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1) RFP Applications

GYCA empowers young leaders with the skills, knowledge, resources and opportunities they need to scale up HIV/AIDS interventions amongst their peers. GYCA programming is implemented primarily by 3 staff people at the North Secretariat who are assisted by a strong Task Force, 12 Regional Focal Points (RFPs), and a team of National Focal Points (NFPs) worldwide.

GYCA is currently recruiting 2007 RFPs. Please look at the principle functions, duties and responsibilities, criteria for application and benefits if you are interested in applying. The term for the position is 1 year (Jan – Dec 2007).



2006 GYCA RFPs and members in action

The application form is available on our website at <http://www.youthaidscoalition.org/>

Deadline: Monday, December 11th, 2006. Applications should be sent to info@youthaidscoalition.org.

Please DO NOT apply if you do not meet the criteria in the form. You must be a GYCA member to apply. Please note that applications received after this date, incomplete applications will NOT be considered. We look forward to receiving them!

2) World AIDS Day

Local Gatherings are a part of GYCA's capacity-building efforts to reach young people at the community level, especially young people without access to information communication technology (ICTs) and marginalized youth. The past series of local gatherings were highly successful events that fostered networking, sharing of information and best practices, and the development of collaborative projects and partnerships between young people working in HIV/AIDS in the same community or city that might not have met before.

GYCA members are holding 45 local gatherings for World AIDS Day in 25 countries so far. GYCA liaised with The World AIDS Campaign (WAC), who generously sent materials to GYCA members to organize the gatherings and also promoted on their website. Please add your event on their website if you do not see it: <http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/>.

Send Kiran (Kiran@youthaidscoalition.org) a short report of your gathering **with pictures**, and we can showcase it in the next newsletter.

3) UN Global Youth Leaders Summit

GYCA members Rotimi Olawale (President, The Intellectual Group) and Hauwa Umar (Program assistant, GHAIN) were selected to represent Nigeria at the first ever United Nations Global Youth Leaders Summit at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from November 29th to November 31st, 2006.

Hauwa and Rotimi were selected by the United Nations (Office for Sport and Development) based on their previous involvement in the Pan African Youth Summits held in Senegal (2004) and Morocco (2005), and also

because of their work on youth development in Nigeria. The United Nations Development Program in Nigeria is supporting the participation of these young Nigerians at the summit.

Please check out www.unyouthsummit.org for more details on the summit and a profile of Hauwa and Rotimi. Contact them for more details: (Hauwa Umar – haumar@ghain.org and Rotimi Olawale – rotimi@youthaidscoalition.org)

4) Fighting HIV/AIDS in Egypt

Past GYCA Project Management e-course participant, Ahmed Haroon, is leading a project, “Promoting Against HIV/AIDS in Egypt”. The project is expected to start on November 20th for three months in Cairo, Egypt. It consists of holding 20 lectures in ten universities and schools each. These lectures are on the basics of HIV/AIDS; its nature, how it is spread and how to deal with and support infected people. The project aims to be educational while also spreading awareness. The attendees will be given information about developing a project on HIV/AIDS in their community. They will also receive handouts with the relevant information. Various organizations including GYCA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, SDA, IEARN etc. are supporting this project. Contact Ahmed Haroon for more details at: ahmedmaharoon@yahoo.com

5) GYCA Mapping

One of GYCA's four pillars is networking and sharing of best practices, and as a result we have a 'Global Directory' on our site of youth-led and youth-serving HIV/AIDS organizations, programs and networks that are affiliated with GYCA. This directory is continuously updated by RFPs as a resource to young people seeking other organizations in their community or region doing similar work, or seeking volunteer, scholarship and/or professional opportunities. It is also used by international organizations seeking to partner with youth in their countries and communities.

Please go to:

<http://www.youthaidscoalition.org/orgs.html> and check if your organization is listed. If not, please contact Kiran at kiran@youthaidscoalition.org to add it. Your addition will also automatically appear in TakingITGlobal's directory.

