized and/or negated the existence of gay men and other men who have sex with men. IRMA (International Rectal Microbicide Advocates) launched Project ARM—Africa for Rectal Microbicides to ensure Africa is on the world's RM research and advocacy agenda.

### METHODS:

In December 2011, 40 individuals from 10 African and 3 non-African countries participated in a two-day strategy meeting, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Participants shared and considered diverse African perspectives, developing priority actions for RM research and advocacy grounded and sustained in African countries.

### RESULTS:

“On The Map: Ensuring Africa's Place in Rectal Microbicide Research and Advocacy,” published in April 2012, defines seven RM research and advocacy priority actions specific to Africa. Top among these priorities are:

- The GLAM campaign (Global Lube Access Mobilisation) to increase access to condom-compatible lubricants for Africans who engage in AI;
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours Surveys documenting AI practices and perspectives; and
- The development of educational tools on anal sex/anal health.

### JOIN PROJECT ARM:

Since the “On The Map” strategy document was released, IRMA has been reaching out to individuals and organizations to join Project ARM efforts. All interested Africans and allies are invited to help ensure Africa is on the RM map. If interested, visit IRMA at [www.rectalmicrobicides.org](http://www.rectalmicrobicides.org) and send an email to [rectalmicro@gmail.com](mailto:rectalmicro@gmail.com).



**Our diverse sexualities in Africa shouldn't be defined only by the prevention tools we have available. HIV prevention tools must be adapted to our sexualities.**

**Alliance Nikuze, Rwanda**



**The tag line for GLAM sums it up. Whenever someone says “condoms,” we say “And Lube.” You cannot say one without the other. Access to condom-compatible lubricant is deplorable all across Africa—it's unacceptable, and we are working to change that.**

**Tian Johnson, South Africa**



**Africans need rectal microbicides and they need to be part of the advocacy, research and development processes that are essential to creating products that are not only safe and effective but acceptable and accessible too. As co-principal investigator of the Microbicide Trials Network, I pledge our full support for the efforts of Project ARM.**

**Ian McGowan, United States**



**In Zimbabwe and across Africa, we are struggling to get people living with HIV into care and treatment. We have to do much better, and we have to do much better on the prevention side. I see a rectal microbicide as an important prevention strategy for Africa to embrace.**

**Martha Tholanah, Zimbabwe**



**We can't forget about the issue of human rights and criminalisation. If a gay man is not safe to be himself in any African country, he won't be able to gain access to rectal microbicides once they are available. A rectal microbicide will get dusty on the shelf if people are afraid for their lives.**

**Gift Trapence, Malawi**