



DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS COMMUNICATION & CROSS-FERTILIZATION KEY LESSONS

Barcelona, July 10 – Young people and adult allies identified electronic communications and cross-fertilization of ideas across countries and continents as key lessons from a series of networking and training events sponsored by the Barcelona YouthForce during the International AIDS Conference.

“Meeting with other youth from so many different countries was extremely helpful,” said Ozzi Warrick, from Trinidad and Tobago, one of about 40 youth attending the first night’s session. “I saw how the same tools that work for us in the Caribbean also work in Africa and Asia.”

Representatives from Youth Against AIDS (YAA), a global network of young people and a sponsor of the YouthForce, described a letter-writing

Final Networking Session
Hotel Barcelo Sants
Pl dels Paisos Catalans
Thursday 11 July
20.30 to 22.00

campaign where a lack of finances was limiting their impact on the British Prime Minister. They needed ideas from other youth, and easy communication helped.

Electronic communication offers a key strategy in partnerships within countries and across regions of the world, the participants agreed. Several youth pointed out that they had been working together for months on projects via e-mail but met for the first time only this week in Barcelona.

Such connections lead to action. Saul Cameron from the UK, for example, described attending a training workshop in Uganda coor-

inated by Student Partnerships Worldwide. At the meeting, he became more sensitized to HIV/AIDS issues. Back home, he discussed the issue with his father, a businessman, whose company followed with a recently launched HIV/AIDS fundraising effort.

Coordinators of a session on youth-adult partnerships drew on a curriculum under development by Advocates for Youth and YouthNet, two YouthForce sponsors. Another meeting focused on youth involvement with the newly established Global Fund. The final session tonight provides a forum for ideas about getting involved in political processes and advocacy strategies.

Rebecca Maina, Kenya and Bill Finger, U.S.

YOUTHFORCE HIGHLIGHTS

You are invited!

Youth Networking
Hotel Barcelo Sants
Pl dels Paisos Catalans s/n
Metro: Estacio Barcelona Sants
Thursday 11 July
20:00 to 23:00

On our final night of programming, we will discuss how youth can get involved in political processes around the world. Our session will open with a panel of activists from both the global south and north who will discuss how they developed advocacy strategy in their home countries. Then, guided by the panelists, attendees will break up into smaller groups and discuss ways that they can get involved in their own country, developing plans that can be used in the future. All youth advocates and adult allies are invited. See you there.

WHO LAUDS YOUTHFORCE

The World Health Organization (WHO) is convinced that strategies to involve and empower young people and adolescents are essential in tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Accordingly, WHO lauds the efforts of the Barcelona YouthForce for organizing activities to raise the visibility and participation of youth at the XIVth International AIDS Conference. Even at this stage of the epidemic, the principle of true youth participation has hardly moved beyond rhetoric. The relatively small numbers of youth that are part of events such as the Barcelona Conference are testimony that more youth involvement is necessary in all our responses to the epidemic. Let the example of the Barcelona YouthForce guide us on how to meaningfully involve young people in all that we do.

Dr. Tomris Turmen
Executive Director, Family and Community Health,
WHO

US SUPPORTS YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

With 50 percent of new HIV infections occurring in your generation, the contributions of the Barcelona YouthForce to the International AIDS Conference are essential. I call on all stakeholders to support the involvement of young people in all efforts to fight global AIDS. For example, involving out-of-school young men or women in programs that build skills can help make them employable and give them a reason to avoid risky behaviors. I am excited to work with all of you in the Barcelona YouthForce to increase the visibility of young people at this conference and beyond.

Scott Evertz
Director, Office of National AIDS Policy, USA

Inside this issue:

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- Youth speak out at Satellite Meeting on VCT and Youth Networks
- Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS



FINDING A PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH HIV

Three years ago, then 23, I received word that my HIV-test was positive. I found it very difficult to meet other young people with HIV, and I had so many questions about school, work, income and social life. Most importantly, I needed hope.

