



Using innovative  
female condom  
advocacy to  
improve awareness  
and catalyze change

PROTECTION OPTIONS FOR WOMEN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

POW PDP | 2011-2015



上海达华医疗器械有限公司  
Shanghai Dahua Medical Apparatus Co., Ltd

## The POW PDP Partners

The Protection Options for Women Product Development Partnership (POW PDP) was created to promote sexual and reproductive health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS, by expanding access to the Woman's Condom. The POW PDP was supported by funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2011 to 2015.



**PATH**, an international nonprofit health organization, led decisions related to manufacturing, market development, and advocacy. Through PATH's country program offices in China and South Africa, PATH staff worked directly with country partners on market research, market tests of uptake and acceptability, and advocacy to raise awareness for female condoms in general, and for the Woman's Condom specifically.



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**Shanghai Dahua Medical Apparatus Co., Ltd (DAHUA)** in China led Woman's Condom manufacturing production scale-up activities. They also led market development activities for the private sector in China. PATH licensed the Woman's Condom to DAHUA for manufacturing and commercialization.



**CONRAD** is a United States-based nonprofit organization that facilitates rapid development of safe, acceptable, affordable products for contraception, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections. CONRAD is the regulatory sponsor of the Woman's Condom and developed and implemented the clinical study, A Randomized Cross-Over Study of Vaginal Semen Exposure and Clinical Failure Comparing the PATH Woman's Condom and the FC2 Female Condom. This study was funded directly from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to CONRAD.



**Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)** is a health research agency within the US government. NICHD conducts and supports clinical trials and other types of research that explore health and the process of human development from conception to old age. NICHD developed and implemented the clinical study, A Multicenter, Open-Label, Non-Comparative Study of the Safety and Contraceptive Efficacy of the Woman's Condom. Data from this study will become part of the Woman's Condom technical dossier and will assist in regulatory submissions. This study was funded directly by the US government through NICHD.

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# A changing context for female condom advocacy

Rates of unintended pregnancy, maternal mortality, and HIV infection among women are unacceptably high in many countries around the world—and the female condom is the only woman-initiated technology that provides dual protection from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. Female condoms also offer other benefits: they provide a contraceptive protection option free of hormones or side effects, they can be used only as needed and without seeing a health provider, and for some couples they enhance communication and sexual pleasure. Female condoms also empower women with a tool to initiate safer sex.

While female condoms have been available for 20 years, for most of that time availability and use around the world has remained low. For example, in 2013 in sub-Saharan Africa—a region where rates of unintended pregnancies and STI/HIV infection are alarmingly high—only one female condom was available for every eight women of reproductive age. Myths and misperceptions abound, and few large-scale campaigns have sought to change attitudes. Although many global frameworks and national policies recognize female condoms as a vital component of family planning (FP) and STI/HIV prevention programming, most country governments and donors have not chosen to implement or finance these policies. Investment to support large-scale training, programming, and distribution has been insufficient, and female condoms have been largely omitted from traditional FP and STI/HIV prevention programs.

In the last decade, however, the landscape for female condoms has begun to change. New products—like the Woman's Condom—are coming to market and rekindling interest among decision-makers, health providers, media outlets, and consumers. Governments and donors are taking a fresh look at the female condom and its unique role in prevention programming. Global distribution of female condoms has steadily increased overall, reaching more than 60 million units in 2012. Several female condom advocacy and programming initiatives have launched, spurring additional momentum and seizing new opportunities to strengthen advocacy efforts to expand access.



Innovative female condoms (left to right): Cupid (India); Panty Condom (Colombia); FC2 female condom (US/Malaysia); Woman's Condom (China) with and without dissolving capsule. Photo: PATH/Danny Ngan



Woman's Condom branding and packaging from multiple countries. Photo: PATH/Patrick McKern



Participants at Women Deliver 2012 share in the joy of haute couture fashions inspired by female condoms. Photo: PATH

A sign of  
surging interest  
in female condoms:

## Woman's Condom named a Top 50 Technology and Innovation

In 2012, the Woman's Condom was named one of the top Technologies and Innovations in the **Women Deliver Top 50 contest**, an initiative to identify the most inspiring solutions for women's and girls' health. Women Deliver received hundreds of submissions from 103 countries around the world. A selection committee of experts and advocates from leading global nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations narrowed the applications to 125 finalists, which were then posted online and voted on by thousands of voters.

The female condom is the only  
**woman-initiated technology**  
that provides dual protection  
from unintended pregnancy and  
sexually transmitted infections,  
including HIV

# The POW PDP's approach to advocacy

Against this backdrop of renewed global interest in female condoms, in 2011 the Prevention Options for Women Product Development Partnership (POW PDP) began its own advocacy initiative to increase female condom awareness and spur greater recognition of female condoms in policies, programs, and media outlets. POW PDP advocacy targeted both decision-makers—including donors and policymakers—at the global level and in countries, specifically China and South Africa. While the PDP's market-shaping work at the country level prioritized the Woman's Condom product, its advocacy efforts focused on promoting awareness and creating an enabling environment for the entire product category of female condoms.