6) E-courses

GYCA is currently offering the **Grant Writing and Fundraising e-course** from Nov. 20th – Dec. 20th. It is the last e-course for the year. The e-courses will resume again in late January. Check the GYCA website and the e-forum for future dates to apply for other e-courses. Contact Caitlin@youthaidscoalition.org for more details.

7) Youth in Action Workshop –

Youth from West Africa came together for the Global Youth Action Network's *Youth in Action Workshop*, held October 17-19 in Accra, Ghana. While the majority of the participants were from various regions in Ghana, there were ten international participants from Nigeria, Cameroon, the Gambia and Sierra Leone.



Sydney Hushie, GYCA National Focal Point for Ghana, and Caitlin Chandler, Project Officer for GYCA North Secretariat, co-facilitated the workshop, which was supported by

the World Bank. They led sessions on Project Management, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategies and Political Advocacy. Transparency International facilitated a session on anti-corruption monitoring in governance, and local officials from the World Bank came to discuss how the Bank participates in development efforts. At the end of the conference, it was announced that participants could apply for a limited number of small grants from GYAN to help fund their respective projects.

There was tremendous energy at the conference. Participants brought with a wealth of knowledge on how young people can participate in





development work. Several case studies specific to West Africa were discussed, and the participants worked towards developing sample project plans in key areas such as HIV/AIDS and environmental protection. Many participants spoke of the need for an alliance of West African young people, and one of the aims of the conference was to link up activists across the region to promote the sharing of resources and cross-organizational collaboration. Participants also spoke of the lack of awareness in their communities about the Millennium Development Goals, and Sydney demonstrated quick and easy ways to spread knowledge about the MDGs. Contact Caitlin at Caitlin@youthaidscoalition.org for more details.

8) News from MENA

Dr. Mohamed Awad Tag, the former Egyptian Minister of Health and Population, stated last year that Egypt has 818 HIV+ cases. Although this number was considered an underestimate compared to UNAIDS estimates, a few days ago Dr. Ihab Salah, the National AIDS Program coordinator, said that the government estimates of HIV+ cases has risen to 5,300 cases, which is about six times last year's estimate. As a result, Dr. Ihab stated that the ministry is working on a five-year national strategy to fight HIV/AIDS.

As a way to start including youth in the fight against HIV/AIDS, different youth initiatives and networks were asked to help plan the next World AIDS Day. GYCA was invited to help coordinate and participate in WAD events, along with five other youth initiatives/networks including YPEER and EFPA (Egyptian Family Planning Association). The WAD celebration this year will be in the form of a Youth Camp for three days where about 300 – 400 young people will attend to share in different activities that will increase their awareness and commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. GYCA and other participating youth organizations had several meetings to design the agenda for the Youth Camp, and it was agreed that the attendants will be divided into 10 – 12 groups, and each initiative/network will be responsible for organizing and facilitating a three-hour session to one or two of these groups. GYCA will be facilitating two groups.

The sessions will include; HIV/AIDS basic knowledge, stigma and global concerns, concepts of volunteerism and political advocacy. At the end, the participants will come up with a declaration that will empower youth and those

fighting HIV/AIDS in Egypt. Currently an e-consultation is in the process on the Regional MENA listserv to help prepare the draft of the declaration. The aim is to get the declaration signed by the government and by the entire delegation of youth participants attending the Camp.

To participate in the e-consultation and/or to find out more details about the event, please join the GYCA-MENA e-forum by sending a blank email to: GYCA-mena-subscribe@groups.takingitglobal.org or contact Amr@youthaidscoalition.org.

9) National Youth Trainings in Macedonia



During the last few months, Miodraga Stefanovska, GYCA NFP, conducted five trainings with young people of the MIA youth network. All the trainings were focused on reducing the risk of HIV

transmission among youth in the Republic of Macedonia as well as behavior change communication techniques. The average number of participants per training was 15, and the trainings lasted three days. All the participants were trained in transmitting correct information on HIV/AIDS to their peers.

