

Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS

Youth HIV/AIDS Leaders: Building an Empowered Alliance



December, 2004

Mila Gorokhovich and Joya Banerjee

Table of Contents

I.	Background of GYCA	2
II.	Introduction to the E-Consultation	3
III.	Week 1: October 18- 24 - Idea of GYCA	3
	A) What Youth Hoped to Gain from the E-Consultation	4
	B) Reflections on the Value-Added of GYCA.....	5
	C) Feedback on Existing Draft Framework.....	6
	D) Reservations and Doubts about the Development of GYCA.....	6
	E) Challenges Facing Youth Leaders.....	7
IV.	Week 2: October 25 - 30 - Thematic Priority Areas of GYCA	9
	A) Capacity Building	9
	B) Best Practices	10
	C) Website.....	11
	D) Political Will and Government Accountability to UNGASS and Youth	12
	E) Toronto and GYCA as a Youth Consultancy to International AIDS Conferences.....	13
V.	Week 3: November 1- 7 - Structure and Initial Logistics of GYCA Set Up..	14
	A) Structure of Secretariat and Regional Operations.....	14
	B) Feasibility of Working Through Existing Networks and NGOs	14
	C) Availability of Youth Leaders.....	16
	D) Sustainability of Volunteers	16
	E) Availability of Dedicated Youth Leaders	16
	F) Suggested Next Steps Post E-consultation to Sustain Momentum.....	17
VI.	Week 4: November 22-29 – Role in International AIDS Conferences	19
	A) Youth Programming in Toronto.....	19
	B) Scholarship Competition for Increased Youth Participation.....	20
	C) How to Increase Youth Presenters.....	20
	D) Youth Age Limit and Approaching Private Businesses for Funding.....	21
	E) Youth and UNGASS, MDG Commitments	22
	F) GYCA and the Future.....	23
VII.	Conclusion.....	24
	Appendix I - Member Countries	25

Background of GYCA

More than half of the 5 million people worldwide infected each year by HIV are youth, disproportionately young women. Youth lack the information, education, and services necessary to protect themselves from infection. In addition, the vast majority of people living with HIV/AIDS do not have access to life-saving treatment and care.

Youth are uniquely positioned to affect change in the exponential spread of the pandemic. They possess the idealism, dedication, creativity, and enthusiasm to become leaders in the HIV/AIDS movement. The Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA) believes that by networking youth leaders in HIV/AIDS and adult allies worldwide, we can strengthen and empower the youth movement against HIV/AIDS.

GYCA recognizes that while there is an enormous array of youth-serving HIV/AIDS organizations and networks worldwide that works 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 youth-led initiatives are uninformed about other groups doing similar work in their own countries. Youth need access to a central clearinghouse where information is available in a consistent and reliable format and to which access is free and instantaneous. GYCA seeks to create an alliance that facilitates collaboration between youth groups and organizations and that links youth to necessary technological and organizational capacity at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

GYCA is a project currently under development by over 380 youth representing organizations around the world working to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. The coalition was initially proposed by activists working on youth representation at the International AIDS Conferences, and attendees of the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, 2004, and the XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, 2002, and has now expanded to include youth from other networks as well.

At Bangkok, the idea for GYCA was informally discussed within small groups at various youth sessions during the conference. Most participants were extremely keen on the idea and at the final youth session at Bangkok, the youth agreed on a draft of thematic areas, prospective goals and post-conference activities. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, as well as other major adult leaders, personally pledged to members their interest in the creation of such a coalition.

Attendees of Bangkok committed to the creation of GYCA formed an initial planning team that expanded to include other youth leaders in HIV/AIDS and adult allies. The mention of the 'initial task force' refers to those individuals who continued communication with various key players at the conference and beyond in order to make GYCA a reality.

As a follow up to discussions at Bangkok on the lack of resources and opportunities for youth involvement, and based upon the recommendations set forth in UNICEF's report on its youth consultancy at Bangkok,¹ GYCA is developing a concrete strategy to empower young people through comprehensive networking and knowledge sharing, advocacy, and capacity-building. The coalition aims to increase youth participation and representation at major international meetings on HIV/AIDS issues, particularly at biannual international AIDS conferences.

¹ UNICEF, "Young People Speak Out: Meeting Our Rights to HIV Prevention and Care: Access for All." 2004. http://www.unicef.org/voy/media/Bangkok_Youth_Report_2004.pdf

Youth lobbying for greater involvement at past international AIDS conferences has been met with promises of support, and requests for specific ways in which adults can assist. There is growing support for youth participation in HIV/AIDS work by many “adult allies” but the question remains, ‘Tell me what youth want!’² This report is one stepping-stone of many towards the realization of the specific goals that youth HIV/AIDS leaders lobby to achieve.

Introduction to the E-Consultation

As a preliminary needs-assessment to guide the development of the Coalition, GYCA conducted a month long e-consultation using TakingITGlobal technology from October 18th to November 15th. The purpose of the consultation was to identify the needs, goals, and perspectives of youth leaders in the fight against the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Over 365 youth leaders participated, representing 48 countries.³

The results of the e-consultation were used to construct GYCA’s organisational framework as well as to guide its course regarding logistical structure, future projects, and subsequent steps for membership involvement, including that of youth in resource-constrained areas.⁴ Highly active members will be selected as regional focal points, and will serve to expand the reach of GYCA’s target audience: youth leaders in need of empowering information, skills, services, resources, networking, and opportunities.

Each week, e-consultation moderators Mila Gorokhovich (Columbia Global Justice and Oxford Stop AIDS, UK) and Joya Banerjee (UNFPA, USA) posted specific questions to GYCA’s e-forum, designed to engender thought-provoking responses and discussions. Members drew on their experience and local expertise to flesh out the gaps in current youth-serving programmes and resources, and to brainstorm methodologies for carrying out GYCA’s mission of empowering youth leaders engaged in the HIV/AIDS movement.

Weekly summaries compiled responses and were translated into French and Spanish by Sylvie Niombo (AZUR Development, DRC), Jill Mills (Global Youth Action Network, USA), and Luis Davila Ortega (Global Youth Action Network, USA). The consultation culminated with a definitive agreement on the need for such a global youth coalition. It is intended to bring attention towards youth who are ready to collaborate and exhibit responsibility, reliance and results.

² Graca Machel, ‘Meet the Leaders’ session at Bangkok XV International AIDS Conference, 2004

³ For a full list of member countries, please see Appendix I, page 31.

⁴ The term “resource-constrained” refers to youth who may not have access to the internet and to other communication technology

Week 1: October 18- 24 - Idea of GYCA

Youth worldwide received the invitation to the e-consultation via e-mail, the web, and word-of-mouth. The invitation was sent to many e-forums and youth-serving organisations and was forwarded on from there. During the first two weeks, over 300 youth joined the Coalition; since then almost 100 more have joined. Participants were asked to submit registration information for the beginnings of GYCA's global directory, and asked to respond in detail to questions about the needs, goals, and aspirations of youth leaders working to fight HIV/AIDS. They began with their expectations for the consultation and their aspirations for the Coalition.