The POW PDP designed its advocacy strategy based on PATH's 10-part framework, a methodical approach to achieving policy goals through advocacy. In designing both global and country activities, the POW PDP focused on using creative tactics, tailoring evidence for specific audiences, deploying champions with the power to influence decision-makers, and leveraging strong partnerships. The strategy was guided by three key approaches to catalyze change:

## APPROACH 1

### Bringing local voices to national and global policymakers

Increasingly, decision-makers want to gauge the attitudes and demands of constituencies and citizens before investing political and financial resources in female condoms. To provide evidence of demand for female condoms, the POW PDP and partner organizations spearheaded several creative initiatives that brought community voices to national and global policymakers. In 2012, they supported the launch of **Global Female Condom Day** (GFCD), which created a new opportunity to elevate the voices and perspectives of local organizations and individuals in policy dialogue. And in 2013, the first-ever international female film competition, the **"Female Condoms Are\_" film contest**, mobilized dozens of filmmakers around the world to share their powerful, personal stories about female condoms.

The POW PDP, contest partners, champions, and advocates have used these videos at policy forums and community events to connect decision-makers and opinion leaders with the stories and voices of women and men who urgently want and need better access to female condoms.





## APPROACH 2

### Generating and using evidence to inform advocacy and policy

The most effective advocacy efforts use evidence to inform issues, so the POW PDP strategically used data to shape decision-makers' perceptions about female condoms. The POW PDP was in a unique position to be able to leverage its own data generated by the project for policy and advocacy purposes. In China, for example, they used results from a series of market tests assessing acceptability and uptake of the Woman's Condom to explore interest among government officials in purchasing and programming. The POW PDP then packaged the data into summaries of key findings from each market test and organized workshops with national and provincial leaders from FP and HIV/STI prevention programs.

In Kenya, the POW PDP conducted a **qualitative assessment** of the facilitators and barriers to integrating female condoms in HIV prevention programs. The final report included recommended actions for policymakers, health providers, and advocates to improve integrated programming in Kenya. Report results were disseminated widely, including distribution to stakeholders in Kenya and at the International AIDS Conference in order to inform the development of future advocacy agendas.



## APPROACH 3

### Improving attitudes and changing perceptions of female condoms

Myths and misperceptions surround female condoms throughout the world, so the POW PDP also sought out opportunities for decision makers and users to hear, see, and interact with female condoms in new, “outside the box” contexts. A key example was a female condom fashion show in Seattle, where local partners designed outfits inspired by—or made of—female condoms. The fashion show presented female condoms as hip and fashionable and generated “buzz” and a slew of **media articles**.

In South Africa, advocacy partner WISH Associates collected **digital stories** from men and women about their experiences using the Woman's Condom. Participants wrote and recorded their own personal, heartfelt stories. WISH Associates screened these digital stories at policy forums to offer South African decision-makers a new way to think about and appreciate female condoms.

The POW PDP also cultivated and deployed influential individual champions in China and South Africa to amplify positive messaging, debunk myths and misperceptions, and reach new audiences. Female Condom champions participated in the POW PDP's innovative initiatives, including GFCD and film screenings, and also engaged in advocacy in their own spheres of influence, including traditional and new media and special events.





# Global Female Condom Day: elevating voices, raising the profile of female condoms

## POW PDP advocacy partners

Partnerships were critical in advancing the POW PDP's global female condom advocacy initiatives, including Global Female Condom Day. Global partners included:



Universal Access to Female Condoms  
Joint Programme (UAFC), Netherlands.  
<http://www.femalecondoms4all.org/>



National Female Condom Coalition (NFCC), USA.  
<http://www.nationalfcccoalition.org/>



Center for Health and Gender Equity  
(CHANGE), USA.  
<http://genderhealth.org/>



Association for Reproductive and  
Family Health (ARFH), Nigeria.  
<http://arfh-ng.org/>

In 2012, the POW PDP, along with NFCC, UAFC, and CHANGE, launched the first Global Female Condom Day (GFCD), an annual day of education and advocacy for female condoms in countries around the world. Held on September 16, GFCD brings together diverse organizations with an interest in health and rights, provides an opportunity for coordinated action and advocacy, and elevates the visibility of female condoms, especially for national decision-makers. Today this one-of-a-kind event for female condoms is internationally recognized and celebrated, giving supporters, advocates and users a platform to band together to take local action, share stories, and build momentum.

To initiate GFCD, the POW PDP and partners created a comprehensive strategy to raise awareness about the event, recruit supporters, and equip participants with information and practical tools. The POW PDP supported development of the brand and an easy-to-navigate website ([www.femalecondomday.org](http://www.femalecondomday.org)) that could serve as a single source of information, inspiration, and materials for advocates, individuals, and leaders.