Since there was a strong interest from young people to join the trainings and become HIV/AIDS informers in their community, MIA's team developed a standardized selection criterion by which leaders in each community (rural and urban areas) are selected. The local government and schools play an important role in the selection process. These institutions nominate young people from their local communities for the trainings, to inform their peers and undertake HIV prevention activities with MIAs support.

During the last year MIA has organized two Trainings of Trainers (TOT) with 40 participants total. Each young person has informed at least 300 young people in their communities and schools. All the information sessions they have organized are under the supervision of MIA's local youth teams, which consist of experienced trainers.

10) Local Youth Gatherings in Macedonia

There were eight local gathering sessions organized to update AIDS activists in the Republic of Macedonia of the outcomes of the Toronto International AIDS Conference 2006.

The local gatherings took place at the Youth Center. Young peer informers and trainers on HIV/AIDS topics were introduced to the activities and opportunities for HIV prevention and to the experience of young people around the world faced with the AIDS pandemic. New ideas for conducting a country specific approach for preventing HIV/AIDS among young people were discussed. Contact Mia for more details at: vesnamia@osi.net.mk



Sessions gave women the public speaking skills to advocate for issues affecting them and gave them the knowledge to develop their own action plans for potential projects in their communities. During the workshops, women were given some time to share their experiences of living positively. Sharing sessions were also conducted to help some who were still in states of denial to open up and gain confidence in themselves. Some issues recognized at the workshops were being denied treatment of STIs, health care workers' attitudes, lack of information on PMCT and STIs and lack of follow-up. Contact Andile at swaziland@icw.org for more information.

12) Framework for Peer Education

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) office in London organized a consultative meeting to develop a framework of good practices for peer education programs. Upon completion, this framework is to be a guide for IPPF regional offices in planning peer education programs. The meeting lasted three days 9th – 11th of October 2006.

The meeting brought together the Program Officers in charge of Adolescents and Youth from all regional offices, as well as peer educators from Columbia and Estonia. Sydney Tetteh Hushie, GYCA Taskforce member, was invited to this meeting, along with a few other young people from different peer education networks. Everyone present shared experiences, reviewed existing resource materials, and explored implementation issues, all relating to peer education. Hence, the meeting did not develop a new framework but drew from past resource materials and existing models on peer education.

At the end of the three days, the team achieved consensus on the main elements within a comprehensive framework of good practices for quality peer education. The process has just started and a draft will be sent to all participants for final comments. GYCA participated in this meeting to share experiences in organizing young people all over the world and to share experiences on local level implementation of online trainings and programs. In general, the meeting was a success as it provided possible networking opportunities. Contact Sydney at sydney@youthaidscoalition.org for more details.

11) “Positive Women Monitoring Positive Change”



Andile Phindile Nhleko, GYCA member and past e-course participant, held and facilitated workshops in Swaziland on the needs of women living with HIV. Over 80 HIV

positive women attended. Swaziland has a large percentage of young women living with HIV who are not well informed about their sexual reproductive rights, and ultimately are helpless and face abuse in the hands of men. UNDP supported the workshops that were run in all the regions(4) to sensitize women living with HIV on issues of women's rights and HIV/AIDS, various international and regional human rights and HIV/AIDS related instruments, declarations and commitments e.g. UNGASS, ABUJA, CEDAW, GIPA etc.

13) Working to Empower

Northern Uganda has been plagued by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) for the last eighteen years. This rebel group, which has displaced an estimated two million people, has also abducted citizens for the purpose of transporting goods, becoming forced soldiers and in the case of many women, to rape. The Internal Displaced Person camps that were created did not stop attacks, nor have the peace talks in Juba offered any answer to the immense fear held by those living in the camps. Daily struggles include security, but also lack of nourishment and medical care.