What Youth Hoped to Gain from the E-Consultation

Participants in the e-consultation identified four to five specific, realistic goals for the Coalition that would distinguish it from existing groups and networks. These were narrowed down to the sharing of information (news, reports and publications, success stories, best practices, events and opportunities, etc.); networking existing resources, leaders, and their skills; building the capacity of youth leaders; and planning for the 2006 XVI Toronto International AIDS Conference.

GYCA must facilitate open communication between regions and the sharing of ideas that will allow them to learn from each others' experiences. Members of GYCA recognized that youth are often unaware of programmes, policies, and projects even in their own countries, and can learn from the sharing of best practices what approaches to HIV/AIDS prevention and care fail, and succeed. They hoped that engaging TIG technology in the movement will allow the easy sharing of surveys, documents, statistics, innovative programmes, perspectives, and news. They also hoped that collaboration with youth from other countries will broaden their awareness of issues, challenges, and solutions in HIV/AIDS work.

Participants reported that they had made contact through GYCA with other youth working on similar issues in their countries and regions, and supported the proposition for GYCA to create a global directory of youth HIV/AIDS organisations and programmes, through which youth can collaborate, share skills, and avoid the duplication of services. Members hoped that by linking youth by country and region, GYCA will facilitate the process of searching for opportunities to get involved such as scholarships, internships and jobs. It will also aid youth in finding training resources, funding, employees, volunteers, skilled professionals, adult allies, and mentors for their projects and organisations.

The consultation found that many youth possess excellent leadership skills and innovative ideas for prevention and care; however, they often lack the technical skills and knowledge to put their ideas into action or to gain credibility to influence adult-driven programmes. Members pushed for a capacity building priority area that will empower youth to develop technical skills. Specific needs are: training on how to write project and grant proposals and abstracts, how to train other youth in prevention, treatment, addressing sex and sexuality issues, and training on successful coalition-

"I hope to be exposed to the facts and findings of other young people like me. I wish to learn from others' points of view and be able to contribute meaningfully as an employee of my government in addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS." – Belinda-Maree Gara, 26, Papua New Guinea Department of Treasury, Papua New Guinea

building. Members also recognized the need for training on how to find funding opportunities, and how to meet funders' stringent criteria.

Reflections on the Value-Added of GYCA

Overall, GYCA is seen as a significant contributor to successful HIV prevention efforts to reduce infection rates among youth. Youth see GYCA as strongly positioned to influence adult-driven programmes and policies, and to integrate youth participation into HIV/AIDS work worldwide. Members hope that GYCA can create a standard or blueprint for youth to be used in HIV prevention worldwide, tailored to specific country needs and climates.

It was recognized that there are already many regional groups and networks, but there is no international alliance that links these groups together. Participants hope that GYCA will take the lead in creating a global network with a strong knowledge and skills base that will be recognized by governments, leaders in the cause, and the International AIDS Secretariats. Members advise that the alliance should be a technology-driven clearinghouse that compiles and makes available existing knowledge and resources. The alliance must represent a diversity of youth, representing all regions, races, religions, HIV statuses, sexual orientations, disabled youth, and youth with various educational and professional backgrounds (from civil society, faith community, government, academia, etc.)

GYCA must create strong and meaningful youth-adult partnerships. It was acknowledged that the international community is nowadays more often recognizing the fruitfulness of youth-adult partnerships, but such partnerships are few and far between, or have not been highlighted and made public as best practices.

Participants suggested that GYCA's role as a clearinghouse will make youth input easily available to adults working on HIV/AIDS. They seek to develop strong communication between youth and adults, and to involve youth in existing programmes by making them more accessible to young people.

GYCA was called upon to showcase youth achievements in prevention and treatment. GYCA should use its network of expertise to compile and create youth-friendly HIV prevention messages in the form of pamphlets, brochures, videos, and other materials that are inexpensive, translated into several languages, and accessible online and easily.

GYCA must provide organisational and technological support to youth groups worldwide. Specifically, this includes delivering resources and training opportunities, creating standards for needs assessment processes for countries' youth HIV/AIDS situations, and guidelines for conducting monitoring and evaluation. GYCA's methodology should be to create regional networks (and in the future, local committees) that will disseminate information, resources, and opportunities.

"[GYCA should provide] resources to those who want to get involved, but feel like they don't know enough to do so, or feel like they don't have the skills to develop campaigns, policies, publications, etc. [GYCA should] provide models that can be replicated by almost anyone!"
David Suk, 19, McGill Global AIDS Coalition, Canada

Members acknowledged that one of GYCA's strengths is to involve youth from all regions in global advocacy campaigns. As an alliance working in solidarity, GYCA will be uniquely positioned to lobby and pressure governments to increase access to youth-friendly information, education, and services regarding HIV/AIDS.

Feedback about the Draft Framework of GYCA

Members were generally in agreement with the goals and methodologies set forth in the draft framework, authored by GYCA's initial task force. They suggested that the framework be adapted and updated according to the input provided by the e-consultation.

It was suggested that the preliminary goals of the draft were too ambitious, and should be based on a needs assessment (i.e. the e-consultation) that would create a detailed justification of what GYCA plans to do, and how it will not duplicate existing efforts. Members suggested creating further partnerships with existing organisations and also partnering, in the long term, with governments.

Reservations and Doubts about the Development of GYCA

Consultation participants feared that GYCA might not be effective or sustainable. They expressed concern that GYCA would not move beyond a temporary discussion and would remain a "paper tiger," in other words, rhetoric that would not be transformed into action. Some factors that could hinder the effectiveness of GYCA were identified in the areas of lack of resources and commitment, lack of representation amongst leadership, fears for the autonomy of GYCA from donors and major stakeholders, and the difficulty of targeting diverse communities with differing needs.

With regard to resources, members expressed concern, based on their own experiences, about the difficulty in obtaining funding, staffing, and office space. The lack of resources necessary to run a successful organisation is exacerbated for youth by their lack of credibility amongst adults as meaningful leaders in the HIV/AIDS movement. Participants feared that the goals of GYCA were too ambitious for its currently limited resources. They also feared that the dedication of members might wane over time, because it is difficult to rely upon youth who are often in transitory periods in life, otherwise occupied by the pressures of school, work, and family life.