Organizations and individuals across the world responded enthusiastically to the inaugural GFCD. They organized a range of female condom advocacy activities, including policy roundtables, media briefings, road shows, community performances, and marches. Social media connected advocates and amplified female condom messaging. Photos of events, real-time messages, and tweets reminded participants that they were part of a global event.

Since the inaugural event, GFCD has invigorated stakeholders by offering a shared platform for communication and advocacy. New partners have joined the GFCD organizing committee, including ARFH. The initiative has mobilized thousands of supporters worldwide, created media visibility for female condoms like never before, and provided opportunities to advocate with decision-makers to strengthen commitment. Going forward, GFCD will remain a valuable mobilizing moment for female condom supporters, as well as a launch pad for strengthened and sustained advocacy.



## ANNUAL GFCD HIGHLIGHTS

**2012: Cocktails, condoms, and costumes**

For the first GFCD, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health organizations and advocates from around the world took action in their communities to increase awareness, access, and use of female condoms. PATH held a fashion show in its Seattle office dubbed Cocktails, Condoms, and Costumes that brought together 150 attendees to see models in original designs adorned with or inspired by female condoms.

**2013: Female condom films**

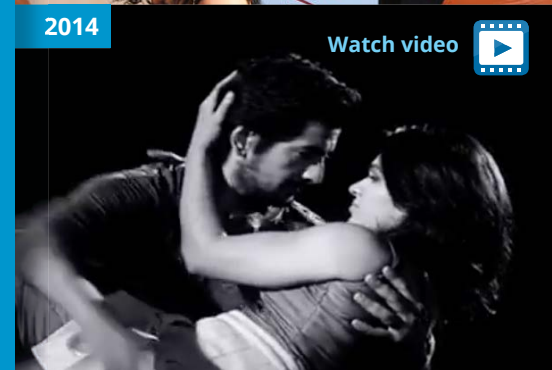
The POW PDP and GFCD partners hosted screenings of "Female Condoms Are \_\_\_\_" films and sponsored community discussions. In China, four universities organized film screenings and dialogues, where nearly 500 students viewed the videos and debated the advantages of, and barriers to, female condoms. In South Africa, POW PDP advocacy partner WISH Associates held a film screening at the University of Cape Town that featured special guests, including the contest's "honorable mention" (Female Condoms Are About Self Love) filmmaker, Nawaal Deane, and Female Condom Ambassador Kgomotso Motsunyane.

**2014: Dance4Demand**

The wildly popular Dance4Demand campaign encouraged people to dance on GFCD, document their events, and share their video footage and messages through social media. The POW PDP developed a toolkit to guide dancers, licensed and shared a song to be used worldwide, and supported a global social media push that ran before, during, and after the event (#Dance4Demand, #GFCD2014, #femalecondoms).



In July, the Dance4Demand campaign kicked off with a dance party at the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia. On GFCD, PATH offices in China, Kenya, India, South Africa, and Zambia organized dance competitions, choreographed dance events, and held parties. Numerous partners helped to extend the celebration's reach. In the United States, PATH's Seattle office orchestrated a Dance4Demand flash mob that drew local and media attention and complemented other GFCD events taking place in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Washington, DC.



Overall, hundreds of organizations and individuals in nearly 60 countries endorsed GFCD or pledged action in 2014, demonstrating that GFCD is truly a global phenomenon.

**2015: Dance, dialogue, and more**

Back by popular demand, Dance4Demand remained one of the featured actions for GFCD 2015. PATH offices in Uganda, Vietnam, Kenya, India, and Zambia organized activities ranging from dance events, female condom demonstrations, community dialogues, and essay writing contests, to developing and disseminating infographics.

PATH Uganda organized a lively Dance4Demand competition attended by Ministry of Health (MOH) officials, implementing partners, users, young people, and the media. Several television stations and media outlets covered the event, and the MOH pledged support to the advocacy efforts to increase demand, access, and use of female condoms in Uganda.



2013

2014

2014

Watch video



# Female Condoms Are\_\_\_ film contest: the big picture for female condoms

When the POW PDP was founded, few opportunities existed for female condom users to demonstrate demand and rectify misperceptions, especially ones targeting policymakers, donors, and programmers. So the POW PDP looked for creative ways to bring new voices to the female condom conversation.

To bring the issue to life for decision-makers, in 2012 the POW PDP, together with UAFC, NFCC, and CHANGE, launched the **“Female Condoms Are \_\_\_” film contest**, a global competition that called for filmmakers of all experience levels to share stories about how female condoms can enhance people’s lives and be used in a sex-positive manner. Contest organizers were excited about the advocacy and communication potential of film because it allowed users and advocates to “humanize” female condoms for policymakers and other key audiences. The films could also provide a strong “ripple effect” beyond original viewings if subsequently shared and distributed at local events and through social media.

