

## MEDIA BRIEF

### MARC KOSKA HISTORY

Marc Koska OBE tirelessly campaigns to improve global health – with a particular focus on injection safety. In 1984 Marc read a newspaper article predicting the spread of HIV through medical syringes, this Eureka moment giving a total direction to his life. Marc spent the next ten years researching the problem from every angle: clinical behaviour, drug use, patient activity, syringe manufacturing / moulding, distribution, disposal, procurement, public health, policy and funding. He then went on to design an AD (Auto Disable) syringe, which physically prevents reuse called the K1. His design was openly licensed and engineered to fit on all syringe manufacturing machines, and not just purpose built machines, which in turn has led to global availability. His company's commercial strategy is built around this technology: targeting the developing world manufacturers to ensure wide availability and global affordability. It is clear that the K1 technology has established non-reusable syringe devices as an attainable standard for all of global health. It has also been the driving force behind the 70% cost reduction of safe syringes witnessed in Unicef's pricing, in the last decade. The K1 is approved by the WHO and is suitable for both curative and immunisation markets. In May 2008 Star Syringe celebrated its One Billionth syringe made and used. For more information please go to: [www.starsyringe.com](http://www.starsyringe.com)

Marc has long lobbied political leaders to change legislation to prevent syringe reuse and enforce safe injection guidelines. He assisted the drafting of such legislation in Pakistan, who were the first, to pass this into law in 2005, since then resolutions have been passed in such countries as Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, and Malawi. Marc and the K1 have been credited with saving in excess of nine million potentially fatal infections.

Although Marc has dedicated the last twenty-five years of his life to the challenge of injection safety with enormous success - he is determined to create, safe attainable healthcare on a global scale with a focus on the developing world. His leadership at Star drives forward the design and subsequent manufacturing of cost effective, safety products that are at the cutting edge of safe injection technologies.

### SAFEPOINT

The complementary activities of SafePoint, - a not-for-profit trust set up by Marc in 2006, plays a vital role. After hundreds of hours spent, assessing hospital needs, talking to doctors, nurses, patients, mothers and children Marc realised that product alone would never solve this silent epidemic.

The SafePoint Trust inform the next generation, by raising awareness - of the dangers of unsafe injections, this is paramount in maximizing impact of the technologies Marc fought to put into place. Through powerful, hard-hitting public information campaigns, SafePoint make short films, lobby for legislation change at ministerial level and adapt the delivery of each campaign to suite the political, cultural practices of each country. Marc purposely set up SafePoint to work in partnership with local and international networks, including other NGOs to maximise reach and efficiency.

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#### SafePoint Advisors

Dr Tim Evans  
Professor Göran Grosskopf  
Mr Rupert Lywood

#### SafePoint Patrons

Dr Alex Kamugisha  
Padmashree Lila Poonawalla  
Dr Ray Yip

#### SafePoint Trustees

Mr Marc Koska  
Mr Stuart Lawson  
Prof Alan Richardson

Marc's vision is clear: to rid the world of unsafe injections, in 2008 he rolled out one of the biggest social media campaigns in India with staggering results. An intensive campaign delivered between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008 informed 509 million people, through radio, TV, Cinema and the written press. Subsequently, the Health Minister Dr Ramadoss was forced to

implement legislation change, and in April 2009 it was mandated in India that all public hospitals and clinics would only use AD (Auto Disable) syringes. For more information on this campaign please watch Making the Point: [www.marckoska.com/#films](http://www.marckoska.com/#films). Ongoing, campaigns on a smaller scale have been run in India since the mandate, as Marc continues to force states to change over to AD syringes, so far 40% of states have adhered to the legislation change.

Little, if any focus has been given to eradicate unsafe injections, this is a global problem and currently kills more people a year than the reported figures on Malaria. It is a misconception that HIV is only spread via sexual transmission – Marc Koska aims to give the next generation a chance, empower them, give them a voice – ensure that the 40+ billion medical injections that are given each year are administered safely stopping the unnecessary spread of blood-borne diseases.

In Africa Marc has already assisted with the creation of policy changes in: Tanzania, Ghana and Ethiopia. He is also currently working on a project that will ensure that the lifesaving technology he has already created is widely available to the world without limits.

## AWARDS AND PERSONAL ACOLADES

### Personal

- 2008** Honorary Degree from Sussex University
- 2008** Honorary Degree from University of Brighton
- 2006** OBE for his contribution to Global Health
- 2006** The Paul Harris Fellowship
- 2006** Sussex Business Award - Business Person of the Year Award

### Awards

- 2008** RBS International Trade Awards – Innovation
- 2007** RBS South Regional Award for International trade Company
- 2007** Medical Futures Conceptual Design in the Anaesthesia and Critical Care Innovation
- 2006** Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade
- 2006** Special Award in Recognition of the Outstanding Contribution to Society and Social Responsibility, The Wealden District Council
- 2006** Sussex Business Award - Innovation in Business Award
- 2006** Sussex Business Award - International Business Award

For more information:

[www.marckoska.com](http://www.marckoska.com)

[www.safepointtrust.org](http://www.safepointtrust.org)

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## FACTS AND FIGURES

Each and every year due to unsafe injections there are:

- 230,000 HIV Infections
- 1,000,000 Hepatitis C Infections
- 21,000,000 Hepatitis B Infections
- RESULTING IN 1,300,000 DEATHS EACH YEAR (WHO figures)
- Syringe re-used kills more people than Malaria a year which the WHO estimate kills 1,000,000 a year (World Health Organisation)
- At least 50% of injections given were unsafe (World Health Organisation)
- Depending on which report you read a syringe is used on average between 4 to 7 times in the developing world
- Resulting in every 24 seconds a life is lost as a result of an unsafe injection
- Some 17 billion injections are given each year, and 7 billion of these are unsafe medical injections (Hutin 2003).
- The World Health Report (2002) reports that unsafe injection practices accounted for 28% of liver cancer, 24% of cirrhosis cases, 5% of HIV infections and 0.9% of deaths worldwide (WHO, 2002).
- Infections resulting from unsafe injections lead to costs of \$535 each year in direct medical expenses (Miller 1999).
- Each year unsafe injections cause 23 million hepatitis cases worldwide - 21 million HBV and 2 million HCV. This is 32% of all HBV infections and 40% of all HCV infections (Hauri 2004).
- In the developing world the average person receives an unsafe medical injection more than once every year (1.3 times) (Hauri 2004).
- In Africa 20 million medical injections contaminated with blood from a patient with HIV are administered every year (Reid 2009).
- Before the introduction of the auto-disable syringe, the few studies that analyzed immunization injections revealed that even under the auspices of WHO regional immunization programs, 30–62% of injections were unsafe (Kotwal 2004).

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- One in four HIV infections and half of HBV and HCV infections in India result from unsafe medical injections (Hutin 2004).
- One in five adults in Egypt has contracted hepatitis C from an unsafe medical injections, and liver disease has become a more important cause of death and disability than the diseases the injections were intended to treat (Strickland 2006).
- In the 1980s more than 10,000 children were infected with HIV as a result of unsafe healthcare in Romania, the majority infected by unsafe injections. At the time there were only 13 adult cases of AIDS reported in Romania. This historic nationwide outbreak still accounts for over 50% of HIV cases in children recorded in Europe since the beginning of the epidemic (Drucker 2007).
- Even indirect syringe reuse can transmit HIV from one patient to four others (Shields 1994).
- As recently as 1998, WHO recommended the reuse of needles and syringes up to 200 times in vaccination programs (Drucker 2001).

For further information:

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