"The youth are the ones at the most risk, therefore, it is rational that the youth should be empowered to solve their own problems. So far, efforts to sensitise the youth about AIDS have been led by organisations staffed with older generations who may not share the same ideals or norms as the youth."
Crispin M, 23, Swaziland

Participants worried that soliciting funds from major donors and international agencies might jeopardize the autonomy of the alliance, putting it at risk for cooptation by groups with differing agendas. They feared that receiving funds from particular organisations might create unnecessary bureaucracy, censorship, and cooptation of youth voices. Members acknowledged that "youth participation" is the fad of the moment, and that HIV/AIDS organisations are merely paying "lip service" to engaging youth in policy making and programming. They felt that youth continue to be only beneficiaries, rather than participants, in current programmes,

and worried that adults may try to dictate GYCA's agenda.

Members expressed concern that the initial task force is representative mainly of the global north, particularly, the US and Canada. In addition, general membership is highly representative of the global North and Africa; other regions are disproportionately under-represented. Members committed to expanding reach to high-prevalence and high-infection rate areas as well.

Participants discussed the power struggles that often occur among ambitious leaders, competition

between groups with similar mandates, and superficial commitments for youth simply seeking “resume-builders.” It is hoped that responsibilities will be distributed evenly to avoid power struggles and that youth will have opportunities to participate based on merit.

A major concern of the consultation was GYCA’s ability to reach under-served youth in resource-constrained areas. This question prompted the continued discussion on how to reach out to youth without access to technology. Participants felt that only privileged youth were able to contribute to the consultation, and that those youth most vulnerable to infection were not part of the discussion.

Some members questioned the universality of programmes and policies. They noted that HIV/AIDS work is highly political. Religion, culture, and politics put into question issues of sexuality, namely abstinence-only education, premarital sex, transactional sex, homosexuality, drug use, etc. They also recognized that primary modes of HIV transmission differ from country to country, and programmes and policies of GYCA must be adapted to take into consideration varying needs.

Challenges Facing Youth Leaders’ work— Can GYCA Address these Challenges and How?

The most widely acknowledged challenge was the lack of funding. Youth, especially those working in developing countries, are not informed about how to receive funding or the process of soliciting funding (grant proposals, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation). Major funders often have stringent criteria that youth organisations are incapable of meeting.

GYCA participants felt that youth are ineffective because they are marginalized in society. They have great difficulty affecting policies, programmes, and attitudes in international and donor agencies and governments. Youth are not taken seriously, and programmes continue to be designed *for* youth, not *by* youth. One major obstacle to youth’s efficacy is the lack of opportunities for involvement. Youth have few employment, internship, or volunteer opportunities with the major international and donor agencies, which usually require masters degrees and several years of work experience.

“Credibility comes from success, success depends on good projects with good proposals and good leaders- so, youth leaders should learn how to do it perfectly... I think GYCA can be the way to persuade [stakeholders] that youth agencies should play more of a role in the national and international level especially in HIV/AIDS issues. This can happen when we give them something real that can we do.”

Amr Awad, 25, Global Youth Partner, Egypt

Closely related was the lack of accessibility to information and services. Members noted the closed and bureaucratic nature of international and donor agencies and governments. Where programmes exist, they are limited to “target populations” or to a limited number of youth who have been privileged enough to have connections to international agencies. Members felt the marginalization of youth, and especially youth activists, by these groups decreases political will and international commitment. Youth felt that the closed nature of these groups precluded their meaningful involvement at the local, national, and international levels. In addition, members noted that when governments and donors cut spending, it is most often

youth social services that are first cut or eradicated.

Members also acknowledged that the social, cultural, and political climates of their communities often create insurmountable obstacles for HIV prevention. Many respondents, especially from Islamic nations, felt that religious prohibitions on premarital sex and homosexuality created a culture in which

discussion about sex and sexuality was highly taboo. They felt that the gatekeepers and leaders of society are quite often opposed to providing youth with full and accurate information on how to protect themselves from infection.

Members expressed that homophobia, stigma, discrimination, and ostracisation of vulnerable groups (especially intravenous drug users, lesbians, gay people, bisexual people, transgender people, and people living with HIV/AIDS) prevented the community from accessing HIV prevention information and taking the pandemic seriously. It was acknowledged that among youth, knowledge does not always affect behaviour. They feared that gender inequality, violence against women, and the refusal of men and boys to change their behaviour will hinder GYCA's work.

Touching upon concerns expressed in question four, consultation participants voiced specific worries about the divide between developed and developing countries, and between urban and rural populations. They wondered how to reach youth who are in remote rural areas, slum dwellers, street children, and/or commercial sex workers. They worried about the lack of access to testing, counseling, and care, and discouraged the privileging of western approaches to medicine over traditional healers.

PROFILE: Pervaiz Tufail is a 29 year-old psychologist in Pakistan and is a Program Manager of the AMAL Human Development Network. He focuses on issues of Reproductive Health- specifically HIV/AIDS, Gender Issues, and Child Rights. His work is to build the capacity of individuals, organisations, NGOs, and government on these issues. In addition to the many other projects he contributes to, Pervaiz worked with UNICEF Pakistan to launch the Life Skills initiative. He is also a National Youth Technical Advisor and designs national youth policy.

Pervaiz wants to "hear the voice of youth with solution-oriented approach. I hope to have a pool of youth leaders aiming to work as change agents world-wide to bring together a diversity of experience working on HIV/AIDS. I am also hoping to learn planning skills and Coalition building along with sustainability skills."

Members asserted that the lack of basic human rights such as access to food, water, sanitation, healthcare, education, and employment, greatly exacerbate the spread of HIV/AIDS. The absence of these basic needs contributes to misinformed assumptions about who is "at risk" and who is not, and creates feelings of infallibility to HIV infection among youth. Marginalized populations have little or no access to correct and comprehensive information. In addition, war and conflict greatly increase the likelihood of infection and decrease access to services.

Recommendations:

- Global advocacy campaigns should be tailored toward local and regional needs
- Regional focal points and members should keep contact with youth in resource-constrained areas
- GYCA will expand its task force to include a more representative leadership. In addition, GYCA will bring on board strategic partners based in the global South to expand our reach and efficacy

Week 2: October 25 - 30 - Thematic Priority Areas of GYCA

From discussions at and post Bangkok, the following 4 priorities will guide the coalition:

• Capacity building
• Best practices/sharing info
• Political advocacy
• Increasing representation and participation at the next International AIDS Conference in 2006 – Toronto

Members were asked if these four priorities adequately represent GYCA's mission and alternate suggestions were solicited. Members were asked to reflect upon what advantages they would envision from a partnership with UNAIDS, as that week GYCA representatives met with the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS and Young People to present GYCA's initial framework for their feedback.