To solicit quality entries, the organizers created a website and supporting materials including a flyer, official contest rules, and frequently asked questions. They conducted email outreach to film schools, nonprofit organizations, and advocates and promoted the contest on social media including Facebook, Twitter (#FemaleCondomsAre) and LinkedIn. Prize money was offered for first (US\$5,000), second (US\$2,000), and third place (US\$500).

The contest drew 27 submissions from 12 countries on five continents. Guest judges selected four winning films, including a tie for third place, which were announced at a screening at the Women Deliver 2013 conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



**27** SUBMISSIONS  
FROM **12** COUNTRIES  
ON **5** CONTINENTS





After a screening, the mayor of Bulawayo – Zimbabwe's second largest city – promised to ensure local clinics were stocked with female condoms



Watch all finalists at  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/globalhealthcatalyst>

After unveiling the winners, contest organizers, contest participants, and female condom advocates around the world used the films to raise awareness and build support for female condoms among policymakers, health professionals, the media, and potential users. The films have been shared widely online through social media and screened at a number of conferences targeting female condom decision-makers. In addition, the POW PDP and contest partners created a film-screening toolkit/memory card to help local advocates host "offline" community-based screenings and discussions.

The film contest and accompanying events and social media have reached thousands of target audience members in countries as diverse as Ireland, Malaysia, and Mozambique. More than 150 downloaded the web toolkit, and the films collectively have been viewed more than one million times on YouTube. Hundreds of policymakers, donors, and advocates in dozens of countries have attended film screenings and discussions.

Anecdotal reports indicate that the films have directly affected policymakers' decisions. After a screening for hairstylists and taxi drivers organized by Youthhood in Zimbabwe, the mayor of Bulawayo —Zimbabwe's second largest city— promised to ensure that local clinics were fully stocked with female condoms. And during a female condom workshop in South Africa, policymakers described the forum as their first encounter with positive media on female condoms. The films helped create a comfortable discussion space for the policymakers, and at the end of the workshop, government officials vowed to improve tendering procedures to increase access to a range of female condom products.



# AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

1ST



## FIRST PLACE

Pathfinder International's short film about two young activists in Mozambique. ***Female Condoms Are My Power, My Protection, My Pleasure!*** features Deolinda and Benjamin, two activists with a passion for educating their peers about female condoms.

*"I believe in the incredible power of film to cultivate conversation about the great issues of our time... I [also] hope our film will start a dialogue about the important role men and boys play in empowering the women and girls in their lives."*

—Jaime Jacobsen, director of Pathfinder International's first-place winner, *Female Condoms Are My Power, My Protection, My Pleasure!*

2ND



## SECOND PLACE

***Female Condoms Are Preferable***, a docu-drama from Cameroon by Community Human Rights and Advocacy Centre (CHRAC), shows the difficulties married women can face in negotiating family planning options with their husband, and the journey one couple takes in agreeing to use female condoms.

*"It is our hope that when audiences view our film they will change their sexual attitudes towards women. That they will see the need to use the female condom as a protective tool for both women and men in terms of HIV/AIDS, STIs, and unwanted pregnancies."*

— CHRAC

3RD



## THIRD PLACE

Two films tied for third. ***Female Condoms Are Pretty Nice*** from Malaysia profiles a young Malaysian couple as they explore their options for protection and finds that female condoms are appealing. ***Female Condoms Are a Woman's Bargaining Power*** from Kenya features three Kenyan female condom advocates from a reproductive health drop-in center in Mombasa who share how to use the product and explain the bargaining power it gives to women.



Watch the winning films at  
<http://sites.path.org/rhtech/female-condom-film/>

# China: conducting advocacy to build interest for female condoms

Facing limited knowledge and awareness of female condoms in China, the POW PDP confronted a major challenge: how to raise awareness about female condoms, particularly O'Lavie, which is the Chinese brand name for the Woman's Condom, among those individuals who could impact decisions about distribution and increase acceptance among target audiences. Making female condoms available through government family planning and HIV prevention programs was an important distribution strategy, so the PDP focused its advocacy efforts on a few priority groups:

- National and provincial policymakers
- Sexual and reproductive health training centers and reproductive health programs
- Traditional and social media contacts
- Potential consumers

Over a four-year period, the POW PDP created and educated a network of policy and technical stakeholders about female condom developments in China and around the world. This group included Chinese policymakers and sexual and reproductive health decision-makers, scientists, and media influencers who could increase the visibility and credibility of female condoms. Through a listserv and social media, the PDP packaged programmatic and research information about female condoms, including information about global initiatives for female condom programming, developments around quality guidelines and standardized research protocols, breaking news, and research summaries. They formed a cadre of female condom champions—key researchers and opinion leaders—who reached more than 10,000 participants with female condom updates through over 80 national and regional workshops and conferences in China.

