



The Bangkok YouthForce

***A Report of Youth Activities from the
XV International AIDS Conference***



U.S. Agency for International Development



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Bangkok, Thailand

Acknowledgments

The following organizations collaborated to form the Bangkok YouthForce (in alphabetical order): Advocates for Youth, Emerging Markets Group, Family Health International (FHI)/YouthNet, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), Save the Children, Student Global AIDS Campaign, and Youth Against AIDS.

Others who were instrumental in all of the activities of the Bangkok YouthForce (BYF) included: Kayley Harrington, Kent Klindera, and Akenji Ndumu of Advocates For Youth; Jeanne Ellis of Emerging Markets Group; Claudia Ruland, Hally Mahler, Maxwell Marx, Napat Phisanbut, and Maryanne Pribila of FHI/YouthNet; Imogen Fua and Willow Gerber of PATH; Connie Lee, Kinuko Mitani, and Amy Weissman of Save the Children; Adam Taylor of Student Global AIDS Campaign; and Lydiah Bosire and Rebecca Maina of Youth Against AIDS.

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▣ Background ▣

The XV International AIDS Conference brought together thousands of stakeholders who are involved with HIV/AIDS, including about 400 young people from around the world. Through the work of the Bangkok YouthForce, youth contributed their ideas and energy to the conference with hope that this partnership would substantially contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The BYF was guided by the objectives and lessons learned at the XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona two years earlier. The activities in Bangkok concluded with many positive notes among members. Most participants said that they gained useful knowledge and experience, and optimism that many doors of opportunity are open for youth to work with adults in preventing the spread of the AIDS epidemic. This report records their experiences and comments. It also includes suggestions for improvement from youth for the next international AIDS conference in Toronto.

Youth participation includes the rights of young people to share power and decision making on matters that affect them. We believe that youth participation can contribute positively to the outcome of HIV/AIDS policy and programs. Since more than 50 percent of the new infections are among populations aged 15-24 years, it is crucial to have input from youth in the process of conceptualizing plans and making decisions regarding HIV prevention, care, and support. At any major meeting like the International AIDS Conferences, where many program officers, politicians, researchers, donors, and other individuals gather, the inclusion of youth is key to ensuring a more comprehensive dialogue.

In 2002, several youth-serving and youth-led organizations formed the initial Youth Force, which promoted youth involvement at the XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona. It was planned mainly as an awareness campaign, in which the goals were to raise the visibility of youth participants and youth issues at the conference and to encourage more commitment from organizations focused on addressing HIV to build partnerships with youth. Some 200 youth made their voices heard in Barcelona on issues affecting youth and engaged in substantive discussion during the discussion forum with former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Although the campaign was successful in getting youth issues on the map at the conference itself, the following question was raised after the conference: How did this campaign benefit youth and their communities in the long term? When preparing for Bangkok, the organizers looked to address this question by shifting the emphasis to focus more on the *quality* of youth participation, instead of promoting the general concept of participation alone. Youth should represent their peers and show adults that they can be resources and partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS. At the same time, youth should be able to cultivate knowledge and benefit as much as possible from this rare and valuable opportunity of attending such an international conference. Consequently, in Bangkok, the Bangkok YouthForce aimed to create activities that would equip

youth with knowledge and skills that would enable them to contribute to the dialogue and implementation of HIV/AIDS programs.

The Bangkok YouthForce

The Bangkok YouthForce (BYF) is an international network of youth activists and adult allies working to raise the awareness and visibility of youth and youth issues around HIV/AIDS. It brought together many of the leading organizations working on youth-related HIV/AIDS issues worldwide, including: YouthNet/Family Health International, Advocates For Youth, Save The Children, PATH, MTV, YouthAIDS, UNAIDS (Interagency Technical Team), Student Global AIDS Campaign, Thai Youth Action Program (TYAP), Youth Against AIDS, Deloitte Emerging Markets Group, and the aids2004youth listserv. Each of the partners contributed expertise and technical assistance to the activities of the BYF.

The objectives of the BYF were to:

1. Provide technical information and skills to young people so they would feel empowered to effectively participate in the scientific and community program discussions.
2. Promote inclusion of youth issues in the mainstream conference agenda and in HIV/AIDS programs.
3. Train youth to become leaders in their own right – advocates for themselves, their peers, and communities - on issues related to young people and HIV/AIDS.