The four priority areas listed above are some of the most difficult areas to deal with when it comes to youth and youth involvement. However, it is important to solidify the main purpose of GYCA. Evidently GYCA stands out as a coalition of networks and organisations. Since it is just developing, there must be a prioritization of actions. Consulting in the planning of the next International AIDS Conference would be a very good first step since the IAC link is what makes GYCA unique from other youth organisations. Such an event would trigger visibility and hopefully, subsequent support. The group agreed that we need more financial support to implement the other three priorities. They should be accounted for, particularly sharing of best practices and information, but being a legitimate consultancy for IACs and other big conferences would be an effective priority.

Capacity Building

Most youth at Bangkok agreed that there was a lack of access to resources for gaining skills to improve projects and strengthen work related to HIV/AIDS. Capacity building component of GYCA would assist in creating links between groups to enhance their work. As a network of organisations, GYCA can empower youth organisations with effective capacity building. Capacity building refers to training an individual and/or an organisation to manage change, resolve conflict, enhance coordination, foster communication, and share information as an effective group leader.

Member organisations of GYCA have a lot to offer one another and with help of UNAIDS and other established development organisations, its members can access information, education, communication toolkits, and trainings materials easily.

Both institutional and financial support from other organisations augments credibility and trust, thereby solidifying alliances between youth and adults as well as increasing motivation among young people. Established organisations can provide access to experts who can train youth. Members responded that UN country offices could partner with local youth representatives and assist them by providing temporary office space, a meeting place and use of communication technology (telephone, internet, printing). They could also help disseminate information on conferences and ways to participate.

Youth in various regions reported a need for translation assistance. Much of the information and materials distributed by UNAIDS is in English. The youth who need to have information and training the most may not understand English or complicated jargon, and are thus inhibited from accessing crucial information. Moreover, youth need to access local, national and international media for publicizing projects. Most respondents also established the need for: investment into training youth peer educators (an approach that has proven effective in many countries), outreach into resource-constrained settings, a global directory of other AIDS service organisations for networking, knowledge about other youth-led organisations with case studies/successful models.

The capacity building segment of the consultation addressed what youth think about the idea for groups like the Global Fund for Malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS and other donors for HIV/AIDS-related activities to accept a certain number of applications that are youth-led projects. This would ensure that donors are giving attention to youth participation. What kind of criteria do youth have to meet to have access to funding? Youth-adult partnerships are crucial for young people to meet typically not youth-friendly criteria.

Responses were skeptical because it is difficult to affect existing funding standards of donor organisations and there is limited interest in youth projects for funding agencies. On the other hand, acceptance of a certain number of applications would be helpful. However, involving youth in decision-making is equally if not more important. As for criteria, special criteria should be given to youth because they do not have the same access as adults do to certain resources. At least initially, youth should collaborate with adults to ensure more responsibility and accountability— crucial to obtaining funding.

Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals should be made up of urban and rural youth groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To submit proposals, youth need to be empowered with grant-writing skills

Best practices

Participants were asked about the best way to share best practices and information; for example, organized events, activities, list serves, newsletters and publications.

Generally, an e-newsletter and list-serves to disseminate information are a good idea, particularly as this would encourage young people in various regions to report to each other on the realities of the problem specific to their area.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-written flyers or pamphlets on common issues would be very useful. I.e. Global Aids 101" "Debt relief and the AIDS crises." "Basic biology of AIDS for the international health activist" "Patent Law and The AIDS crisis: Recent developments"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school outreach materials, a database of panelists and speakers, rally ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting for those who do not have access to informational resources such as the

internet
• A website would be much more effective than a list-serve/newsletter, particularly as newsletters are quite expensive
• Using local radio stations to disseminate information
• Video conferencing, meetings on regional, local and national level are also important coupled with using member organisations.
• Use of music, drama and theatre to convey information
• Existing youth ASOs or youth-adult ASOs should be utilized by GYCA to distribute information on ground.

Website

GYCA members were asked what they thought of the TakingITGlobal model for a website.⁵ They replied that TakingITGlobal is a great model for the kind of virtual hub GYCA should exist in. TIG empowers young people from all over the world by providing connection mechanisms based on specific interests. Young people can connect, collaborate and act together. TIG is interactive and user-friendly, and allows youth to network with others working on similar issues to share best practices and expertise. Therefore, yes, GYCA should have a similar but smaller hub of its own with HIV/AIDS being the only focus.

Recommendations:
Collaboration with TIG and becoming an appendage of TIG rather than something completely new. Also, TIG has multi language versions as well which is helpful given the existing obstacle language can be for those who do not understand English.
An additional mechanism should be in place to ensure that those without internet access are heard.

Members were asked about the feasibility of a group like GYCA organizing international projects between countries? (for example, World AIDS Day) They responded that international projects are definitely feasible for GYCA but not in the short-term because capacity building, organisation and leadership of GYCA will take time and priority. When the credibility of GYCA increases, GYCA could obtain more media coverage for the development of such a project, particularly if a diverse group of countries with young leaders are involved.

Given the global scope of GYCA, members felt that an international campaign could be very effective. Such a project would create a sense of unity and be an adequate representation of what youth can really achieve, acting as a manifestation of 'taking destiny in their hands' It could be presented at IACS and reflect youth responsibility. However, such a project would require a lot of work and would need to account for different socio-economic circumstances, settings and thus, different approaches necessary for different countries. Some young people suggested the idea of a youth exchange programme. GYCA hopes to partner with existing exchange programmes specific to development opportunities in the future.

⁵ <http://www.takingITglobal.org>

PROFILE: Antonio Chamorro is a Mexican youth living with HIV/AIDS. He works with other Mexican youth to combat stigma and discrimination and to find opportunities for youth engagement in combating HIV/AIDS. Antonio believes the government's focus on *machismo* is important in targeting attitudes that encourage risk behaviour. He notes that in Mexico, a large percentage of people becoming infected are men who have sex with men. Antonio hopes that GYCA can tailor its regional structures to meet specific country needs and situations.

“The global efforts are important, but we have to see our regional differences... I think we have to talk about epidemics, and for each one, [work on] prevention, and against stigma and discrimination. We have to make this epidemic in young people visible with specific campaigns and with treatment.”

Antonio Chamorro, 23, Esperanza Voluntades Comprometidas, Mexico

Political Will

Members described some of the challenges to youth participation on political decision-making bodies or in lobbying government. Students and young people in general do not have enough motivation and feel that they are under-represented (and not taken seriously enough) to be heard by their governments. This leads to a widespread sentiment of doubt and skepticism about the effectiveness of youth activism. It does not help that youth are often undecided and disrupted by internal power struggles instead of being a unified voice. There is not enough understanding about one's country's HIV/AIDS policies and political structure and in most cases, there is no recognition of youth by government at all. Unfortunately, there is a general consensus that cultural, religious barriers and generation gaps prevent youth from having access to address their government. For those who need help the most, illiteracy, unemployment, and the lack of information continue to be obstacles.

