

## 2009 Young Leaders Summit: Outcomes and Recommendations

### Building a Stronger AIDS Response With Young People

In June 2009, twenty-seven young leaders from grassroots organizations and policy groups from over 22 countries united at the aids2031 Young Leaders Summit to discuss better addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination. What did they have to say?

**Recognize** and foster the leadership of young people living with HIV as a central strategy to strengthen the AIDS response. Channel **funding** and **support** to youth-led initiatives that demonstrate effectiveness at challenging HIV-related stigma and discrimination and providing youth-specific services. **Make space for** young people to shape health policy and **mentor** young people to lead.

The following are the key outcomes and recommendations from the Summit on creating an AIDS response prepared to address the stigma and discrimination faced by young people both positive and negative. The full meeting report is available online at [www.aids2031.org](http://www.aids2031.org).

### Safe Spaces for Young People Living with HIV

Greater investment to support the engaged leadership of young people living with HIV in the AIDS response will help sustain young leadership in the long-term AIDS response. Barriers currently limit the long-term participation of young people living with HIV, including burnout, over-engagement of involved activists, and lack of institutional support.

- 1. Create better programs for addressing the isolation and trauma faced by young people living with HIV.** Increase global networking among young positive-led organizations and initiatives; develop standards of care for HIV-positive speakers, such as debriefing sessions for young leaders after speaking at meetings and conferences; and further develop and strengthen international interactive information technology platforms to connect young people living with HIV and young leaders prior to key events, so that an ongoing support mechanism is in place.
- 2. Develop strategies for supporting new leadership among young positive people.** This could include young leaders living with HIV acting as advisors to AIDS program directors, helping to monitor and evaluate projects, and serving as integral staff members of organizations. These strategies should be developed and implemented by donors, UN agencies, civil society groups, and other partners in the AIDS response.
- 3. Create safe spaces for young people living with HIV within spiritual and academic institutions.** Map global religious partners working to decrease stigma and discrimination and address why young people living with HIV do not have safe spaces in many spiritual institutions. Ask academic institutions to create or revisit their programs and services for young people living with HIV to ensure they meet the needs of students.

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4. **Conduct research on the meaningful participation of young people living with HIV.** Operational research will help demonstrate the value of the meaningful participation of young people living with HIV in program and policy creation. The research process must be led by (and for) young people living with HIV. During the Summit, UNAIDS committed to support the facilitation and administration of this research.

### Funding for Initiatives Led by Young People

Targeted support for young people leading their own initiatives, including management training programs linked to funding to support skills building in grant writing, project management and monitoring and evaluation, will lead to higher rates of success among youth-led organizations.

1. **Young Leaders Fund:** The Young Leaders Fund is a collaborative, grant-making mechanism to support youth-led initiatives on HIV/AIDS. The Fund specifically seeks to support the core costs of initiatives, and also the leadership development needed to create sustainable initiatives. aids2031 is currently taking the lead in establishing a host organization for the Fund, and in fall 2009 will convene youth AIDS networks to set the fund's grant-making priorities and governance structure.
2. **5% for the Future Campaign:** This campaign calls for 5% of donor HIV funds to be allocated to youth-led organizations. The campaign aims to help funders commit to an ongoing investment in young people to ensure relevant and innovative solutions now and strong leadership for the future. The call is directed to multi-lateral donors, bilateral donors, national governments and foundations.
3. **Develop a donor report card on young people:** The creation of a donor report card on youth-led initiatives, with a template for donors to report their efforts to support youth-led organizations working on HIV, could act as a mechanism to incite donor accountability to young people. Such a report card could highlight the percentage of funding given to youth-led organizations, as well as other ways donors support young people and young leadership.

### Use Media & Technology to Challenge HIV-Related Stigma & Discrimination

Leveraging the power of media and technology can help address HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Many AIDS campaigns using new media and technology do not convey anti-stigma messages, and the media is often a stigmatizing force towards young people and young people living with HIV.

1. **Capitalize on the upcoming FIFA World Cup South Africa 2010** to launch an anti-stigma and discrimination media campaign. The World Cup 2010 is a key media opportunity to reach young people and address HIV-related stigma and discrimination in South Africa. For example, although soccer players are often engaged in HIV prevention campaigns, there could be greater focus on engaging sports celebrities on specific stigma and discrimination issues relevant to young peoples' lives.
2. **Utilize text messaging to reach young people with anti-stigma and discrimination messaging.** A campaigning idea was proposed called the "Text 4 Truth" campaign, which would use SMS messages to reduce stigma and discrimination through an interactive text message quiz. The quiz's aim would be to debunk HIV/AIDS myths.

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3. **Develop and disseminate a media training program** to address stigma and discrimination by journalists and media professionals towards young people. This could be in the form of “Dos and Don'ts” developed by young people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

### Strengthen the Capacity of Young People to Participate in Policy & Lead

A sustainable and effective global response to HIV is rooted in human rights frameworks that cater to specific needs of different communities. Young leaders need access to information, networks, and skills-building to better influence policy development concerning stigma and discrimination.

1. **The Young Leaders Mentorship Hub:** The goal of the Young Leaders Mentorship Hub is to create an exchange of ideas and knowledge between young leaders and more established leaders, including decision makers in media, policy, and funding. Such an exchange would allow young leaders to gain insight and skills towards building sustainable initiatives, and allow decision makers to learn from the capacity and ideas of young people. UNAIDS has committed to incubate the Hub.
2. **Document achievements** and collect evidence on the value of participation of young people in policy making through a published collection of “success stories.”
3. **Provide simple and youth-friendly tools on understanding stigma and discrimination**, governmental processes and using human rights frameworks, along with building leadership and advocacy skills through trainings, online courses and pre-conference workshops.

Young people are an integral piece of the AIDS response. Start thinking differently about young people, and young peoples' needs, and create a different future for AIDS.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> aids2031 Young Leaders Summit was organized by aids2031 in close collaboration with a youth-led planning committee, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador HRH Crown Princess Mette-Marit. The youth-led planning committee included members from the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS, the World AIDS Campaign, Hope's Voice International, UNAIDS and aids2031.

<http://www.aids2031.org/>