The BYF not only promoted youth participation and youth-adult partnerships as part of its activities but also made an effort to incorporate such partnerships in its internal structure. Throughout the preparatory process, there were several youth who took responsibility to lead the BYF working groups. The BYF also received input from youth worldwide through the aids2004youth listserv (now youthatbangkok listserv) to use in the planning of activities.

Activities

● **Pre-conference Workshop**

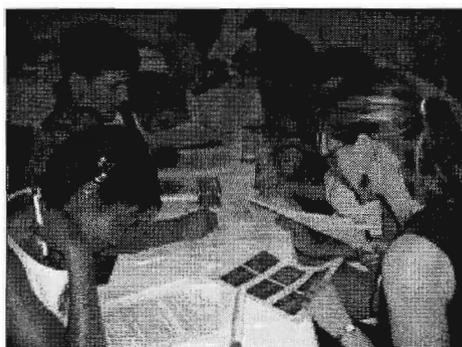
The workshop was held on July 9-10, 2004, at the Twin Towers Hotel, Bangkok. Its main goal was to provide youth with information and skills to participate effectively in the main conference. Of the estimated 400 youth attending the conference, 130 youth from more than 40 countries, participated in this workshop. Fifty of those attending received scholarships from the conference's Youth Committee.

Many experts contributed their time to facilitate

The sessions covered included: "ABC" and comprehensive prevention, voluntary counseling and testing, high-risk populations, orphans and vulnerable children, microbicides, PLWHA and stigma, vaccines, gender, advocacy, media, and the role of youth in the BYF visibility campaign.

workshop sessions including Linda Sussman (USAID), Doug Kirby (ETR Associates), Ann McCauley (Population Council), and many FHI staff. In each session, the facilitators provided background technical information that would enable youth to understand and participate on topics that are common to such conferences. Facilitators were also asked to explain how the issue affects youth and link the information to upcoming conference sessions. For example, what are pertinent areas for discussion and how can young people ask meaningful questions after sessions.

The general feedback from youth participants showed that the workshop achieved its objectives. One youth said, “It made me better understand the scientific researchers’ work and gave me an inspiration and consciousness about what I do and how I can learn more in the main conference.” Some participants mentioned that the workshop was the platform that adequately provided an introduction to some new topics. This background enabled them to dialogue with the scientific community about various youth and HIV related subjects at the conference and later. Participants also expressed their appreciation for how the BYF empowered them during the conference week and beyond. Because they felt empowered and more knowledgeable with the subjects, youth attended conference sessions that were aimed *for* youth and *about* youth, as well as scientific sessions on topics that often require more youth involvement for better results.



Rebecca Maina and Alisha Ross discussed during a pre-conference workshop session

The benefits of the workshop also extend after Bangkok. One youth said, “[The workshop] built my knowledge, which I will pass on to the youth I represented, contribute to my career development, improve my practice in my daily work, and also make me knowledgeable and confident to discuss such issue with policy-makers or managers.” After a young woman was introduced to the topic of microbicides at the workshop, she sought out other microbicides-related sessions at the conference. As a result she was able to provide the National AIDS Department and Red Cross of her home country with pamphlets and information on the topic. This example shows that youth

can become an effective conduit of information and educators to their peers and community when they are empowered with capability and skills.

Feedback from participants also included what they believed was missing from the workshop and what aspects could be improved. With regard to specific sessions, the most common criticisms was the time constraint. The sessions were either 45 or 90 minutes, with two different sessions running concurrently. Most participants felt that 45 minutes was not enough for facilitators to enrich the concepts and theories with examples and discussions. At times, participants felt facilitators had to oversimplify concepts. The audiences’ range of prior knowledge on the topic also made it difficult for facilitators to customize the material in a way that could benefit the whole group. Youth really appreciated the sessions that outlined how a given topic related to youth and provided useful tips that to use in discussing such topics. However, when technical sessions did not offer such clear guidance, some participants did not know how best to utilize the new information.