Recommendations:
• Disseminate existing resources, training kits, and educational materials to help youth to mobilize
• Provide credibility for the representation of a unified voice of youth
• Provide replicable models and successful youth-government partnership models (by existing orgs such as SGAC, ARYI and TIG)
• Reach out to youth on the ground and empower them with knowledge and communication skills necessary to lobby their governments
• Publicize results of this consultation to governments and at conferences
• Educate groups on how to form alliances with other groups to gain credibility
• Help youth gain exposure on international forums
• Make youth aware of their rights and freedoms in different socio-economic circumstances (based on different political structures, forms of government, etc)

Government Accountability to UNGASS and Youth

GYCA agreed that governments should be held accountable for promises made at UNGASS and other international meetings by international funding being conditional upon fulfillment of promises. Additionally, international pressure through media and publicity would expose false promises and lack of commitment. A commission that would seek to monitor and evaluate implementation of promises

would be helpful. Commitment follow-ups are very important and should be further publicized on the country-level basis (for example, through domestic publicity).

How Can Youth Take an Active Role in Making Governments Accountable?

GYCA members said that youth can use media to publicize the failure of governments when they do not meet their commitments. Using innovative ways such as drama, theater and rallies, youth can convey a message to their local public and community about their governments' commitments. Youth should make use of training tools on evaluating national policy to learn about monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of programmes to meet governments' commitments to UNGASS and other declarations. They would then be more empowered to put pressure on governments through informed advocacy and lobbying campaigns. Youth must collaborate with civil society, work with influential groups/organisations, partner with celebrity figures and adult allies to gain credibility and more access to government officials.

However, youth need to be more educated about their governments' policies and programmes and must be more unified on a domestic level. They need to learn how to convey clearly what they want. Youth need to have a voice in government decision-making and should have access to government representatives.

Toronto and GYCA as a Youth Consultancy to IACs

Members were asked to provide input from their personal experiences on improvements they would like to see in youth participation/representation at international AIDS conferences and other international meetings. They also addressed some barriers in having access to IACs:

Transportation fees continue to be a huge obstacle for youth in accessing conferences and other international events. Special attention should be given to youth in ensuring that they are able to attend. There should be more scholarships available for youth via a scholarship competition based upon merit and need. Often, some youths who do have the privilege of attending do not adequately represent the voice of the community they go on behalf and do not have a grasp of the problems at hand. A competition might eliminate this problem. Host countries sometimes discriminate against PLWHAs and intimidate young people, conveying stigma in a supposedly nurturing environment. Closely related was the difficulty in obtaining visas. Youth representatives of grassroots organisations have an especially difficult time in acquiring the necessary documents to travel.

The application process should be more user and youth-friendly. The conference organizers should acknowledge the effectiveness of pre-conference youth activities such as Bangkok YouthForce, which empowered youth with knowledge on effective conference participation. Inexperienced youth often feel overwhelmed at big conferences. Pre-conference activities would help them overcome intimidation by the enormity of the experience.

Recommendations:
• Toronto should be a primary focus since GYCA came out of Bangkok
• Ensure that there is a session for youth, by the youth
• Educate youth on how to present themselves properly during presentations, etc

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with IAC organizers on increasing opportunities for youth sessions and presenters with selectivity and competition for this process
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include youth in programmes that focus on lifestyles, care, support and media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More support for youth pre-conference activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HIV positive youth should be given a greater voice and should be on decision-making bodies of the conference
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase effectiveness of virtual presence and feedback of youth who cannot attend via presentations, reports, pictures (with communication going both ways – from the conference to youth and vice versa)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help youth understand complicated applications and empower them with skills to write abstracts and/or submit proposals for presentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase publicity/outreach about the IAC to youth who should be attending the conference
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase communication between youth who attend IACs and those who don't. There needs to be more pressure for youth who attend to report back on their experiences

Week 3: November 1- 7 - Structure and Initial Logistics of GYCA Set Up

Structure of Secretariat and Regional Operations

Participants discussed the basic structure of GYCA keeping in mind funding constraints and communication difficulties between regions. It was decided that if costs allow, we should have a main secretariat that coordinates activities, documentation and evaluation, disseminates information, and manages programmes. It could be composed of regional representatives. A main secretariat is necessary for accountability reasons and also to maintain the cohesiveness of the global coalition.

The main secretariat would need to be centrally located with constant and efficient communication with regional secretariats. It is felt that headquarters of international agencies often have difficulty communicating effectively with the country level. Some suggested that it should not be located in the US because it might impose American policies and perspectives. Members concurred that there needs to be more discussion on how centralized or decentralized GYCA will be.

There should also be regional secretariats and eventually country offices for efficiency and effectiveness, especially at reaching youth in resource-constrained areas. If cost does not permit regional secretariats, we could start with country representatives. Another way to minimize costs at the onset would be to work through existing networks, since administering an extensive secretariat and regional secretariats is quite expensive.

Staff of secretariats should be selected through an application process and interviews, or nominated/elected. Staff should be youth.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GYCA will be comprised of a main secretariat with regional focal points representing major regions of the globe, who will eventually establish regional secretariats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The main secretariat will be physically based in New York due to the proximity to the United Nations and several of the organizations that the task force is comprised of; however, the main secretariat will also encompass South-based organizations that will be kept in constant communication via the web and phone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional focal points will be chosen by application and will be considered on the basis of their expertise and their ties to established youth HIV/AIDS NGOs and community-based organizations and related networks. They will be chosen on the basis of their familiarity with and connection to youth in resource-constrained areas.

Feasibility of Working Through Existing Networks and NGOs

GYCA's task force has taken the approach of working with existing NGOs in order to maximize efficiency and reduce duplication of efforts. Members were asked to reflect upon the effectiveness of this approach based upon their own experiences.

Respondents against working through existing organisations argued that the process might create unnecessary power struggles and would prioritize privileged individuals/organisations over those with experience and skills but without equal funding and resources. They feared getting sucked into bureaucracy and unrelated projects. NGOs are also often managed by adults that might not be sensitive to youth needs. They may have policies aimed at youth, but they could lack authenticity or legitimacy because they were not drawn up by youth. GYCA should be a grassroots organisation with indigenous representation. GYCA needs a fresh start and should develop its own approach to HIV/AIDS and young people. The network should be created out of existing group members who are currently participating in the consultation. Those who have participated have the motivation to develop GYCA.

Those in favor of working with/through existing NGOs and youth-serving organisations felt that such an approach would cut costs; help us to benefit from organisations' expertise; achieve legitimacy as a true coalition; provide use office space, internet, and meeting space; and avoid duplicating efforts and wasting resources. However, members argued that we must preserve our own autonomy within our partnerships and avoid becoming involved in NGO power struggles.

