



WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE...

July 7 -- Global leaders called for new directions in partnerships with youth at a pre-conference rally and reception sponsored by the Barcelona YouthForce. "We are working *with* young people rather than *for* young people," Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, told more than 200 young activists and their adult allies. He praised the gathering as the first organized youth force that he had seen in all the AIDS conferences he had attended.

Other leaders underscored the importance of youth involvement at Barcelona and beyond. The United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS, Stephen Lewis, stressed that youth "lie at the heart of the intervention response. If there was ever a hope to overcome this scourge, it lies with

"More than two-thirds of the new youth infections are among young women and girls. It is a frontal attack on women. A defining issue of the pandemic is in its gender inequality. Gender is the toughest issue to address, tougher even than race."

Stephen Lewis UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS, at the Barcelona YouthForce Rally, July 7th

people like you."

Sandra L. Thurman, president of the International AIDS Trust, called for young people "to be at the table and part of the team. If we want to make a meaningful difference, we need active and vibrant partnerships with you and your allies."

Speakers at the rally in-

cluded youth from around the world, from royalty to grassroots activists. Her Royal Highness Princess Rattana-Devi Norodom of Cambodia, a young person herself, spoke of her pride in the youth of her country, who she described as bright and eager to learn but lacking visibility. Kahlil Osborne, 19, from St. Kitts in the Caribbean, told the group, "It's our time now!"

At the reception, youth delegates shared strategies about increasing their visibility at the Conference. Colorful stickers declaring "More Youth Voices = Fewer HIV Infections" appeared on t-shirts, foreheads, arms and legs. Music and dancing added to the festive spirit.

Rebecca Maina, Kenya

Bill Finger, U.S.

YOUTHFORCE HIGHLIGHTS You are invited!

Youth Networking!!

Every evening from Monday, July 8th to Thursday, July 11th, 20:00 to 23:00. Hotel Barcelo Sants, Pl dels Paisos Catalans s/n Metro: Estacio Barcelona Sants

Continue networking each evening, with sessions including youth-focused workshops, skills training, informal discussions and strategy sessions.

Press Conference:

Where are the Youth?

Monday, July 8th, 15:00 to 16:00, Barcelona 3 Media Center

Peter Piot, Executive Director UN-AIDS, Sandra L. Thurman, President International AIDS Trust, Lydia Bosire, Barcelona YouthForce coordinator, Ralph Jager, Coordinator of Youth Positive section of HIV Association of Netherlands, and Her Royal Highness Princess Rattana-Devi Norodom call for more youth involvement.

Satellite Meeting:

Cutting Edge Issues in Youth and HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Wednesday, July 10th, 18:00 to 20:00, Palacio 2, Room 2.3

Youth and adult experts will speak on best practices and state of the art youth-specific HIV/AIDS interventions in developing countries, including youth networking, advocacy strategies and youth-friendly VCT services

SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN: LETTER TO YOUTH

The Barcelona YouthForce is living proof that we can translate a problem into a solution. We know that HIV targets the young -- half of today's new infections are among young people. But we also know that wherever HIV prevention has been successful, it is you, the young, who have been at the forefront of change.

You set trends. You have the energy, creativity and flexibility essential to HIV prevention and care. Wherever you have been em-

powered with the knowledge, skills and means to protect yourselves, you have succeeded in battling HIV. You can bring to your peers convincing messages about safe sexual behaviour. And, in the most affected parts of the world, young people are compassionate and responsible caregivers to sick parents.

The international community needs to do its part too -- in particular on three fronts:

National leaders must make programmes for young people a prior-

ity; we must maximize the participation of young people in prevention and care. We must work for a massive increase in education programmes and services for young people -- especially for girls, orphans and other vulnerable children.

It is in the mobilization of young people like you that the real heroes and heroines of the war against AIDS are to be found. It is our job to furnish you with hope.

Kofi A Annan

Inside this issue:

UN Taskforce on Youth discusses youth involvement

First Lady of Zambia, Mrs Maureen Mwanawasa, discusses youth and AIDS in Zambia



A REBIRTH OF HOPE

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in his message to the Barcelona YouthForce, designated the adults and stakeholders as the providers of hope. After so many conferences and declarations of good intentions, what does real hope mean? For many youth activists, hope comes in the form of resources for youth organizations that are struggling to address the crisis of their generation. It comes in the form of a commitment to partnership by youth-serving organizations, away from the paradigm of token involvement of both young people and youth-led organizations.

Youth have already taken much of the initiative on their own. Consider the Young Positive network being developed to support the HIV-positive youth in Europe and around the world. Or the constructive daily evening discussions and action planning for effective youth-to-youth and youth-adult



Youth in Senegal discuss AIDS Networking Strategies

partnerships in addressing HIV.

But this can be further improved beyond Barcelona. Secretary General Annan's message recommended an increase in education and services for youth, with a special focus on vulnerable young people. At the Barcelona YouthForce rally, Peter Piot suggested that youth networks be strengthened, because the UN has not worked as

effectively with youth in the past. Her Royal Highness Princess Rattana-Devi Norodom gave her personal commitment to empowering youth in Cambodia.

We have five days to justify the expenditures that went into this conference. As the conference begins, let us all set one tangible goal that can help achieve the Secretary General's objective of finding hope. When we return home, let us take with us a concrete commitment to increasing real youth-adult partnerships. Peter Piot told the YouthForce rally that getting fresh ideas into the AIDS fight is essential, because the sense of urgency seems to have faded.

Meaningful youth-adult partnerships may just be the glimmer of hope we all need to move into the third decade of the ravages of the virus.

Editor

YOUTH AND HIV/AIDS IN ZAMBIA

Although much of the news coming out of the African continent describing how the HIV/AIDS pandemic is affecting the future generation is fairly negative, there are small windows of hope that demonstrate the fact that forthright, sustained campaigns aimed at the youth can indeed turn the tide of this scourge. Zambia, located in Southern Africa, with 58% of its 10 million people aged below 19 provides a snapshot of best practices that could be replicated in other parts of the world.

In response to the government policy on youth/adolescents health, a conducive environment has been developed in which several youth based organizations have developed comprehensive programs to encourage young people to change their behavior and attitude towards HIV/AIDS. A rigorous campaign strategy has been developed in the country to promote responsible social behavior

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such as abstinence, fidelity and the use of both male and female condoms. Social marketing strategies which promote the free distribution of condoms in public places such as bars, health centers and offices has increased the access and acceptability of condoms.

The Ministry of Education has mainstreamed several HIV/AIDS/STI and reproductive health materials into the school curricula. Peer education programs that train young people on how to communicate and counsel each other about responsible behavior have been implemented, while theatre sketches and songs on HIV/AIDS are being broad-

ened to reach a wider audience. A youth newspaper, Trendsetters, provides information on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues and an extremely successful mass media campaign called Helping Each Other Act Responsibly Together (HEART), has through the use of television, been able to reach 71% of urban and 37% or rural youth with health communication spots.

Such strategies have contributed to a 13% decline in HIV prevalence in the 15-19 age group, from 28% in 1993 to 15% in 1998, according to the Zambia Ministry of Health. In addition, trends show that young people are delaying their first sexual encounter while more youths are completely abstaining from having sex.

*Mrs. Maureen Mwanawasa
First Lady of Zambia*

YOUTHFUL PERSISTENCE

Only with determination and much creativity would someone ask the CEO of British Airways for a ticket to Barcelona. For Sophie Dilmatis, a 26-year-old, HIV positive woman from Harare, Zimbabwe, this was her solution after she applied for conference scholarship funds and was denied. Her action speaks to the dedication and persistence of those in the field of HIV/AIDS.

Rather than being an AIDS victim, Sophie is an active educator and advocate in the field of HIV/AIDS. As a representative of Choose Life!, she visits schools to present educational information about HIV and discuss her personal experiences living with

HIV. "In response to the growing threat that HIV/AIDS poses to our country, the main objective of Choose Life! is to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS by educating young Zimbabweans," she says. Choose Life! is affiliated with *The Centre*, an organization that provides services such as HIV test counseling, nutritional information, and stress management workshops.

"Through education, knowledge can be passed on, thereby conquering the fear, ignorance and silence that surround HIV/AIDS," she says. Sophie has worked with youth discussion groups in radio and television and on a series of short films

called *Heads and Tails*, which includes participants who were affected by HIV.

At the Barcelona conference, Sophie hopes to gain insight and new ideas. "As an HIV positive woman in the third world, attending the conference exposes me to the latest information, which I can channel through Choose Life! back to the community. My participation at this conference would be a proactive step in gathering new ideas as well as seeing how I can improve and strengthen the objectives of Choose Life!"

Smita Sonti, India

REACHING UNGASS GOALS THROUGH YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

July 7 -- Youth speaking out, youth participation and youth involvement are key in turning UNGASS global commitments to young people into action, said Dr. Jing Ling of UNICEF at the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Young People satellite meeting.

"Involve us, involve young people living with HIV/AIDS," cried a young woman as she shared her experience in a film shown at the meeting. The film, "Voices of Youth," captured the emotions, challenges and pain young persons living with HIV must endure. Inviolata Mubavi, who was in the film, appeared at the UNGASS session. She reiterated her plea and indicated that young people have been shut out by policy-makers and leaders. A fiery Mubavi continued: "A combined effort of young people and the older service providers is very vital in improving the lives of young people."

Dr. Kim Dickson, a speaker

"EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS IN INVOLVING THEM IN ALL PHASES OF PROGRAMMING FROM POLICY DEVELOPMENT TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION"

at the meeting, indicated that the UNGASS goals for young people can be achieved by harnessing what exists, scaling up national responses, government commitment and fully involving young people.

Dr. Katherine Bond of PATH addressed the UNGASS goal to have in place strategies and policies to reduce the vulnerability of young people. She indicated that political commitment is not only the involvement of governments but also the engagement of civil society. She further pointed out that the current mechanisms for funding and financing makes such goals difficult to achieve.

The meeting was then treated to sensational questions from the

participants and a hot debate about promiscuity being promoted by condom usage. This was clearly sealed by a participant from USA who said, "if condoms bring about promiscuity, then is it true that umbrellas bring about rain?"

The final moments of the meeting witnessed a dramatic Kent Klindera of the Barcelona Youth-Force addressing the issue of youth participation in monitoring and evaluation. He reminded everyone that young people indeed have the skills necessary to participate at a high level of such forums. The chair of the UNAIDS Inter-agency Task Team endorsed Klindera's point strongly, stating that the empowerment of young people is in involving them in all phases of programming from policy development to monitoring and evaluation.

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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 YOUTHNET 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
Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs (JHU/CCP)
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Youth Coalition
Africa Youth Alliance
YieldIreland

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION: HIV/AIDS AND YOUTH

The majority of the 40 million people infected with HIV are in the prime of their working life, and young people are more infected than any other single group. In high-prevalence countries, the workforce will be reduced by an estimated 10 to 30 percent by 2020. Meanwhile, young workers are often the most vulnerable to low pay, marginal jobs, breakdown of community structures and separation from family and support systems. The HIV pandemic has profound implications for the world of work.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed a *Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work*, which establishes the principles of gender equality and

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Sonia Smith, ILO/AIDS

non-discrimination on the basis of HIV status. These are meant to serve as HIV prevention and mitigation strategies in the world of work. This Code can be used as a basis for national workplace policies, guidelines for enterprises, collective agreements and training programs. It can also be a tool to strengthen the involvement of civil society, in particular by mobilizing young people and their communi-

ties to address HIV/AIDS.

The Code is a particularly effective tool for working with youth because of its emphasis on vulnerable groups and gender inequalities. The ILO is currently developing strategies to adapt the Code to working with young people, including the youth sections of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The Code is also being used with other UN agencies, working with the informal economy, gender dimensions of care work, the transport sector. It is available in 20 languages, with copies in English, French and Spanish available on the ILO website (www.ilo.org/aids).

Sonia Smith, ILO/AIDS