Overall, participants felt that more emphasis should be placed on efforts that create a stronger link between the Pre-conference Workshop and the main conference. Although a majority agreed

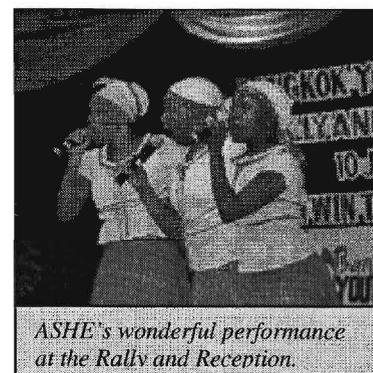
that the workshop provided useful technical support for the conference's main agenda, many of them believed that it could have dedicated more time to prepare them to "become a YouthForce member." Some stated that the session on the participants' role in the BYF Visibility Campaign should have been scheduled first to set the stage for why and how the sessions and activities were important to youth and to the YouthForce campaign. Several participants expressed that they wanted to be included in the earlier processes of drafting the BYF talking points, and creating collective action plans for the conference week.

"I think that the information provided during the pre-conference was extremely valuable overall. ... I have a more firm understanding of several of the scientific issues that before I had known little about."

Many also said that the Pre-conference Workshop could have allocated more time to building cohesion among youth, allowing for networking opportunities, and sharing personal experiences with each other. They also thought young people should have had a chance to interact and discuss cultural differences around HIV/AIDS, given the advantage of having representation from various cultures from around the world. Also, for many young people, traveling abroad to a conference of approximately 20,000 participants proved to be an overwhelming experience. Therefore, some participants suggested that the workshop could have provided an orientation to the conference program and venue to help them get as much out of the conference as possible. (An orientation was indeed conducted by the overall conference Youth Coordinator, Sujima Viravaidya, on July 11th, but it was not compulsory for all.)

● **Rally and Reception**

The Rally and Reception was held at the Twin Towers Hotel on July 10, 2004, after the conclusion of the Pre-conference Workshop. The event brought 300 youth and adult allies together to celebrate the collective power that youth and adults have in working together. The event was hosted by two young dynamic masters of ceremony: Conroy B. Wilson from the ASHE Caribbean Performing Arts and Annie Supsermsri, a VJ from MTV Thailand.



ASHE's wonderful performance at the Rally and Reception.

The night of celebration and powerful messages began with an opening statement from Jennifer Hawkins, Miss Universe 2004 from Australia, whose platform is HIV/AIDS. Following the opening, two youth representatives, Inga Aksamitauskaite of Lithuania and Luyombya Henry Hudson of Uganda, spoke about their personal experience and their work. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, made a speech to encourage youth to continue making themselves heard. The atmosphere was very energetic, thanks to the amazing performance of songs and dance by ASHE Caribbean Performing Arts from Jamaica (who performed an amazing edutainment session the night before). Other prominent attendants included Helene Gayle from the Gates Foundation, Nils Daulaire of the Global Health Council, Aurorita Mendoza of UNAIDS, and Julitta Onabanjo of UNFPA. The Ghetto Artist Production



Conroy Wilson and Jennifer Hawkins, Miss Universe

of Botswana performed a cultural show as a closing act. The rally, "...helped [to build] the right atmosphere among the youth to work closely together during the conference," said one youth. A clip from the event and several interviews were later broadcast on MTV Thailand during its news program.

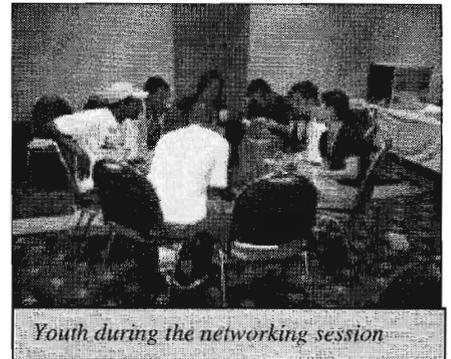
● Networking sessions

During the main part of the conference, the YouthForce organized three networking sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, which were very successful in Bangkok, just as they were in Barcelona. The sessions aimed to provide opportunities for youth to learn skills, share knowledge, and join discussions on the given topics. The topics for the sessions were:

- ***Getting More from the Global Fund: Youth Advocacy for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS in Donor and Recipient Countries. (Akenji Ndumu and Kayley Harrington, Advocates For Youth; Jeanne Ellis, Deloitte Emerging Markets Group)*** The facilitators discussed how the Fund works from the donor perspective and in recipient countries. Participants also brainstormed strategies to increase youth involvement in Country Coordinating Mechanisms, and how to leverage funding through Local Fund Agents and strengthen youth advocacy in donor countries.
- ***Building Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships in the Fight against HIV/AIDS (Maxwell Marx, YouthNet; Kent Klindera, Advocates For Youth)*** The session shared strategies to foster greater youth-adult partnerships. The session highlighted the training curriculum section of the Youth Participation Guide developed by Family Health International/YouthNet with Advocates for Youth. The session assisted participants from both adult and youth-led institutions in identifying and strengthening effective youth involvement strategies that integrate adult professional participation. Using experiential learning, the session assisted participants in looking internally at their own values and perceptions on youth-adult partnerships, as well as assisted in examining institutional by-laws and norms that may hinder these partnerships.
- ***Building Bridges from New York to Nigeria: Creating Stronger, More Sustainable Partnerships Between Youth AIDS Activists Across the World (Adam Taylor, Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC); Lydiah Bosire and Rebecca Maina, Youth Against AIDS)*** The facilitators presented the challenges of building long-lasting, substantive partnerships among youth across regions and nations. Following the presentation, the facilitators responded to questions about creating a Global Youth Coalition on AIDS that emerged during the week. Separate work groups were formed related to the following topics: global networking, global advocacy, technical assistance, and the Toronto 2006 International AIDS Conference. Each work group developed a list of action steps towards achieving benefits from such a coalition. Although there were no conclusive next steps reached for this coalition, participants agreed that there should be a systematic structure that links the effort of youth and adults working on HIV/AIDS from around the world and between international conferences. It should be noted that the SGAC and many active youth who are connected through the *youthatbangkok* listserv are interested at taking this forward, and that the plan does not belong to the YouthForce organizers.

In all three sessions, youth and adults shared a role in planning, co-facilitating, or leading group work. Adults also attended some of the sessions, including Albert Siemens, CEO of Family Health International, and Dr. Kwaku Afriyie, Minister of Health from Ghana.

Youth said that the networking sessions provided “opportunities to share and build bridges for further collaboration and working together.” Many were pleased with the youth-adult partnership session. “After the workshop I was able to see how I can ensure that youth organizations are youth-led and adult-supported and not the other way around,” said one young person. Another said, “The session helped me to define what level of youth involvement our current program is, and how to improve it in the future.”



However, the feedback from youth also indicated that they would like to have more opportunity to actually network among each other as the name of the activity suggests. Some felt that the sessions had too many presentations and the atmosphere was too formal, which may discourage some attendance after a long day at the conference. A few youth also said that the content of the first and last session were set too much in the North American context.

● Newsletters

The BYF published and distributed three issues of newsletters in Bangkok for conference participants. Articles were elicited from young writers who reported on conference sessions while some gave their own opinions on youth related issues. Prominent figures such as the Former United States President Bill Clinton, pop singer Alicia Keys, and the Director of the World Bank’s Global HIV/AIDS Program, Debrework Zewdie, also contributed articles in support of youth. The newsletters can be downloaded from the YouthNet Web site. (www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/BKKYouthForcenewsletters.htm)

Most youth thought that the newsletter served as a great outlet for promoting youth issues and representing youth voices. The content of the newsletters also provided youth with updates about the main sessions of the conference that they thought were useful. However, the BYF newsletters were easily overshadowed by several other newsletters and the large amount of documents circulating at the conference. Although the BYF is proud that we created a great youth-focused publication that represents the voice of youth, the on-site production of the newsletter also required tremendous effort and valuable time that exceeded its benefit. Therefore, the BYF suggests that for the future we collaborate with other newsletters, such as *The Correspondent* by Health Development Network and contribute articles to a section dedicated to youth issues.

● Visibility Campaign

The goal of the visibility campaign was to raise awareness about the importance of meaningful youth participation and to promote the message “More Youth Voices = Fewer HIV Infections.” There were several strategies that the BYF used to achieve this goal. First, YouthForce members

were encouraged to attend the sessions related to what they learned at the Pre-conference Workshop, and engage in constructive questions and discussion related to youth specific issues.



A BYF member gives a conference delegate a sticker, "I'm a Youth Ally."