There are many youth-led organisations that exist already that have extensive skills- a partnership can only strengthen the movement. Combining resources is more effective than establishing competing organisations. GYCA should benefit from their experiences at the local level: local NGOs better understand the specific political/cultural challenges of working in that country and can share their knowledge. It will require extensive research to find compatible NGOs.

GYCA members asserted that we should only work with NGOs that share our mission and are youth-sensitive. Some NGOs have excellent youth participation programmes and we should partner with them. We could have specific categories for the organisations we work with such as youth-serving organisations, youth-driven organisations, and individuals.

It was reiterated that our mapping project is essential. Youth are not aware of each other's activities. GYCA should create a directory with a search engine by location or by postal code to help youth leaders work with each other. GYCA should use TIG's model of interactive posting of profiles, opportunities and upcoming events.

PROFILE: Erick Nyabala works with CISSO, a community-based organization in the Suba District of Kenya. Erick works for the development and empowerment of the capacity of youths towards mutual response to HIV/AIDS, poverty, contributing factors such as premature/forced marriages, commercial sex etc. He has worked in policy design, research, capacity building and dissemination of information. Erick is also particularly interested in information communication technology, and youth employment initiatives. He presently also works with the Youth Employment Summit in Kenya (YES-Kenya).

Erick says that, "The most grievous mistake that most NGOs and coalitions have ever done is to overlook existing structures, only to realize duplication of effort, and subsequent waste of resources... Most problems or shortcomings we experience in projects aimed at reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS are as a result of the up-bottom [top down] approach. Where resources are centralised for example at the National headquarters and major towns, and the most vulnerable, the rural poor are not affected. We could rather employ bottom-up techniques that draw solutions from and with the problem area."

Availability of Dedicated Youth Leaders to Conduct Local Events, Gatherings, or Workshops

There is an abundance of local youth leaders but the problem is that many do not have the skills or technology to come forward and are often controlled by privileged youth. They need capacity building and credibility in order to make use of their skills and motivation. We need to establish a good mechanism to find the leaders that exist and to enlist them in the cause. Local leaders should be empowered and put in charge of events to create ownership and to build skills.

Members mentioned that indigenous youth need to be involved in GYCA's secretariat to help us take a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach. Programmes that work best use local examples of successful programming and showcase and share them with the rest of the Coalition. Youth leaders that do exist may already be working with NGOs (furthering the need to build partnerships).

Youth should move beyond focusing on workshops. It was felt that workshops and gatherings have poor outcomes and are very expensive, with little to no result in the battle against HIV/AIDS. There is often little follow up by the youth or for the youth after conferences are over. Youth should focus on results, not on attending conferences.

It was suggested that GYCA identify young leaders and build their capacities to solve the problem of turnover and to achieve sustainability. Local gatherings (above it's mentioned that these don't work) are an important way of identifying committed youth leaders and volunteers.

"I am an HIV/AIDS Educator and I would say that the biggest challenge is to implement young people's ideas and energy into programming... There is so much work to be done in terms of creating a meaningful space for youth involvement, at all levels and stages of HIV prevention work."
Andrea Poncia, Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa, Canada

How to Find and Keep Committed Volunteers

Volunteers need to be acknowledged for their work, given specific challenges and necessary skills-building, and opportunities for further advancement after they "age-out" of GYCA. GYCA should create a warm, friendly work environment that focuses on team-building and respect. Volunteers should not be asked to put in their own resources (except for time). Volunteers need to be constantly re-inspired. There should be a set time frame for which they will be expected to volunteer, and all efforts should be

undertaken to monetarily compensate those volunteers who are dedicated and skilled enough to become staff. Volunteers should state the time frame of their commitment in the form of a contract and should be in constant communication with the secretariat to sustain their dedication.

The best way to attract volunteers is to showcase the potential of the project and its practicality. GYCA should begin projects to show them results, instead of just submitting proposals. It is important to show volunteers how their involvement can make a difference, and let them contribute to the conception of initiative instead of just the implementation.

Volunteers should be connected to related internships and exchange programmes after their service to GYCA, and offered opportunities for advancement within GYCA. Once we have funding, we should create opportunities for outstanding volunteers to represent GYCA at local conferences and events,

and possibly travel opportunities. With funding, a small grants programme could bolster existing youth programmes and become a programming arm of GYCA.

We must ensure that volunteer opportunities are meaningful, linked up with people's interests and passions, and allow opportunities to build skills for employability. Volunteer positions should be widely advertised, perhaps in the form of an internship opportunity. Volunteers should be selected through an application process that requires interviews and references. We should keep in mind that volunteers are often committed to many causes; they must have sufficient time to contribute to GYCA. Volunteers must be monitored and should provide feedback on the work level (is it too much, is it too little to keep them motivated?) They should be asked to report back on their progress to the group. We should develop a training programme or training manual for volunteers including relevant reports and publications, expectations, rights and responsibilities. We should identify organisations that can help sponsor a volunteer or that can contribute staff members to GYCA. GYCA should tap into universities and schools that have clubs working on HIV/AIDS to recruit future volunteers.

Suggested Next Steps Post E-consultation to Sustain Momentum

Members said that GYCA should begin a mapping project to create a global directory of youth HIV/AIDS organisations and successful projects worldwide. The criteria for organisations and projects included should be that they are youth-led, youth-serving NGOs, local organisations, government programmes, and international agencies. It should also compile training resources that are now scattered over many websites across various international agencies and NGOs.

In addition, GYCA should begin a global campaign that includes youth that are not ICT connected. It should be based on existing models by youth. It could take on the form of a t-shirt with HIV prevention messages, it could be based on Uganda's "Peerlink" programme where mostly urban and "wired" youth (in school in this case) twin with a rural, non-wired school and figure out ways to provide ICTs and computer literacy, in addition to HIV/AIDS education. It could be based on MDG 6, and highlight youth MDG projects.

GYCA members should create profiles for themselves on TakingITGlobal so that other youth can network with them based on their listed skills, interests, languages, projects they are involved in, and events they have attended.

GYCA should put together an HIV/AIDS and youth-specific newsletter to

PROFILE: Elisabet Fadul is a Global Youth Partner in the Dominican Republic. She recently launched the DR's Global Youth Partners campaign with a gala event that attracted senators, congressmen, and ambassadors, as well as representatives of various NGOs, and especially the executive director of the Presidential Commission on AIDS. Elisabet effectively uses the media to disseminate information about HIV/AIDS to young people. In preparation for the event, Elisabet and her team appeared on four television programmes and two radio programmes. The event itself was aired on five national television stations.

Elisabet says that "*There is an urgent need to make our work known to the general population, to have in the local/national/international media information on youth participation and issues related to HIV/AIDS in order to have our work reach many more. I envision organisations like UNAIDS helping by giving support, opening spaces for youth in their activities and helping us get more involved, by providing us with the latest information and tool kits.*" Elisabet Fadul, 18, Global Youth Partners, Dominican Republic

showcase youth achievements in HIV/AIDS. It should include information on the HIV/AIDS youth situation in member countries, and members should be asked to contribute research.