I joined the HIV Association Netherlands with the goal of starting a network of young people. Youth aged 10 to 30 responded enthusiastically, and we now have the Young-positive section of the Association. Many of us worked to form a local web site where young HIV-positive people could connect and get help with their concerns.

This week, we launched the

Young people living with HIV have had nowhere to go to meet.

Now they do.

www.youngpositive.com

new international website in English, created by and focusing on young people.

The new web site is just one way to support young people with

HIV. We need support and hope. We need each other. We need to overcome the stigma and encourage others to talk about their situation. It gives others hope and invigorates us all. Young and positive? Now, you have a place to talk to others like you.

Ralf, The Netherlands

For more information,
email jongpositief@hivnet.org

YOUTH PROGRAMS KEY FOR REFUGEES IN SIERRA LEONE

The fear of full break out of the AIDS epidemic in Sierra Leone is becoming more real every day. Of the dozens of people that have died of AIDS, over 80 percent are youths and 65 percent women. No longer can we delude ourselves that the AIDS acronym stands for "Adult Intention to Discourage Sex."

A unique feature of the civil war in Sierra Leone was the use of sex as a weapon of war. As a result, boys and girls were forced into multiple and indiscriminate sexual partnerships. A recent prevalence survey suggests that more than 6 percent and 4 percent of the inhabitants in Freetown and the Provinces respectively, are HIV positive. These data clearly vindicates the Centre for Co-ordination of Youth Activities' (CCYA) proactive public education campaign on HIV/AIDS prevention. It is feared that the disease will soon complete its incubation period and start taking its toll on an ignorant

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and indigent population.

In May 2001 CCYA started its outreach to youth groups on HIV/AIDS through their human rights program for reproductive health. We facilitated the formation of a youth group among our returnee compatriots from refuge areas in the Republic of Guinea. We carried out HIV/AIDS sensitization in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps using skits and real life simulations of different ways of transmission of HIV. Schools and depressed communities where youth populations are dispro-

portionately high replicated this effort. During the Day of the African Child celebration, June 16, 2002, CCYA organized widespread HIV/AIDS information and education programs on the radio, and in IDP camps in Freetown.

Using community events, we continue to interest young people in awareness about AIDS. Because of the cultural inhibitions of talking about sex or sex related problems, the youth forum is the surest way to the conscience of the society on this scourge.

To succeed in our fight against AIDS, the world must rely more on nongovernmental civil society groups to educate the people. These groups need to be reinforced and empowered for this task that will save humanity.

Patrick Fatoma, Sierra Leone

DARK CLOUD OF LOSING PARENTS

As a young child, our family shared happy moments both at home and on holidays. My parents seemed happy together, my dad had a good job at a copper mine, and my three brothers and I loved each other. But mum started keeping to herself, and dad started doing everything for us that mum did before.

They would both shout at us for no reason. My grades at school dropped drastically, and I went from being lively and talkative to keeping to myself. During my last year of secondary school, my mum moved out and filed for a divorce. I cried myself to sleep every night.

When mum remarried, things seemed better for awhile. I passed my exams and went away to college. But

soon after, she called and said she was sick. She was losing weight drastically and was diagnosed with cancer of the lymph nodes. I went home often and my college work suffered. Her health deteriorated rapidly and had several operations to remove growths. On one visit home, she told me tearfully she had had an HIV test and it was positive.

My stepfather also fell ill and began to spend more and more time in the hospital. Soon, he died, and mum was shortly admitted to hospital. She would cry telling me to look after my siblings and myself when she died. I lost concentration in class and eventually stopped attending lectures. I was

tearful all the time. On Sunday, the 4th of November last year, I called her in hospital but my aunt answered. I went straight to the hospital the next day but was too late. I sat on the cold floor and wept. Mum died exactly two weeks after my step dad.

After mum's funeral, I learnt that my stepfather had been HIV positive for many years, even before he married my mother -- and that mum had started seeing him while she was still with my father. Today, a dark cloud hangs over me. I think my dad may leave us too because mum may have infected him.