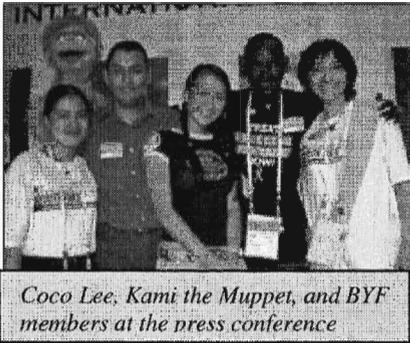
Secondly, BYF members were encouraged to offer themselves as resources to the adults to show that youth and adults must work together to achieve greater results in HIV/AIDS campaign. Together with adult allies, BYF youth members approached high-level officials from their countries to talk about issues related to young people and HIV/AIDS. To create an atmosphere supportive of change, youth handed out stickers with messages such as and "Youth and Adults Fighting HIV/AIDS Together" and "I'm a Youth Ally."

The response from adults who were approached by the BYF members was positive and supportive of the BYF messages. "Adults were enthusiastic about our presence and our motivation," said one BYF member; they wanted to learn more about the YouthForce. One youth said, "[The campaign] let us warmly approach the delegates and emphasize youth issues. [It was] well-prepared and [showed that] youth are well-committed." Time and again, adults expressed their support to BYF members to continue pursuing its goals and their appreciation for youth input to the conference. Youth from South Africa spoke about youth issues and youth involvement with the South African Minister of Health and has been able to maintain contact with her office after the conference. In the end, the visibility campaign also turned out to be a networking outreach effort that fostered new alliances and youth-adult partnership. "I met people from different countries and made a lot of contacts that I believe will be useful for my organization," said a YouthForce member.

Most of the feedback from youth regarding the campaign was that there needs to be even more participatory process that involve youth in the planning before they arrive in Bangkok. Many expressed that the strategy and talking points should have been created by a larger group of youth to reflect the concept of inclusion and ownership in the campaign. Furthermore, some would like the campaign to include soliciting pledges from adults on how they would support youth after the conference.

● Press Conference and Media Outreach

The BYF also focused on outreach to the media. First, a press conference was organized, moderated by Coco Lee, a young Asian pop singer and YouthAIDS Ambassador to Asia. She was joined by Kami, the HIV-positive puppet from Takalani Sesame (Sesame Street South Africa), and by four BYF members from Honduras, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. They told stories of infection, experiences with loss, and personal triumph to local and international media. A news coverage of the press conference appeared in the Bangkok Post, and a picture appeared on CNN.com. <http://www.bangkokpost.net/education/site2004/cvjl2704.htm>.



Coco Lee, Kami the Muppet, and BYF members at the press conference

In addition to the press conference, journalists interviewed many YouthForce members to highlight young people in their coverage of the conference. For example, a feature ran on BlackAIDS.org (USA) and Health E-News (South Africa), among others. Several BYF members were guests on 97.6 FM, a Thai national station broadcasting live from the Global Village section of the conference, and two YouthForce members were interviewed for a half-hour news magazine show sponsored by the Thai Ministry of Health and Channel 11, a national television broadcasting daily updates from conference.

What did we achieve?

The achievements of the Bangkok YouthForce are threefold. First, many youth said they gained a tremendous amount of useful knowledge and skills, as well as empowering experiences that they share with other youth from around the world. The benefit of the BYF activities was not only to offer group sessions for youth at the conference, but more importantly, to give youth delegates experiences and knowledge to share with peers in their home communities. In addition, all BYF members made contacts with youth and adult colleagues from their own countries and regions that can help them make a difference in their work. Being recognized as a leader in attending such a conference and meeting other youth who work toward common goals also rejuvenated their motivation for fighting the epidemic. Many youth delegates suggested that these relationships would be maintained once delegates returned back home.



BYF members at the conference

“I found the workshop very empowering. It has given us the information, the friendship, and the faith in ourselves as a group to be really effective and to fully take part in the upcoming conference.”

The second achievement is the overall presence of youth and the result of youth participation in the conference, which was meaningful and enhanced. Many attendees noted that youth actually tried to engage in discussion with adults about issues they believed were important and encouraged key leaders to put more focus on programs that benefit youth. One adult stated, “[Youth’s] participation in the conference was *substantially* enabled by [BYF’s] efforts to orient them to the key issues at

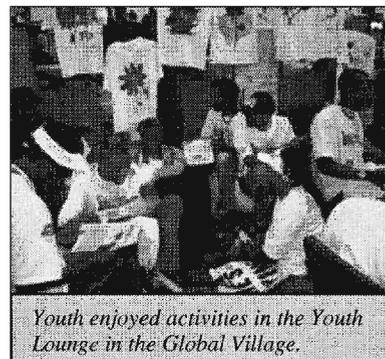
hand in international AIDS work today. There was a clear output of youths gaining comfortability in relating to senior decision-makers and policy officials. On numerous occasions I saw members of the YouthForce ask thoughtful and useful questions in plenary and meet-the-leaders sessions, and some even appeared on panels.”

