

---

## EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE FUNDING

### A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH

---

#### THE LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION

In June 2010 HealthRight International presented their annual Corporate Leadership Award to Levi Strauss & Co. in recognition of their longstanding commitment to health and human rights.

Daniel Lee, Executive Director of the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF), shared the history of the Levi Strauss response to the global epidemic dating back to 1982 when Robert D. Haas—CEO at the time—and other leaders helped to pass out leaflets at their San Francisco headquarters to educate their employees about HIV (then known as GRID, or Gay-Related Immune Disorder). In 1983 LSF became the first corporate foundation to make a HIV/AIDS-specific donation to the funding of the Kaposi Sarcoma Clinic at the San Francisco General Hospital. In the more than two decades since, the company and Foundation have provided more than \$45 million in social investments that have helped build several HIV/AIDS service and advocacy organizations from the ground up in San Francisco and in over 30 countries around the world.

Lee also highlighted the four core values embraced by Levi Strauss and Co. and the Foundation that serve as the guiding light not only for its business practices, but also their response to HIV/AIDS: **originality, empathy, integrity and courage.** *“In our programs, policies and campaigns, we have sought to be pioneering, bold and honest,” said Lee. “We have sometimes raised a few eyebrows along the way, but as Jonathan Mann (founder of HealthRight International) would point out: if you’re not rabble-rousing and raising eyebrows, you’re probably not on the right track.”*

#### A Focus on Human Rights

HIV/AIDS is arguably the most stigmatized medical condition in human history. It is also well documented that HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination are often intertwined with discrimination attached to being a woman, being

poor, having a different sexual orientation, engaging in sex work or drug use, or being in prison. LSF firmly believes that to ensure the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS responses, it is paramount to protect the human rights of highly marginalized groups—including sex workers, gay and bisexual men, prisoners and people who use drugs.

LSF’s HIV/AIDS grantmaking strategy focuses on driving social change to address this unique nature of HIV/AIDS. Selected milestones include:

1. Implementation of a gender-based violence and stigma reduction initiative covering all apparel workers in Lesotho, a country where two of every five adults is living with HIV.
2. The Foundation co-sponsored the second “Human Rights Networking Zone” at the International AIDS Conference in Vienna in July 2010. Serving as a common space for advocates to gather, learn and mobilize, the Zone’s activities engaged participants in campaigns to end HIV-related human rights abuses and included sessions highlighting the innovation of grantees. LSF also supported mini-conferences on international legal advocacy to bolster HIV/AIDS prevention among sex workers and to promote treatment access.
3. LSF supports four leading organizations—AIDS Law Project (South Africa), Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Lawyers Collective (India) and Human Rights Watch (U.S.)—that are regarded as the global ‘bellwethers’ in the arenas of legal advocacy and policy change.
4. The Foundation also supports the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, a new position serving as a global voice on rights violations related to health. Anand Grover, who currently holds this position, is a leading HIV/AIDS lawyer from Mumbai, India.
5. LSF also embraces community mobilization and the development of new leaders in the HIV/AIDS field to take advantage of opportunities to engender social change.