This is the story of Chomba Rozen Kanjela, Zambia, written by Holo Hachonda, Zambia

By 2001, AIDS had killed the mother or both parents of 10.4 million children under the age of 15, according to UNICEF.

By 2010, USAID reports that more than 44 million children in 34 developing countries will likely have lost one or both parents to AIDS.

FICTION: A NIGHT IN THE LIFE OF THE VULNERABLE

I am sitting on the curb on Koinange Street mesmerized by how clear the sky is today. So far I have counted 13 shooting stars. That's 13 more than the number of clients I have had today. It's funny how slow business can be when the Nairobi sky is clear.

Back in the countryside, my sister Njeri and I would stare at the skies and wonder how many more stars would appear. We would spend hours of the short nights laughing and talking. Then AIDS, the infection whose existence everyone denied, killed my parents and changed our lives. Now Njeri and I sit quiet, hoping someone

would come along to quench his sexual thirst, so that we can satisfy our hunger for food.

The sound of a red Peugeot interrupts our silence. Quickly, Njeri and I stand up and get into the pose. The car stops and an elderly man rolls down the window. He says hello and gives us the stare. We expose our barely-there breasts. With his approval, Njeri walks up to him. She turns to me, and in her soft voice, she reminds me to feed her five-month-old baby. The two of them get into the car.

While the car drives off, many questions go through my mind.

Who is that man? Does he have a family? Will he give Njeri sufficient money? Where will my next meal come from? What would it be like if mama and baba had not died of AIDS? Will I die too?

And as I sit there, and count the 14th shooting star, I wonder if I will ever get the chance to be a 14-year-old.

Atieno Okelo, Kenya

Your Guide to Youth Issues at the
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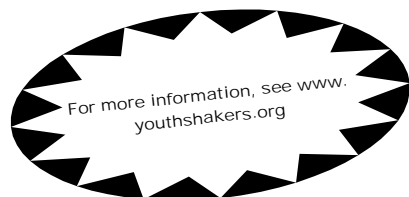
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The Barcelona YouthForce

The **Barcelona YouthForce** is an international network of **youth activists AND adult allies** from both the developing and developed worlds attending the 2002 International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain from July 7-12, 2002. It is sponsored by Youth Against AIDS (YAA), the Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC), Advocates for Youth and the YOUTH-NET Program of Family Health International with funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Global AIDS Program (CDC). Other supporters of **Barcelona YouthForce** activities include MTV/Spain, the Spanish Youth Council and the Catalan Youth Council.

Co-sponsors

UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Youth and HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS Secretariat, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNDCP, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, World Bank International AIDS Trust
Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH)
MTV/Spain
Save the Children
YouthNOISE
The Spanish Youth Council
The Catalan Youth Council
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Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
Population Services International (PSI)/YouthAIDS
Youth Coalition
Africa Youth Alliance
YieldIreland

CUTTING EDGE ISSUES IN YOUTH AND HIV/AIDS

Barcelona, July 10 – Youth activists from three continents, speaking at a International AIDS Conference Satellite Session, emphasized that creating network among youth offers a key element in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic in developing countries. They pointed out the multiple levels through which youth networking operates, at personal, institutional and global levels.

“Youth organizations throughout Spain joined into a network and in the process gained more power and had more impact working together,” said Eva Martin, representative of the

Spanish Youth Council. “This enabled us all to disseminate the HIV prevention messages much more effectively than if we had tried it separately. The network was one key to the success of our campaign.”

With about half of all new infections among youth, networking is only part of the answer. Another key issue is providing youth with the opportunity to seek counseling and testing of their HIV status. Voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) is gaining more attention, particularly in high prevalence countries. Representatives from VCT efforts in Botswana

and Kenya joined FHI researcher Deborah Boswell, describing the many complex issues involved with VCT – from the need for youth-friendly services to ethical issues of informed consent, post-test clubs, and adequate references to treatment.

YouthNet distributed a packet of materials at the session, including a research brief on VCT. A new FHI report on the subject was also available during the meeting.

Casey Albert, U.S.