The third achievement is the exceptional progress on youth issues and youth involvement that the Bangkok conference organizers had made since Barcelona. Part of the success of the BYF must be credited to its predecessor, the Barcelona YouthForce for laying the groundwork and making great impressions in 2002. It worked to create awareness and put youth on the main agenda, and the Bangkok conference organizers took notice. Thus, many more activities and sessions were geared toward youth issues, and youth were incorporated more into panels and discussions this time around.

The organizers also made the effort to make the conference more youth-friendly, helping youth to feel more comfortable in participating in the main agenda. The conference took steps to help youth navigate through the enormous space and agenda; for example, the youth orientation was held before the opening ceremony, and a symbol “Y” in the conference program noted the youth-related sessions.

The number of youth participants increased from Barcelona. There were more than 450 youth at the Bangkok conference (Thai youth included), compared to about 200 young people in Barcelona. Among the 450 were 50 youth who received scholarships through the conference’s Youth Committee and another 40 youth who were sponsored by BYF member organizations. However, both the Youth Committee and the BYF experienced difficulties in securing more funding for scholarships from other organizations and outside sources.

The collaboration between the BYF, the conference’s youth coordinator, and other youth organizations in Thailand also made the youth program and activities better organized and coherent. The BYF joined all of the youth activities’ preparation meetings leading up to the conference, both in Bangkok with the youth coordinator and in Washington, D.C. with other cooperating agencies. This created better communication and avoided overlaps in tasks and activities. Two youth members from the BYF, Napat Phisanbut and Akenji Ndumu, were also on the conference’s Youth Advisory Committee, which advised the youth coordinator on issues dealing with scholarship and session details.



The outcome of the BYF showed that when there are mechanisms in place to support the development of young people, they have the capacity to apply the knowledge and take responsibility as true partners

I want to congratulate [young people] for their active participation and presence during the XV International AIDS Conference and, most importantly, for the critical work undertaken by the groups they represent to work with and for youth affected and infected by HIV.
Debrework Zewdie, director of the Global HIV/AIDS Program, World Bank

in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Many youth have achieved fantastic progress in advocating for the right of youth to be heard, but youth also showed in Bangkok that they *are* interested and *can* engage in the scientific and programmatic discussions as well. Youth were really honored to represent the voice of their peers who did not have the opportunity to attend the conference and remained committed to share what they learned when they returned home. We hope that the Bangkok experience will exemplify the benefits of

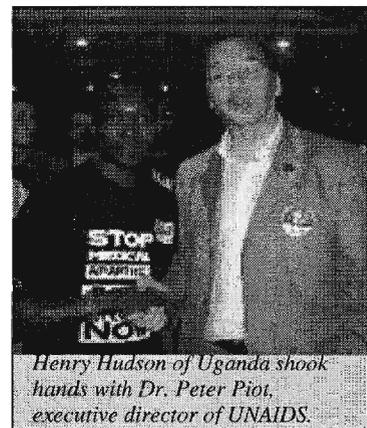
youth participation: that it helps youth themselves and that youth can make positive contributions to the conference itself. Moreover, these efforts should have a lasting impact after the event itself.

Although not a formal part of the YouthForce activities, tracking the impact of participation in the BYF will be conducted by BYF member organizations that sponsored various youth. With increased knowledge and skills, as well as empowerment, these young leaders will hopefully increase the impact of the BYF in their own countries and regions.

Discussion

After seeing the end results of the BYF, the organizers are pleased with its success and appreciated the hard work from all who were involved. However, taking a critical look at our work and what we are trying to achieve can generate many important discussions and lessons learned that we can use for to improve future conferences.

First, youth in Bangkok have said that the BYF should have involved a wider group of youth in its planning process. From the start in October 2003, several youth based in Washington, D.C., were involved as integral parts of the process because they were affiliated with organizations that are part of the YouthForce. The location also made it convenient for meetings and discussions. The attempt to include more youth from other places was made by e-mails and conference calls to solicit inputs from representatives of youth groups, but the lack of real-time interaction and technical difficulties became challenges to participation.