To create a public dialogue on the role of female condoms in sexual and reproductive health, the POW PDP developed partnerships with organizations focused on the sexual needs of young unmarried people and other vulnerable populations—including Marie Stopes International/China (MSIC), China Youth Network, China Family Planning Association, Women's Network Against AIDS, and China Red Cross Association. In addition to the work of several of these organizations in distributing O'Lavie condoms through the O'Lavie market tests, these organizations played an active role in informing and augmenting the PDP's research through a series of stakeholder

Female condom champions in China reached more than **10,000 participants** through over 80 national and regional workshops and conferences

workshops around the country. Raising awareness among potential consumers, especially young people who could be early adopters, was also an important consumer marketing strategy, so the POW PDP targeted university students at 40 universities and technical colleges with information about female condoms using a range of activities, including “awareness days” (often used by decision-makers to deliver key public health messages) and social media.





## SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

## O'Lavie mascot at World AIDS Day 2014 celebrations

During World AIDS Day 2014, the POW PDP and partners introduced O'Lavie™\* to policymakers and influencers through an O'Lavie mascot—a counterpart to a more widely known male condom mascot. The O'Lavie mascot attended public ceremonies organized by United Nations agencies, the National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention (NCAIDS), the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Youth Core group. More than 200 stakeholders participated in the celebrations, which included government speeches and youth-led singing and poetry readings. As a result, the World Health Organization (WHO) China office purchased O'Lavie samples for additional awareness-raising and education programs.

*\* O'Lavie is a trademark of the Shanghai Dahua Medical Apparatus Company*



O'Lavie mascot raising awareness at World AIDS Day 2014 in Beijing. Photo: PATH



"I Jump For Love"—young people participate in the first outdoor activity combining sexual and reproductive health and HIV knowledge and interactive games. O'Lavie representatives provided products and demonstrations. Photos: PATH

## "I Jump for Love": female condom media coverage

Targeting a network of more than 100 health reporters, the POW PDP created a number of high-visibility events designed to draw media coverage of female condoms and O'Lavie.

On Youth Valentine's Day 2014, United Nations agencies and local community groups hosted "I Jump for Love," an interactive youth game that played on the massive popularity of chess among young people in China. To "win" the chess game, young people acted as the pawns on a life-sized chess board, throwing dice and then responding to questions about sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. At the event, the POW PDP distributed O'Lavie samples and gave product demonstrations.

Media attendance at this event led to "Female Condom Attracted Attention," an article in the popular news outlet Chinanews.com that was reposted to more than 30 additional Chinese media outlets.



## Sohu Health online survey and educational campaign

In 2013, the POW PDP partnered with the Chinese media group Sohu.com—one of the top 50 news and media groups in the world—to promote female condoms to its users. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of Sohu Health's users are between 19 and 40 years old, and the site focuses on audiences who care about health, engage with technology to access health information, and have access to disposable income.

Around World AIDS Day, Sohu Health promoted female condoms using the theme, "More Options for Women to Prevent HIV/AIDS." During that time, 13,000 individuals participated in a Sohu Health online survey on female condoms. The survey found that, while 82 percent had never seen a female condom, 57 percent were willing to try one. Women were primarily interested in female condoms as a dual protection method. During the 10-day health education campaign, more than 1 million viewers accessed information about the O'Lavie Woman's Condom.

**男女避孕套区别:**

**女用避孕套与男用避孕套的区别**

项目	男用避孕套	女用避孕套
使用对象	男性	女性
材料	乳胶	聚氨酯
使用方式	套在男性阴茎上	套在女性阴道内
使用部位	阴茎根部至龟头	阴道口至宫颈
保护范围	仅能预防阴茎插入	能预防阴道内/外感染、宫外孕等
使用寿命	每次性交一次	可重复使用

扫描二维码 了解更多女性安全套信息

**专家这样说**

**邹燕**  
国家人口计生委科研所副主任医师

**武俊清**  
上海市计划生育科研所研究员

**女用避孕套优势:**

- 最大优势是“双重保护”，避孕同时预防性传播疾病、艾滋病的作用。
- 套体面积大，对预防性传播疾病特别是艾滋病提供极为有效的屏障。
- 用于绝经性不孕的辅助治疗。
- 提高部分人群的生活质量，如早发性性，使用女用安全套可减缓射精速度，提高性生活质量。

**女用避孕套公众认可度:**

部分研究对象对新型女用安全套这一新鲜事物纷纷表示愿意尝试。但是，少部分研究对象接受程度较低。

**本认可的主要原因:**

- 体积太大，穿脱不方便。
- 需自己涂抹润滑剂，不方便。
- 对正确使用方法没有信心。
- 需自己涂抹润滑剂，不方便。

Results from the massive Sohu Health survey and campaign were available for download via a QR code.



Young men from Nanjing University (top) and women from Guangxi University (bottom) demonstrate their impressive dancing skills in support of Dance4Demand.

