



Developing distribution networks and reducing the consumer cost of condoms in France to increase their accessibility

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Issues

Fewer condoms are used in France than in Great Britain, Germany, Spain and Italy because of their high cost (about 50 cents a unit) and a distribution network which is relatively restricted (pharmacies and supermarkets).

Reducing the price of condoms to 20 cents a unit and expanding points of sale is therefore an important public health issue.

Description

AIDES (the largest French AIDS NGO) with the support of the Minister of Health developed a partnership with tobacco wholesalers/retail outlets, press distributors/newsagents and a French magazine to sell condoms in selected regional tobacconist shops and newsagents. At the same time an agreement was reached between AIDES and a condom manufacturer (Antoine&Associés), to provide condoms costing 20 cents a unit at point of sale.

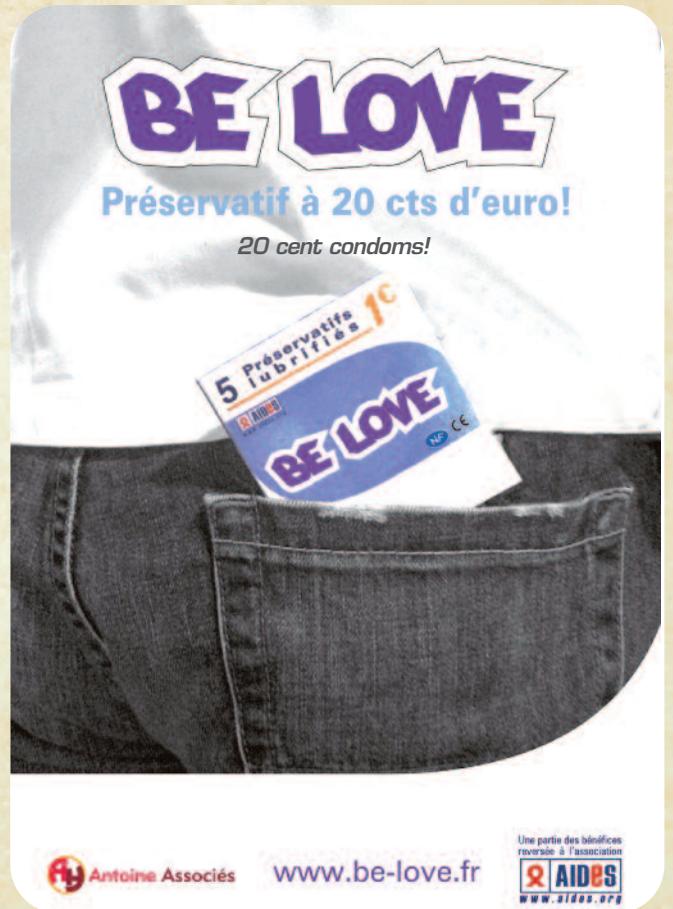
Each partner (AIDES, the condom manufacturer and a press group) invested in the advance purchasing of the condoms, creating a stock to ensure a permanent new supply.

Over 6 million condoms were made available on the 1st of December 2006. Currently, the partners are also working together to expand this initiative throughout secondary schools, night clubs, hotels, bars and neighbourhood shops.

Lessons learned

Over 10 million condoms were sold in one year in 20,000 points of sale. The 20 cent condom has been a huge success in big towns.

Difficulties due to the lack of political involvement as well as coordination problems for the partners have hindered the distribution in networks other than those in tobacconist shops and newsagents.



Next steps

We have interceded with the Minister of Health and are currently pressing supermarkets distribution networks to promote the 20 cent condom.

Moreover, we stress the need for carrying out research on patents to investigate the possibility of producing female condoms at a lower price (current average unit price is 2 euros). Besides, we strongly support European advocacy measures to remove taxes on condoms.



AIDES, a French NGO

Set up in 1984, AIDES is the largest HIV/AIDS community-based organisation in France, with centres in over 70 cities. We support partner organisations in Central and Eastern Europe, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

Our main goals:

- To inform vulnerable people about HIV/AIDS prevention and testing
- To support PLWHAs, (social & professional integration, therapeutic education)
- To advocate for the rights of PLWHAs.



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