GYCA could sponsor a contest for members to create prevention communication tools such as posters, videos, and public service announcements.

Members proposed a Global Day of Action, possibly on World AIDS Day, or in collaboration with existing plans for World AIDS Day.

GYCA should focus on establishing its regional secretariats and main secretariats. This includes building committed national teams, collecting data on countries' situations, and establishing youth-adult partnerships and partnerships with local NGOs.

Additional suggestions included creating national or regional consultations, developing a logo to brand GYCA, developing the strategic framework along a timeline, setting up regional face-to-face meetings, and enlisting the support of a celebrity or sports figure to better facilitate the delivery of HIV prevention messages to youth. Members suggested compiling existing HIV/AIDS materials online and building partnerships to disseminate them globally, especially to youth in resource-constrained areas, perhaps distributing them through youth leaders at universities and schools.

Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GYCA will collaborate with partner NGOs to develop a bi-monthly newsletter to showcase successful youth initiatives in HIV/AIDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GYCA will design its logo and will collaborate with TIG to build its website
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GYCA's task force members from Global Justice are developing a Youth Day of Action, a global advocacy campaign, which will be carried out in a few countries by GYCA's regional focal points and members in their countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GYCA's task force members from Global Youth Action Network are planning to involve GYCA members in their popular Global Youth Service Day in April. GYCA members will plan events that are HIV/AIDS related and service-oriented, possibly for PLWHA.

Week 4: November 22-29 – GYCA's Role in International AIDS Conferences

Youth Programming in Toronto: Youth were asked if there is a need for separate youth programmes or if youth should be integrated within existing programmes. (at Bangkok, there were 3 programmes: scientific, community and leadership)

Most agreed that youth should definitely be integrated within the main committees of the IAC. They should also be represented in the programmes. Separate programmes for youth are supported, particularly educational workshops, trainings and advocacy sessions. At Bangkok, the youth pre-conference was very helpful to youth participants and most agree that it should be repeated. Among others, UNICEF, Advocates for Youth, and Family Health International were instrumental in organizing youth attendees. UNICEF and UNICEF's youth delegates compiled a report on HIV/AIDS and youth with a series of recommendations to meet youth needs regarding HIV/AIDS. GYCA, another product of the Bangkok conference, hopes to work closely with UNICEF to follow up on the recommendations of its youth delegates.

GYCA members who attended Bangkok advised that including youth on plenary sessions is also helpful. Special sessions for youth to meet with policymakers, activists, government reps, donor to exchange information about concerns and funding would be helpful. Youth should work more with adults as allies. However, the main concern about separate youth programmes is that they are isolationist and might be ignored by adults. If GYCA is to take an active role in consulting IAC organizers, it must be clear on what the objectives at the conference are and exactly what youth expect conference organizers to adhere to.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To contact the organizers of the Toronto IAC and begin collaborating with them to strengthen the youth programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that youth are more mainstreamed in existing sessions/programmes. For example, youth could work with adult presenters/researchers and collaborate on their presentation before the actual conference

Scholarship Competition for Increased Youth Representation

Members were asked to elaborate upon the earlier suggestion of a competition to attend the conference with applications selected on the basis of need *and* merit. Bangkok scholarships were awarded on the basis of need.

Overall, most participants were supportive about this idea because it would create an incentive for youth to get active in order to acquire such a great opportunity. It would also ensure adequate pay off from investing into someone attending such a big conference. Members recognized that sponsoring a young person to attend such a huge conference is an investment and associated risks could be minimized by such an instrumental mechanism. It would also enable financially constrained young people doing great work to showcase their efforts.

However, there are also disadvantages to this concept. Many members voiced their concern that it could limit uneducated youth from access to the conference and only enable those with skills and internet access to apply. Similarly, members expressed that only highly educated, exposed young people will obtain this opportunity, but others, such as girls and women with limited mobility, will be

very restricted. Underprivileged youth should be accounted for and need is very important.

There seemed to be controversy about youth attending because it was expressed that youth should not just attend the conference because they are youth. They should convey how they (as attendees) could gain from the conference experience.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publicize the IAC and educate young people about how they can apply and obtain scholarships to attend.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publicize a project sufficiently and advertise gains from attending IACs in order to increase applications to attend and submissions of abstracts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that positive youth are adequately accounted for
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with existing international donor organisations and form an alliance, bringing existing GYCA members to apply separately
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach out to youth in resource-constrained areas to provide assistance for youth on how to apply to IACs. Particularly emphasize these opportunities for women and girls

If a separate youth committee was organized at the next IAC, the following criterion is recommended for their selection:

- Past work with young people, reproductive rights , NGO work, teamwork experience, management skills for follow up and supervision, networking skills
- Participation in previous IACs (esp. Bangkok)
- Commitment to follow up
- Show high level of endurance in difficult situations and be ready to be a volunteer when needed
- Existing, dedicated members of GYCA

How to Increase Youth Presenters, Youth Age Limit and Approaching Private Businesses for Funding

" I believe I will be a leader of tomorrow and hence, the experience and knowledge that I will gather... will not only help me seek a better way to serve and contribute to my community but will serve as a reserve bank packed with lots of experience and skills which I shall continue to impart in other youths of my community and the world at large as I am growing up." Chilambe Katuta 24, International Student Conference on AIDS, Zambia

Members were asked how GYCA can increase the number of youth presenters at IACs, aside from more funding:

GYCA can publicize the IAC more and teach youth ways in which they can participate by working with existing NGOs and youth networks to disseminate information and use local means such as radio. These connections can be used to ensure that youth in resource-constrained areas know about it as well. To augment the latter point, it was suggested that there be a local-regional-national process of selection so that young people who are in poverty-stricken settings know about this.

Our existing members should emphasize incentives for youth to actively pursue IAC participation. GYCA should produce youth-friendly materials with an array of options regarding presentation format (for example, discussion groups, interactive workshops, story-

sharing groups, group presentations because individual ones can be intimidating). It should also create a mechanism whereby youth who have submitted abstracts/done presentations educate other youth about how to do it via workshops or demonstrations months before the conferences. An internal GYCA youth advisory system could be set up for this facilitation about six to eight months before the conference.

Many members voiced the importance of disseminating information about Monitoring, Evaluation and Research strategies (MER) and scientific and recognized tools so that local actions can be researched, documented and made into presentation material. Some members presented their personal experiences in this and offered to share successful strategies.

Some participants said that GYCA should facilitate annual evaluation of presentations to assure positive contribution and maintain level of commitment. It should also lobby for a percentage of accepted programmes/workshops/abstracts to be set aside for youth programming.