Photos: still shots from Dance4Demand videos

## Global Female Condom Day (GFCD) 2013

PATH is a co-founder of Global Female Condom Day (GFCD), a coordinated day of action celebrated on September 16 to increase knowledge, availability, and use of female condoms around the world. In 2013, the POW PDP and the China Youth Network organized 10 days of activities between GFCD and World Contraception Day (September 26). Activities included a social media outreach campaign that reached more than 18,000 people, as well as film screenings featuring videos that had been entered into the "Female Condoms Are\_\_\_\_\_" film contest. Nearly 500 students viewed the films and discussed the potential role of female condoms in protecting health for women and men. In 2014, the POW PDP supported students at several universities to participate in Dance4Demand, a creative initiative to mobilize advocates to showcase the immense demand for female condoms.

# South Africa: reinvigorating the female condom movement

## Confronting a unique and challenging advocacy environment for female condoms

In South Africa, the POW PDP faced a unique set of awareness and policy challenges. Unlike many other countries, including China, South Africa supports one of the largest public-sector female condom programs in the world. The country has approved a number of national policies and strategies that call for increased availability of female condoms. These include the 2012 National Contraception and Fertility Planning Policy and Service Delivery Guidelines, which recognized the critical role of female condoms for contraception and dual protection, and the 2012–2016 National Strategic Plan for HIV/STIs/TB, which set female condom procurement

targets at a record high of 25 million units in 2016/2017.

However, in spite of South Africa's leadership on female condom programming, major challenges still surround implementation of its policy and financing commitments. South Africa's supply of female condoms has remained inadequate to meet demand and has been far outpaced by support for male condoms. In 2008–2009, a few years prior to the POW PDP's advocacy efforts in the country, the government distributed 3 to 4 million female condoms, compared with more than 350 million male condoms.

Further, policies around female condoms have not always been followed by action. Female condoms have not been strongly embraced by HIV/AIDS prevention programs or family planning programs in spite of policy directives, which leaves the product without visible or vocal champions. Research also suggests that knowledge about female condoms is still limited among policymakers and providers and that myths and negatives attitudes persist.

## Sparking momentum: the POW PDP's advocacy effort

Against this landscape, in 2012 the POW PDP designed its advocacy approach to help strengthen the environment for female condoms, while simultaneously preparing for the introduction of the V Condom (the local brand name for the Woman's Condom) in South Africa. The POW PDP recognized that a strong market for female condoms must be characterized by government leaders who could translate policies into procurement and quality programming. However, securing that leadership would also require a change in attitudes and perceptions among influential stakeholders, including journalists, NGOs, and current and potential users.

The POW PDP began by partnering with WISH Associates and the African Gender Institute (AGI) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), two strong

advocacy allies, to better understand the current policy and advocacy landscape for female condoms. A stakeholder mapping exercise and subsequent policy analysis helped to identify potential partners, clarify the policy landscape, and elucidate attitudes of potential users. The analysis confirmed that, although South African policies generally support female condoms, challenges to awareness, availability, and access remained.

From 2013–2014, the POW PDP worked to tackle these barriers. In conjunction with partners, they designed an intensive set of activities focused on closing the awareness gap and generating excitement about female condoms, while encouraging policymakers to follow through on government commitments. The 18-month initiative focused on increasing the knowledge of female

condom programming among South African government officials, improving attitudes and perceptions among key audiences (including journalists, NGOs, and potential end-users), and cultivating and deploying a new network of “Female Condom Ambassadors” who could promote access to female condoms generally, and the V Condom specifically.

Working alongside other female condom advocacy initiatives, WISH Associates and AGI/UCT (with support from the POW PDP) created an ongoing information network for hundreds of stakeholders, including policymakers, journalists, and civil society leaders. This allowed the POW PDP to share information about advocacy activities, new research on female condoms, and specific products, including the V Condom. A series of policy dialogues mobilized decision-makers to make political commitments, while journalist trainings helped to equip the media to cover the female condom issue.

At the same time, youth-focused activities—including a series of digital stories and Dance4Demand—framed the issue as current and encouraged young people to advocate with decision-makers to deliver on policy commitments. Throughout the initiative, Female Condom Ambassadors kept a steady drumbeat of

“We’re raising awareness of a huge, unmet need for contraception... and also HIV [protection]. We have the technology available right now that gives women the power to save and enhance their own lives. But it’s not available.”

— Kgomotso Motsunyane, Female Condom Ambassador and journalist and television personality

This section highlights activities also covered in the **South Africa Report** ➔

Goals included increasing knowledge among policymakers, improving attitudes and perceptions, and deploying a new Female Condom Ambassador network

attention on the issue by participating in public forums, posting sex-positive messages on social media channels, and sharing their stories through articles and opinion pieces.

Over less than two years, this focused effort helped to increase awareness of the importance of female condoms for many policymakers, journalists, civil society advocates, and female condom users. Feedback from events and local ownership of advocacy initiatives demonstrated that the activities had reached target audiences and shaped perceptions.