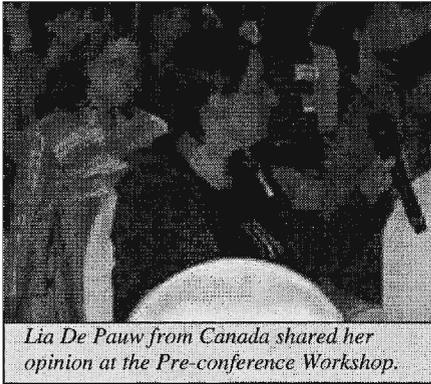


Another big obstacle was that the names of most participants were not available until late in the process (May or June). Therefore, it was difficult to assign people to working groups and share concrete tasks when it was not certain whether they would actually be at the conference or not. In the future, a well-moderated online discussion can be set up as an alternate method for participation as well as be used to create a unified message that comes from wider groups of youth. More efforts also need to be put into involving young people from other fields, such as young scientists, young journalists, and young program officers, coordinators, and managers.

As mentioned earlier, the objectives of the Bangkok YouthForce were partly guided by the results of Barcelona regarding what youth can gain from and contribute to conferences. In Bangkok, the BYF tried to create opportunities for youth to participate more meaningfully and hoped that this would elevate youth recognition as equal partners working to combat the epidemic. Now the question becomes: Does attending conference sessions equal youth participation? Although many people are looking at *how much* youth participated by measuring the number of youth attending, the BYF and youth themselves look at it from the point of view of *how* and *to what degree* they did participate at the conference. Consequently, youth participation does not only mean being present but it also means adding values to the conference dialogue and transferring the valuable experience to benefit their work and community at home. The BYF believes that youth did well on both accounts.



Another issue that was raised was a question of when do young people represent the BYF and when do they represent their own individual perspective. Does the BYF speak for all youth on every issue? The answer is no. During the Pre-conference Workshop, the session on “The Role of Youth in the BYF” explained to the participants the issues that the BYF stands for and aims to promote, all of which addressed the fundamental rights of youth and the significance of youth as a key stakeholder group in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.



Lia De Pauw from Canada shared her opinion at the Pre-conference Workshop.

However, although young people are grouped together because of their age, the constituency of youth is not homogenous. Youth can also represent their culture, religion, gender, organization, or certain beliefs, and form their opinions accordingly, which may not be the same as that of other youths. There are some issues that the BYF does not address, and thus we encouraged youth to express their opinions on those issues as individuals instead of as YouthForce members. Some confusion on what the BYF represents may have occurred as more youth became interested in joining the campaign during the conference but were not fully briefed of their role and the BYF messages. The YouthForce would need to establish how to better communicate its identity, that is, what it is,

whom it includes, what is it trying to achieve, and what issues it stands for. This would give more confidence and clarification to youth whether they are speaking on behalf of the BYF or representing their individual platforms.

The youth delegates would also benefit from more explanations about the extent of its activities and the expected role of the BYF after the conference, since its coordinators did not plan to maintain the YouthForce as a permanent organization or entity of its own. Instead, there should be better guidance on how to connect youth with existing or emerging groups so that they can still benefit from such a network and still carry on with their individual activities beyond the conference.

Recommendations: Two to Toronto!

In looking forward to the International AIDS Conference in Toronto in 2006, we can build upon what we achieved and learned in Bangkok, just like we built on Barcelona. We truly hope that the conference organizing committee will maintain the strong commitment to integrate youth into the main agenda and continue to provide opportunities for youth to be recognized for their contribution and potential. If this happen, one of the objectives of the YouthForce visibility campaign would be realized, and a big advocacy campaign to raise awareness may not be necessary. Instead, more effort and resources could then be invested into strengthening the process of empowering youth and preparing them to participate meaningfully in the conference, which proved to be very useful and rewarding.

The role of the YouthForce could also alter our activities to be more integrated into the main conference. Dialogues about ways of collaboration with the conference organizers should begin early and continue throughout the preparatory period leading up to Toronto.

Finally, because of the incredible experiences that youth brought to Bangkok, including their accomplishment in proving the values of youth participation, we would like to encourage other organizations to commit to bringing more young people to the conference, hence the new slogan, “Two to Toronto!”



See you in Toronto!