In the 1990s, Uganda witnessed the largest decrease in national HIV prevalence in the world, after heavy implementation of the ABC method, these trends

have not continued in the face of continued violence and political unrest. National HIV prevalence averages are estimated around 7%, with the Northern regions (where the LRA continues its war) averaging a much higher 12%. Clearly this disproportional representation is related to the decades of civil strife. Issues that connect this conflict to HIV directly include sexual abuse, but indirectly include extreme poverty, a lack of medical resources, and the hesitation of the international community to offer their services in the face of conflict.

Working To Empower (WTE) has decided to try and reverse this trend. During 2007 WTE will hold seminars, create peer education teams, build resource bases, sponsor community-based education projects, expand an orphan school sponsorship program, as well as creating new and developing existing income generating projects. WTE aims to empower local existing organizations working with HIV education efforts, expanding them, and reaching additional IDP camps in the area through outreach work. Local peer educators will continue weekly efforts in sensitization for various communities through an incentive based program run by WTE.

WTE is a Canadian based organization that has previously worked in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Benin and Uganda. In these locations, WTE held various programs similar to the one outlined above and felt their grassroots approach enabled positive results- providing rationale for its continuation. WTE's approach is locally driven and culturally appropriate. The organization works with existing organizations and networks, starting first by looking at local situations, demands, needs and culture before creating the projects. Initial seminars allow community members to provide the ideas on which the projects are based.

For additional information please visit:

www.workingtoempower.org or contact Logan Cochrane: logan_cochrane@hotmail.com

14) WHO/UNICEF Global Consultation

Malawi is called the "warm heart of Africa" and six GYCA members, have been guests of Blantyre's hospitality for the past few days as delegates to the WHO/UNICEF Global Consultation on "Strengthening the Health Sector Contribution to Care, Support, Treatment, and Prevention for Young People Living with HIV." The meeting brings together health care professionals, activists, and youth living with HIV and AIDS to improve interventions and to give YLWHA a voice.

GYCA members attending are:

Joya Banerjee – GYCA Program Coordinator, USA

Marco Gomes - RFP North America, Canada

Ricardo Baruch - RFP Latin America, México

Gracia Violeta Ross

Quiroga - Task

Force Member,

Bolivia Kingsley

Essomeounu, Task

Force Member,

Nigeria

Edward

Kankhomba -

GYCA member,

Malawi



A day before the meeting started, we went to explore Malawi and wound up at an AIDS service organization



(ASO). We had initially planned to visit an AIDS orphanage on an informal tour organized by a local GYCA member, but the plan fell through, so we decided to travel around ourselves and ended up walking right past the Malawi Network of AIDS Service Organizations (MANASO). We enthusiastically asked if we could visit, and inside we met a lovely Japanese woman who was volunteering there after attending a university in México.

We also met a young man named Mathias who told us about his community-based organization (CBO) doing AIDS outreach, peer education, and caring for AIDS orphans. He graciously took us on a trip to his far away office on a small and rickety *makota*, with space for eight but stuffed with about 15 people. The bus would pull off the road every 1/10th of a km to pick up new passengers and re-attach the door frame.



Marco Gomes and Joya Banerjee
with Malawian AIDS Orphans in Blantyre

We walked along a long dirt road to the office. The level of poverty was astounding. There seemed to be no running water for miles, and I saw young girls carrying water in old gasoline jugs and antifreeze containers.

What was even more striking to me was that even with the billions of dollars pouring into HIV/ AIDS, the ASOs in Malawi, one of the poorest nations on earth, cannot get access to condoms. All of the AIDS orphans at this ASO are HIV positive - Nevirapine seems nowhere to be found. If you are HIV positive, your children are sure to be so as well, unless nature or luck intervenes.



The directors of the organization, HIV positive themselves, have no funding for their work - not even for paste to put up posters in their office. The

organization feeds 46 HIV positive orphans on a daily basis, all out of their own pockets.

We had a lot of questions for them, and met some of their HIV positive female members. Nothing makes this work more worthwhile than meeting someone who has absolutely no material possessions and knows she will die within one or two years for lack of ARVs, but who shines with an inner brilliance and shows kindness to her community and to those even less fortunate and more vulnerable.