In November 2014, local advocates applauded when the government released a three-year tender that tracked closely with the targets laid out in its National Strategic Plan on HIV/STIs/TB. While this achievement was due to several factors, including an authentic commitment by the South African government to improve the health of women, the important work of the POW PDP and other advocates to maintain pressure on policymakers demonstrated advocacy’s value in ensuring policy implementation.



Photo: PATH



## SPOTLIGHT ON SOUTH AFRICA ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

## Engaging policymakers through dialogue

Two high-level policy dialogues on female condoms, held in partnership with the Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa (DENOSA), brought together influential decision-makers from a range of sectors to discuss policy opportunities and make action pledges—including commitments by officials to advocate for female condom choice and accessibility. Following the first policy dialogue in 2013, the POW PDP and WISH Associates focused on ensuring those pledged commitments remained visible by utilizing individual “influencers” to maintain pressure.

The next year, in 2014, the POW PDP, WISH Associates, and DENOSA took stock of the stakeholders’ advocacy activities and progress during a follow-up forum. The dialogue suggested a sharpened interest and commitment to expanding access to female condoms. For example, a high-ranking National



Photo: PATH

Department of Health HIV health official gave a presentation stressing the government’s desire to work toward the 25 million procurement target in the National Strategic Plan on HIV/STIs/TB while at the same time increasing the variety and number of female condoms in South Africa. Event organizers also organized a screening of female condom digital stories; afterward, a number of attendees remarked that it was their first chance to hear real-life stories about the product, and that the stories had strengthened their commitment.



Photo: PATH

## Giving a visible, positive voice to female condoms

The Female Condom Ambassador program comprised a network of civil society leaders from diverse backgrounds who shared stories and personal perspectives to increase visibility and put a “human face” on female condoms. The ambassadors were trained and deployed to integrate female condom advocacy into their ongoing work. They included doctors, media experts, and even a sexologist. The ambassadors dramatically increased the reach of the POW PDP’s initiative by actively participating in awareness-raising events like Global Female Condom Day (GFCD), posting female condom messaging to their social media channels, and penning female condom articles and opinion pieces.

## Improving media coverage of female condoms

Historically, media coverage of female condoms in South Africa has been sporadic and sometimes contained myths or misinformation. In 2013, the POW PDP and WISH Associates hosted a journalist training for representatives of 10 media outlets to strengthen their knowledge of female condoms and build their capacity to produce media content on the issue. At the workshop, WISH Associates educated the reporters on the female condom policy and programmatic landscape, demonstrated a variety of female condom products, and screened videos from the “Female Condoms Are\_\_\_\_\_” film contest. The workshop included a robust discussion on what makes female condoms newsworthy, common questions and misperceptions about the method, and how to ensure unbiased coverage. The group created a set of editors’ guidelines and circulated them to media outlets and advocacy partners in advance of the 2013 GFCD.



Photo: screenshot of September 13, 2013, article from Mail & Guardian

As a result, three important media pieces spotlighting female condoms emerged on GFCD that year. The training and editors’ guidelines have continued to yield benefits and have positioned WISH Associates as leading spokespeople for the issue of female condoms in South Africa. In 2014, the group was consulted for more than 10 media stories on female condoms.



Female condom supporters show off their Dance4Demand routine to hundreds of shoppers at the Rosebank Mall in Johannesburg. Photo: PATH

## Bringing young people to the female condom conversation

Market research identified young people as a key audience for V Condom introduction, so the POW PDP and WISH Associates reached out to university and college institutions with presentations and information about the product. GFCD proved to be a key advocacy platform for engaging young people. In 2013, WISH Associates and UCT/AGI hosted a well-attended GFCD film screening and discussion with university students, which was emceed by a Female Condom Ambassador. The next year, students from seven universities in three provinces in South Africa hosted Dance4Demand dance competitions as part of the GFCD activities.

The systematic engagement with youth from college and university campuses across South Africa eventually led to a student-led initiative to petition the South African government to request expanded access to female condoms on university/college campuses.



# Creativity, evidence, champions, and partners: key advocacy learnings and reflections on impact

Over the past five years, the POW PDP and its advocacy partners made great strides in strengthening the enabling environment for female condoms around the world. Global awareness, attitudes, and interest in female condoms have grown, and hundreds of organizations and community groups worldwide now prioritize female condoms in their advocacy agendas.

Today, more family planning, reproductive health, and HIV strategies and policies recognize female condoms as a critical tool for woman-initiated dual protection—including PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS-Free Generation, the UNAIDS Strategic Investment Framework, and the United Nations Commission on Life-Saving Commodities—providing a foundation for intensified procurement and programming. Media coverage of female condoms has increased in recent years, with coverage more positive, accurate, and balanced than the early years of female condoms. More high-profile outlets are covering the issue, consequently reaching new audiences in unprecedented numbers. A BBC news article on the female condom product landscape, “The Return of the Female Condom?,” attracted more than 1.1 million views the day it ran.