Participants were asked about any struggles they faced in submitting an abstract and if so, what kind of criteria would alleviate the process. Most said that the application process for abstract submission is not youth-friendly enough. It is full of confusing language and its emphasis on research rather than programming makes it very restrictive, particularly for young people who have done great work in treatment and prevention on ground rather than in research (in forms of activism, VCT set ups, innovative reproductive health activities).

Abstract applications should encourage focus on professional experiences and those who write up the applications should learn from existing initiatives in which youth assist coordinating bodies on youth-friendly format (IYP with action plan). IAC abstract accepting committee must acknowledge that youth may have a disadvantage in terms of resources for their initiatives and writing skills for articulating those initiatives (especially in a scientific format).

On the other hand, applicants should tackle issue of concern in their respective country. Abstract applications should have clear SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound) objectives, goal, monitoring and evaluation. They should learn from those who have previously submitted abstracts.

Age Limit at International AIDS Conferences

Most agreed that it should be between ages 18 to 30. However, it is very important to consider different categories of age (15-20) (21-25) – those groups certainly have different needs. What might be of interest to those between 21 and 25 is different for those who are in their teens. Young adults in their late twenties who have experience in research and field work could contribute to those in the younger age brackets. In the pre-Bangkok youth conference, older youth gave presentations and workshops about their experiences to others and were deemed very helpful. Evidently, there are different needs of various age groups that should be addressed. People under 15 should also be represented but that has its limits due to chaperoning issues.

Fundraising to Attend Conferences

Youth were asked if they would feel comfortable fundraising (for example, from local businesses and organizations) in order to pay their way to international conferences. Those who said yes explained

that it depends on the nature of the business. It is easier to get assistance when it is a group that requests it rather than an individual, particularly if it is a local organisation.

Those who said no said that most businesses in the local area are subsistence living (i.e. Fishing) so they would not be supportive because they seek to survive on any profits. It is a challenge to convince businesses to understand the importance of helping out. They do not see any immediate benefit and there is no reinforcement of social responsibility. In conservative societies, businesses are suspicious of any NGO participation. Twenty-four youth addressed this question, and the majority does not get help from businesses due to some of the reasons mentioned above as well as the fact that businesses sometimes demand fees for any initial services.

In many cases, however, local businesses provide materials for events, print out t-shirts, pay for ads on T.V. and radio and provide space for events and meetings. They also donate refreshments, stationary for communal workshops, free condoms for workshop sessions (I.e. O' My Lubricant in Canada), provide discounts for use of services/products and participate in a discount card programme to raise money for HIV/AIDS from the sale of discount cards to use with local businesses. Local businesses have provided means of advertisement and publicity (for example in ads) and have allowed youth to distribute sexual health information at events (Life Beat is an example. Young activists go to clubs and bars to distribute condoms and small leaflets about condom usage).

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share successful models of business/civil society partnerships from different regions of the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GYCA members could create a local scholarship fund and link up with businesses as they are more likely to support organized foundation/organisation – and GYCA could provide that legitimacy and backing.

Youth and UNGASS, MDG Commitments

The majority of respondents said that there is not enough awareness about UNGASS or MDG commitments among youth. In fact, not only are youth uninformed but adults as well. Youth need to understand policies and international commitments that affect them so they can be advocate for the enforcement of commitments made by their governments.

However, there needs to be more dissemination about HIV/AIDS in local communities, not necessarily global topics like UNGASS (or at least, in addition to UNGASS). It is more difficult to convey such large-scale information because it does not necessarily affect the individual. There needs to be more information on poverty and gender, particularly local circumstances.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate an awareness campaign and eliminate 'English jargon' that is often used in explaining UNGASS and the MDGs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create practical youth-friendly projects to foster better understanding of UNGASS, perhaps in local languages.

GYCA and the Future

Most youth who participated shared this consultation with their networks/organisations/youth groups. They are currently ready for further concrete action and have concerns about sustainability and follow up. In future programming, GYCA must acknowledge different cultural compatibility, sensitivity around certain issues and circumstances. There is the concern that GYCA is just for the rich, privileged youth. However, hopefully this will be eliminated by

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continual emphasis on the importance of outreach to youth in resource-constrained areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possibility of another consultation to be done a year from now as an assessment for what has been achieved

Conclusion

"Considering that the Bangkok Conference is where we got started, GYCA should lobby for more youth input and youth issues in international conferences (and not just in Toronto). Hopefully, the ultimate results for GYCA are 1) showing that there is a strong movement of youth and by youth in HIV/AIDS work, and 2) a recognition and acceptance of this movement by others that will lead to a more inclusion of youth in programs and more support for youth-led initiatives." Napat Phisanbut, 24 of Family Health International and Coordinator of the Bangkok Youth Force in Thailand

Results from the consultation reiterate the need for the establishment of the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA). Communication gaps, lack of sustainable youth-adult partnerships, and insufficient outreach to youth in resource-constrained areas are just some of the challenges that youth need to overcome. They can be empowered to do so with solidarity, collaboration with adult allies manifested in a central hub of resources and networks. This mix of essential elements could effectively be provided by a GYCA (particularly given its roots from Bangkok and current strategic partners/members from both the north and south).

GYCA will base its goals and activities on the desires and perspectives of its members as expressed in the month-long e-consultation. Youth participants recognized that it is important not to be overly ambitious when beginning such an initiative, and will therefore work to implement some of the many innovative ideas and projects recommended by participants in the e-consultation once GYCA is better cemented to fill in the gaps in current HIV/AIDS work for youth. Members are currently working to establish GYCA as a credible and effective alliance of youth HIV/AIDS leaders and adult allies by making contacts with existing organizations and stakeholders, by expanding our reach to youth worldwide, and by collaborating with UNAIDS and its inter-agencies to build a cohesive platform for action.

Annex I: Member Countries

1. Argentina
2. Bangladesh
3. Botswana
4. Brazil
5. Bulgaria
6. Cambodia
7. Cameroon
8. Canada
9. Chad
10. Cote d'Ivoire
11. Dominican Republic
12. Egypt
13. Ethiopia
14. Fiji Islands
15. Germany
16. Ghana
17. India
18. Kenya
19. Kosovo
20. Latvia
21. Lesotho
22. Mexico
23. Namibia
24. Netherlands
25. Nigeria
26. Pakistan
27. Papua New Guinea
28. Perú
29. Philippines
30. Republic of Congo
31. Republic of Macedonia
32. Romania
33. Senegal
34. Sierra Leone
35. Singapore
36. Somalia
37. South Africa
38. Spain
39. Swaziland
40. Tanzania
41. Thailand
42. Trinidad and Tobago
43. Uganda
44. Uruguay
45. USA
46. Vietnam
47. Zambia
48. Zimbabwe