We could not leave without giving them a donation of whatever cash we had on us, and hoped that it could help in some way. Marco and I will be sending MANASO several boxes of condoms as soon as we return home to distribute amongst the various ASOs.

15) Living Positively – Interviewing Makoti Edwin

“Being positive hasn’t affected anything. I can say I have used the opportunity of being positive to do good things in my community and I can see the impact that I have made and am continuing to make by living positively and openly with the status,” says 22 year-old Makoti Edwin from Tanzania.

How I got infected – I was sexually abused when I was a kid and was forced to sodomize a male adult. I was diagnosed with HIV in 2003 after I went for voluntary counseling and testing at the hospital. I was not very shocked as I knew that I had been in a risky situation before. My family, especially my mother, supported me and we have been very close since.

Living With HIV – The most important thing is eating well and the way one lives with the disease. I know that I have HIV, but that doesn’t change the fact that I am a human being and can still do anything and live a normal life. I respect myself and others. I do not feel ashamed by openly living with the disease because I want other people to learn and take measures to protect themselves from acquiring the disease.

My life is very normal, but very busy. I coach street children to play football, work everyday from morning to afternoon helping Canadian volunteers working in Tanzania, and attend high school studies in the evening. I also go out and party hard on weekends, and sometimes during the week. I



enjoy watching movies (comedy) and football. I go out on dates, I rap, and I dance. House/techno is my favorite music. I am currently not on ARVs as my immune system is still strong. My CD4 count is high.

Goals and Aspirations – I am very talented at football and was dreaming of playing for London-based Chelsea football club some day. However, I can't reach this goal now due to my status. I now dream of becoming a professional HIV/AIDS journalist so as to talk, see, and report different issues from around the globe concerning HIV/AIDS and PLWHA's. I don't think my current status can stop me from realizing this dream.

In order to halt the disease, I believe that we need to provide HIV/AIDS education to different groups, especially young people, as they are the ones who are most affected and infected with the disease. Political leaders, religious leaders and celebrities (musicians, actors and actresses, football and basketball players etc) around the world also should play a big role in the fight against the disease by openly talking about it and even disclosing their status. This will show that anybody can get HIV no matter who you are or what you do. We now need more actions than words!

Facing Stigma – I haven't faced any kind of stigma or discrimination, although many PLWHAs in my country and around the globe say stigma and discrimination are the biggest challenges that they face in their lives. I have been open with my status almost everywhere: at home, school, work. I have been raising awareness on television, newspapers and magazines, radio stations, etc. Everyone I know is aware of my status and has been very supportive. They encourage me to get more information on the disease, about living positively and how they can avoid HIV. I also reach out to youth who are positive and are afraid to disclose their status because of stigma and discrimination from the community. They are afraid that their partners will leave them once they find out their status as they want to have sex. I still date very beautiful girls who know my status and I am proud of this.

Stakeholders need to recognize us and stop pretending like we don't exist. They should build our capacity so we can be confident and more effective in what we do in our daily lives. My friends and family all know my status, as I mentioned earlier, and they are all still best friends. It's not

necessary to disclose your status, but doing so is very crucial as it helps reduce stigma and silence.

Role Models – My role model is a musician from Ireland called Bono, who uses his talent to fight for the poor and the poorest.

Advice for Other Young People – We have to believe in ourselves. The best way of achieving something is to come out and say that we need change and rights. People won't hear you if you stay silent. We also can't fight social stigma and discrimination if we hide and keep quiet. We have to voice our concerns. I don't wish to be remembered, but I do want to see a world free of HIV/AIDS.



If you have any information or material that is HIV/AIDS and youth focused, or if you know of any excellent examples of people working in HIV/AIDS intervention in your country and think they should be highlighted in our newsletter, please submit their information to kiran@youthaidscoalition.org.

Join GYCA by subscribing to GYCA's partner organization TIG at www.takingitglobal.org and then sending a blank email to: gyca-subscribe@groups.takingitglobal.org.