At the country level, especially in China and South Africa, the POW PDP’s advocacy initiatives have helped to inspire accountability and new policy dialogues about the current and future role of female condoms. The POW PDP’s commitment to combining local evidence with consumer voices has helped to change traditional perceptions about female condoms and spark a new kind of conversation.

While the POW PDP’s advocacy initiative was one of many efforts that led to increased visibility and political commitment for female condoms, its work played an important role in helping to establish and sustain new momentum. Over the last five years, by endeavoring to combine creativity with strategic discipline, four key lessons from our advocacy work emerged:





1. **Creative approaches can cut through the noise, demonstrate demand, and bring new voices to the female condom conversation.** The POW PDP's advocacy work helped to improve perceptions of female condoms at both global and country levels by positioning the product as desirable, relevant to diverse user groups, and a vital part of the prevention toolkit. Activities like GFCD, Dance4Demand, and the "Female Condoms Are \_\_\_\_\_" film contest provided visual and high-energy illustrations that women, men, and youth across the world are eager to find creative ways to share their stories, experiences, and demands for access. The POW PDP's innovative advocacy activities—hallmarks of the five-year advocacy effort—showcased many powerful personal stories that put a human face on the issue for policymakers and journalists, many for the first time.
2. **Strategically tailoring evidence for decision-makers—and then delivering it at the right time—leads to impact.** The POW PDP realized that simply having the evidence of health need would not be sufficient to gain political commitment for global or country agendas. So they leveraged the breadth of the project's work to create tailored packages of evidence that spoke directly to the questions, needs, and concerns of decision makers. Policy forums and media briefings in South Africa combined data with stories and were customized to give target audiences the information that they needed, when they needed it. Dissemination of market test and research findings in China sparked a new conversation among stakeholders about sustainable markets and the future role of the female condom in the country. And the POW PDP staff regularly fed new data and evidence about acceptability, user demand, and financing into conversations about global policy changes and initiatives.
3. **Providing a conduit for local voices to influence the female condom debate strengthens and personalizes the advocacy argument.** Identifying and cultivating champions was critical to raising awareness and strengthening support, particularly in China and South Africa. By creating a range of opportunities for individuals to share their stories and perspectives, the POW PDP was able to marshal a wide range of supporters—including academics, journalists, NGOs, community leaders, and celebrities in China and South Africa—as female condom champions. These champions significantly expanded the visibility of female condoms in the media and within their circles of influence. As respected spokespeople, they helped to create a new way to talk about female condoms in the context of women's health, dual protection, and sex.



- 4. Strategic partnerships are crucial for advancing both global and in-country advocacy agendas.** Recognizing that it was only one element of the evolving female condom story, the POW PDP partnered purposefully and intensively at all levels to carry out its advocacy activities, engaging diverse actors and perspectives. In seeking partnerships, the POW PDP chose allies with supplemental strengths and influence with key groups, as well as deep connections with in-country advocates. As a result, partnerships proved to be crucial in showing decision-makers that support for female condoms is widespread across communities.

As support for female condom programming continues to evolve, only a commitment to ongoing advocacy will ensure action. At the country level, the POW PDP's hope is that excitement and interest will continue to mount as new advocates continue to carry the female condom issue forward. At the global level, advocates should leverage new international health and development goals and strategies—such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health—as opportunities to push for implementation of women-centered prevention, including comprehensive programming of female condoms.

Robust financing and implementation of supportive policies at the country level are two of the remaining challenges that lie ahead for the female condom advocacy agenda. The POW PDP remains confident that the global advocacy momentum generated during its tenure will help fuel country and regional efforts to further expand access to female condoms for the many women and men who want and need them.





## Read the related reports



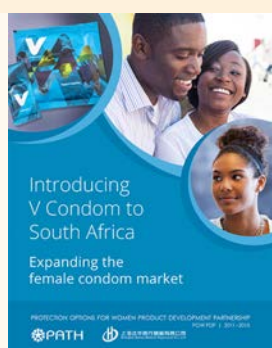
### Developing sustainable markets for the Woman's Condom

➔ <http://www.path.org/publications/detail.php?i=2564>



### Introducing O'Lavie Woman's Condom to China: Expanding dual protection options

➔ <http://www.path.org/publications/detail.php?i=2565>



### Introducing V Condom to South Africa: Expanding the female condom market

➔ <http://www.path.org/publications/detail.php?i=2566>

## Watch the related videos



### Winning films from the "Female Condoms are: \_\_\_" film contest

➔ <http://sites.path.org/rhtech/female-condom-film/>



### Global Dance4Demand dance for female condoms

➔ <http://www.femalecondoms4all.org/video/global-dance4demand-for-female-condoms/>



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