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Global Fund Launches Public Awareness Campaign

The Global Fund has launched a campaign in France to raise awareness about the Fund. It will feature advertisements in nearly 40 French magazines and newspapers, on several French television channels, and in the largest network of cinemas in France. By early next year the campaign will extend to Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK. The Fund had previously announced a partnership with VH1, a music channel in the United States, which will produce and air Global Fund public service announcements to an audience of more than 90 million U.S. households.

In France, all of the advertising space has been donated, including \$1 million worth of media placements in September alone. In a letter to the Global Fund board, Executive Director Richard Feachem wrote that these initiatives will raise the profile of the Fund beyond the inner circle of stakeholders, arguing that “if we are to ensure sustainable, long-term funding for the Global Fund, we need to ensure that the populations of our main donor countries are aware of the positive impact of their governments’ contributions.” He went on to describe the media campaigns as “a prime example of private-sector support for the Global Fund.”

The media campaign was designed by the Publicis Group, the world’s fourth largest communications company, on a pro bono basis. In July of last year Maurice Lévy, Chairman and CEO of Publicis, said that the company had already worked on the campaign for several weeks. He said that to find the right concept of how to present the Global Fund is “not an easy task” if what you want to get is “not tears, but commitment.” The company concluded that the best approach should be to come up with “something positive.” He added that the company had been working “very hard” on showing that we want to live in a better world. The concept to be illustrated “is not about charity, it is about investing in our future.”

Evidently, Publicis ran into difficulties with those plans. It took another year-and-a-quarter before the campaign was ready. And the resulting video that is starting to run on TV and in cinemas is very different

from the “positive” concepts that Mr. Levy discussed.

Set in a gritty neighborhood in Glasgow, Scotland, the ad shows a street-fighting bully making trouble wherever he goes. “I love to fight,” he says. “The young, the old, the big. Nobody frightens me. Nobody can beat me.” But then he meets his match when an even bigger fighter knocks him out cold with a single blow. The screen fades to black, and the words, “The Global Fund,” appear, along with – in French, for now – the words “To win a fight, size matters.”

The print campaign is less unconventional. Dramatic photographs show objects chosen to symbolize prevention and treatment – a gigantic tube of anti-malaria medicine, along with an equally large capsule and syringe – being carried through difficult ocean, desert and jungle environments by a ship, a helicopter and a truck.

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