

TAC will have to close in January 2012 - Unless the Global Fund meets its contractual agreement

By *moderator*

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The TAC is an award winning South African social movement campaigning to save the lives of people living with HIV and TB. In the 12 years since it was established TAC has helped to save and better millions of people's lives in South Africa. It has also contributed to the deepening of democracy in South Africa, through its use of the courts, advocacy and promotion of human rights constitutionalism. Internationally, TAC has been one of the most influential AIDS activist movements; an organisation that has catalysed action on HIV/AIDS across the world. Yet today TAC faces a real threat of imminent closure due to a dire funding crisis.

This newsletter is not to cry wolf. We face a real crisis. TAC depends on a five year grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) for a large portion of its work. We are one of the sub-recipients of what is called the Round 6 grant. In July 2011 we were supposed to receive a R6.5 million tranche (\$760,000). However, primarily due to poor administration by the Primary Recipient, the National Department of Health, the payment of the tranche to all sub-recipients continues to be delayed.

The consequence of this is that TAC faces an acute cash flow crisis. Unless the tranche due is paid to TAC by the first week of January, we will go into an unsustainable deficit in February 2012, which means that we would have to retrench all our staff and close our offices at the end of January 2012.

TAC has helped save one and a half millions lives. But TAC is not just about its past achievements. Our organisation continues to do critical work to alleviate the HIV and TB epidemics. For example in the last few months we have helped develop the new National Strategic Plan on HIV, TB and STIs (2012-2016), resolved a shortage of a critical medicine for treating a fatal opportunistic infection and brought together clinicians, government and civil society organisations to take action against the TB epidemic. Our HIV and TB policy briefings are influential and are read and debated by thousands of people.

Our volunteers distribute over five million condoms a year and our treatment literacy practitioners provide information about HIV treatment to patients in clinics in much of the country. Our 130 branches identify problems in clinics and try to get local health authorities to work effectively.

We exposed the Tara Klamp debacle and we have won numerous complaints at the Advertising Standards Authority against quack health practitioners. We have been an outspoken civil society voice on diverse issues, from the Medicines Control Council's recent court case against Adcock Ingram to denouncing the Protection of State Information Bill.

Our members have ensured that the justice system has prosecuted murderers and rapists in places like Khayelitsha. We publish [Equal Treatment](#), arguably the best popular health magazine in the developing world.

We also need to exist in order to enforce several court orders we have won over the years and to fight upcoming court cases, such as one against Christ Embassy, a church whose public advertisements have in the past claimed that they can cure AIDS.

We have in the last year also started two fledgling websites, [Quackdown](#) and [TB Online](#). Our partner organisation, Community Media Trust, uses our global fund money to produce the brilliant Siyayinqoba Beat-it television series.

All of this essential work is at risk of coming to an abrupt end if the GFATM does not fulfil its commitments. As a grant-funded organisation we just cannot afford to run a deficit, despite the fact that through the support of our other donors we are otherwise solvent and spending according to agreed budgets and work-plans.

Besides the fact that over 230 activist organisers will lose their income, the closure of TAC would be a setback for South African democracy.

This crisis is not of our making. Our finances are a model of transparency and good governance. All our audits have been clean and are [available on our website](#).

Tomorrow the Global Fund and Department of Health will meet to try to resolve the impasse. We call on them to make sure that the grant continues to operate and that all the sub-recipients are paid by the first week of January.

Please support TAC by writing to the Department of Health and the Global Fund, demanding that they finalise the next tranche and ensure the sub-recipients are paid. Please email the Director General of Health, Ms Precious Matsotso (mqadin@health.gov.za), and the Director of the Global Fund, Michel Kazatchkine (michel.kazatchkine@theglobalfund.org).

Please also make a tax deductible donation to TAC via [Greater Good](#). US donors can give via the South Africa Development Fund on [Network for Good](#).

For enquiries please contact Nonkosi Khumalo, TAC's chairperson, on 074 104 2450.

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