APPENDIX 1: The Bangkok YouthForce Pre-Conference Workshop Agenda

Day 1 – Friday

Time	Session	Session
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast	
8:30 – 9:00	Introduction and Welcome Hally Mahler, YouthNet/FHI	
9:00 – 10:30	Advocacy Kent Klindera, Akenji Ndumu, Kayley Harrington, AFY; Willow Gerber, PATH, Amy Weissman (Save the Children)	Research Methodology Holly McClain Burke and Maryanne Pribila, YouthNet/FHI
	Break	
10:45 – 12:15	Research Methodology Holly McClain Burke and Maryanne Pribila, YouthNet/FHI	Advocacy Kent Klindera Akenji Ndumu, Kayley Harrington, AFY; Willow Gerber PATH, Amy Weissman (Save the Children)
	Lunch	
1:15 – 2:45	VCT & PMTCT Ann McCauley, Population Council	Monitoring & Evaluation Inoussa Kabore, FHI
	Break	
3:00 – 3:45	PLWHA, Stigma, and Discrimination Akenji Ndumu, AFY and Luyombya Henry Hudson	ARVs Ya Duil Mukadi, FHI
3:45 – 4:30	Orphans and Vulnerable Children Linda Sussman, USAID, and Gretchen Bachman, FHI	PLWHA, Stigma, and Discrimination Akenji Ndumu, AFY and Luyombya Henry Hudson
4:30 – 5:30	Reflect & Wrap Up	
5:30 – 7:30	Dinner	
7:00 – 8:00	Edutainment performances by Ashe Caribbean Ensemble	

Day 2- Saturday

Time	Session	Session
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast	
8:30 – 9:00	Summary of Yesterday	
9:00 – 10:30	Monitoring & Evaluation Inoussa Kabore, FHI	Your Role in the BYF Visibility Campaign Hally Mahler, YouthNet/FHI and
	Break	
10:45 – 12:15	Your Role in the BYF Visibility Campaign Hally Mahler, YouthNet/FHI and Kent Klindera, AFY	Microbicides Stella Kirkendale, Antonia Kwiecien, Cynthia Woodsong, Gray Davis, FHI; Megan Gottemoeller, Imogen Fua, PATH
	Lunch	
1:15 – 2:45	Media Adam Taylor, SGAC, Kent Klindera and Akenji Ndumu, AFY	ABC – Comprehensive Prevention Douglas Kirby, ETR Associates
	Break	
3:00 – 3:45	Gender Jane Schueller, YouthNet/FHI and Martin Foreman	Vaccines Linda Gail Bekker, Desmond Tutu Center
3:45 – 4:45	Wrap Up and Conclude	
4:45 - 5:00	Final Evaluation	
7:00 - 11:00	Rally and Reception	

APPENDIX 2 : Pre-conference Workshop Final Evaluation

Criteria	Overall Quality	Learning Objective	Usefulness	Newness of Info	Importance of Topic
Average	4.47	4.17	4.47	4.02	4.55

APPENDIX 3: Evaluation of Pre-conference Workshop, by Session

Session	Evaluation Score (%)	Compliments	Recommendations
ABC (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 80 Good (3-4): 13 Fair-Poor (1-3): 7	- "The ABCs in my country is very controversial as it is seen as a blatant contradiction by most religious leaders/Christians in society. It is not being shame but the lack of support. Thank you for such a great session with stats provided to present to these folks back home and start to force possible slow change."	- Focused too much on the US - Need more time for discussion
Advocacy1 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 20 Good (3-4): 54 Fair-Poor (1-3): 26	- "I found the workshop very educative, interesting, and encouraging." - Appreciated the small group work	- More interactive activities and experience-sharing - Some topics (masturbation) were uncomfortable for some youth - Received low score on newness of technical information
Advocacy 2 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 46 Good (3-4): 47 Fair-Poor (1-3): 7	- "A highly important topic which utilized breakout sessions extremely well to inspire, motivate, and equip people with real skills for the conference." - "Very useful workshop with practical tips on how to achieve our goal both at Bangkok and beyond." Well prepared and kept the audience engaged	- More sharing of experience - The session felt very 'light' - Low score on newness of technical information

Session	Evaluation Score (%)	Compliments	Recommendations
ARVs (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 65 Good (3-4): 22 Fair-Poor (1-3): 13	- Very thorough review of the scientific basics; useful level of depth, easy to follow - Video was helpful	- Should discuss advocacy opportunity and concrete ways to seek TA for projects - