

Youth Awake!

HIV/AIDS and Young People

Newsletter for March 2005

We are proud to bring you the "Youth Awake!" newsletter. It is through the work of the TakingITGlobal HIV/AIDS Program, the African Regional Youth Initiative, the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS, and their partners, that this collaboration has been successful. We hope to support your work by providing you not only with organizational updates, but also important news, event information, insight into best practice models, and powerful success stories. For more information or to send in submissions, please contact Liz Livelli, TakingITGlobal HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, at elivelli@takingitglobal.org.



The newly established TakingITGlobal HIV/AIDS Program is yet another addition to the TakingITGlobal family. It is through this type of thematic engagement that we hope to more effectively involve our TIG members, who are interested, affected, or infected by HIV/AIDS. We feel that an informed and empowered generation will not only halt the spread of the pandemic, but it will also serve to minimize the wake of devastation that will continue to be felt for decades to come. Today it is youth who are most vulnerable to infection, and tomorrow it will be the youth who ultimately bear the burden of the epidemic. Through the HIV/AIDS Program we hope to encourage a culture of learning and responsibility – for yourself, for your community, and for our future. www.takingitglobal.org

Some of the current projects and programs that we are working on include the following:

OneWorld Africa:

TakingITGlobal in collaboration with OneWorld Africa (OWA) has been working to address the issues facing HIV/AIDS communicators and educators in Africa on the grassroots level. There is a clear need for youth media capacity building, accurate information about HIV/AIDS in languages other than English, and effective distribution methods of good content. We hope to continue discussions surrounding these subject areas, and plan on assist OWA through the TakingITGlobal website and Understanding HIV/AIDS page.

TIGed and HIV/AIDS:

TakingITGlobal's in-classroom educational initiative – TIGed – has joined forces with HIV/AIDS Program, coordinated by Luke Walker. The project is still in planning, but aims to create innovative tools for HIV/AIDS prevention and education, with a focus on issues of global, social justice. Drawing on a youth media approach, the project will engage young people in the development of youth-driven messages for HIV/AIDS awareness.

MDGs and NEPAD:

As an extension of the brilliant work being done by Franziska Seel (TakingITGlobal MDG Coordinator) on the Millennium Development Goals, the HIV/AIDS Program has built a MDG-NEPAD awareness focus into its work plan. We will be collaborating on initiatives such article writing, toolkit distribution, and Open Forums aimed at addressing related issues – for example: What are the MDGs? What is NEPAD? And how can raising awareness about each strengthen their effectiveness?

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African Regional Youth Initiative

The African Regional Youth Initiative (ARYI) is an organization comprised of hundreds of youth and community-based initiatives across Africa addressing social, economic and political injustice. The primary focus of the organization is on HIV/AIDS due to its widespread impact on the continent and around the world. ARYI addresses HIV/AIDS in a comprehensive manner by engaging in activities that mobilize and empower communities, increase women and youth participation, facilitate dialogue between organizations in different countries and other activities that build capacity such as training in policy and advocacy. Other issues addressed are poverty, leadership and governance, women's health, and community development.

ARYI reaches beyond discussion to educate and empower individuals and communities who are most marginalized and affected by social, economic, and political injustice. It is the effective national and regional organization (i.e. national and regional representatives and program coordinators), direct community engagement, and vast support mechanisms that sets ARYI initiatives apart from the rest. It is due to their comprehensive approach, expansive network of grassroots initiatives, and well-established organization of efforts, that TakingITGlobal has solidified their partnership with the African Regional Youth Initiative. For information about, or to join, the African Regional Youth Initiative, contact its Founder and Director, Neema Mgana at nmgana@yahoo.com or info@intcouncil.org.

In an effort to expand its organizational philosophy and programs globally, ARYI, in collaboration with partner organizations, have joined to form *The International Council for Global Initiatives*. The Council fosters effective cross-regional collaboration at the international level and innovative program design focusing on three themes: women's empowerment, youth participation, and community development.

ARYI Programs:

The North-South Mentorship Program:

Mentorship of youth-led initiatives in Africa with national and international experts (including youth experts!) in the field of program planning, evaluation, fundraising, networking, starting a new project, and much more. Within this program is the *Consultancy in Capacity Building Initiative (CCBI)*. The CCBI joins consultants in areas such research methodology, data analysis, and capacity building to ARYI member organizations and supporters in Africa.

Youth Reproductive Health Policy Program:

The youth reproductive health policy program builds capacity of youth people to engage at the policy level in advocating for the creation, implementation, and monitoring of reproductive health policies in Africa. ARYI works at the national level in coordinating workshops on such policies, builds youth policy groups, and supports their collaboration with policy makers through the development of national advisory committees comprised of youth, women, policy makers, and other stakeholders. There are currently eleven national youth policy groups in countries such as Uganda, Liberia, Rwanda, South Africa, and Ghana.

Internship Program for Youth, Medical Students, and Young Professionals:

ARYI provides internship and volunteer opportunities for youth, medical students, and young professionals to work within projects and organizations in Africa focusing on health and development. This program has worked with individuals and groups from all over the world and continues to be a popular program.

Community AIDS Forums:

Community AIDS forums are a means to discuss with community members first-hand on the affects of HIV/AIDS within the community, and later design and implement action plans that address these specific needs.

Women's Program:

The women's program works with young women in Central and East Africa to increase participation and empower women at community, national, and regional levels on issues affecting the health and well-being of women in these areas. This program will expand to all regions in Africa by 2006.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Assistance Program:

This program sets up efforts that specifically assist orphans and vulnerable children in Africa. This includes an Education Fund that is set aside for the education of young children most impacted by Africa.

Leadership Development:

The leadership development program nurtures leadership skills among individuals aged 13-25 years old involved in (or interested to be involved in) activities in the areas of health and development in Africa.

Local Health Data Program:

This program collects local health data (for example on HIV/AIDS incidence and prevalence), including the collection of local stories, experiences, and updates of HIV/AIDS from individuals and organizations in Africa.

ARYI Focus on Activities in Cameroon



World AIDS Day 2003, National Students' Union for the Control of AIDS, Cameroon



Canadian Volunteer spending time with ARYI Cameroon member organization

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global youth coalition on AIDS



We are pleased to share with you an update on the development of the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA). GYCA is an idea in formation by over 575 diverse youth working to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. The coalition was proposed by youth worldwide, including the attendees of the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok and XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona.

More than half of people infected each year by HIV are youth; disproportionately young women. Youth do not have the information, education, and services necessary to protect themselves from infection. In addition, we recognize that the vast majority of people living with HIV/AIDS do not have access to life-saving treatment and care. We believe that by networking HIV/AIDS youth groups and adult allies worldwide, we can strengthen and empower the youth movement against AIDS, in solidarity.

Our Coalition is currently under formation and we invite youth of all ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, and HIV statuses to participate in its development. GYCA recognizes that while there is an enormous array of youth-serving HIV/AIDS organizations worldwide that work on the many facets of the pandemic, there is currently no global coalition that draws together a diversity of youth affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.

Not only is there an absence of a North-South dialogue between youth working to fight HIV/AIDS but many HIV/AIDS youth-led initiatives are uninformed about other groups doing similar work in their own countries. We hope to collaborate to provide the technological and organizational capacity to empower and link youth groups and organizations worldwide. We invite you to join us to devise how to connect organizations to funding, support, networking, and thus reduce duplication of services and provide opportunities for youth to make their voices heard. Please visit us at www.youthaidscoalition.org.

Activities

- GYCA participated in the February 26 Youth AIDS Day, organized by Global Justice, with a series of global actions in 18 countries designed to raise awareness and to scale-up political and community commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS. Regional focal points and their teams, as well as highly active GYCA members came together in a short period of time with few resources to develop incredible actions in their towns, cities, and communities. Further details about global actions is below.
- GYCA was asked to provide feedback into UNAIDS' revamped HIV Prevention Strategy by conducting brief e-consultation from Feb 28-March 3 on specific questions regarding how to scale up prevention efforts for youth. UNFPA's Global Youth Partners, and UNICEF's Voices of Youth also contributed youth input.
- GYCA regional focal points are conducting extensive research projects on progress made toward achieving the targets on HIV/AIDS and youth set forth in the UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session) Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. This is a collaborative project with Global Youth Partners. Reports from 15-17 countries will be published and introduced by the Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr. Thoraya A. Obaid, at a June 2, 2005 Roundtable of the General Assembly at the United Nations Secretariat to 40 member states.
- GYCA is working with TakingITGlobal to develop an interactive website that will help empower youth leaders in HIV/AIDS with the necessary training tools, capacity building resources, events, scholarships,

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opportunities, and information, as well as networking opportunities and a global directory of youth HIV/AIDS organizations and programmes. Please visit us at www.youthaidscoalition.org

- Future plans include contributing to the Global Youth Action Network's review of the World Programme of Action for Youth, reviewing progress made on Millennium Development Goal #6 on HIV/AIDS and possibly bringing youth representatives who are HIV positive and/or from developing nations to the UN General Assembly meeting on the MDGs, possible contributions to ICASA in the fall of 2005, and

strengthening the GYCA secretariat in order to begin reaching out to vulnerable youth on the ground in resource constrained areas. GYCA is also currently working with the International AIDS Secretariat, UNAIDS, FHI, and Advocates for Youth on initial plans for a Youth Force at the Toronto International AIDS Conference in 2006.

It is time for youth worldwide to work in solidarity to protect our bodies, our families, our communities, and our countries from the devastation of HIV/AIDS. For more information or to join our e-forum, please visit www.youthaidscoalition.org, or email joya@youthaidscoalition.org

February 26 Youth AIDS Day Activities:

BANGLADESH

- Press Conference: Dhaka

CAMEROON

- Advocacy and Awareness sessions reaching 102 schools, about 15,000 students and 500 teachers, community leaders and members of Parliament

CANADA

- Drop the Debt Letter Writing Campaign: Montreal, QC; Toronto, ON; Guelph, ON;

EGYPT

- Day of Celebration for HIV/AIDS awareness
- HIV/AIDS Seminar: Mansoura University

GHANA

- Radio Talk Show on HIV/AIDS (JOY 99.7 FM)

GUYANA

- Letters of Hope and publicity through media: Georgetown

INDIA

- Promotional Television Ad for Youth AIDS Day: Imphal West, Manipur
- Discussion Forum: Manipur University
- Meeting and Memorandum Development: Rajasthan
- Awareness Meeting: Mumbai, Gujarat

KENYA

- Discussion Forum: Goethe Institute, Nairobi
- Puppetry, skits, songs, dances and verses "Vijana Tumechill, Rights Hatujachill" ("Sex-wise we are chilling/abstaining, but in our rights, we are not"): Mombasa

- March to the Provincial Administrative Office , Vigil/Solidarity Demonstration & Panel Discussion: Mbita



Mombasa, Kenya- youth procession organized by GYCA member Jacqueline Kowa

KYRGYZSTAN

- School/university visits for HIV/AIDS peer education and Feb. 28 – discussions between youth and government representatives.

NIGERIA

- Youth AIDS Awareness Consultation: Imo State Ahiazu Mbaise Council Area
- Conference on youths, HIV/AIDS, and globalization: Success Academy, Kudirat Abiola Way, Radio Bus Stop, Alausa Ikeja, Lagos

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- Radio Broadcast on HIV/AIDS Awareness: Minaj Systems Radio
- Awareness publications in Nigerian Newspapers: nation-wide



Dr. Kalsoom Akhtar speaking in Lahore, Pakistan- organized by Regional Focal Point Pervaiz Tufail

PAKISTAN

- Awareness Raising Walk: Quetta
- Awareness Raising Seminar: Islamabad
- Capacity Building Seminar: Islamabad
- Documentary Film: Islamabad
- Networking and Linkages Building Conference: Islamabad
- Event: Advocacy Walk and Seminar: Pattoki District Kasur
- Capacity Building Seminar/Workshop: Rawalpindi

SIERRA LEONE

- HIV/AIDS Awareness articles: Free Town

SUDAN

- Document Signing to scale-up political commitment on HIV/AIDS

TANZANIA

- Youth Forum on HIV/AIDS: The Impact of HIV/AIDS to Tanzanian Young People

UGANDA

- "Wake Up, It's Time" Letter Writing Campaign: Mbarara
- "Wake Up, It's Time": Teleconference with students at University of Toronto: Mbarara University of Science and Technology
- "Wake Up, It's Time": Protest March and Voluntary Counseling and Testing
- "Wake Up, It's Time" Radio/TV Talk Show

UNITED KINGDOM

- Signature collection to ensure HIV/AIDS treatment, Global Fund funding, debt cancellation and generic drug accessibility are on the G8 Agenda

UNITED STATES

- Student March Against AIDS: White House - *Washington, DC*

www.youthaidsmarch.org

ZAMBIA

- Peaceful demonstration to the IMF and WorldBank to forgive debt for impoverished nations battling HIV/AIDS



Manipur, India- organized by Regional Focal Point Vikram Laishram

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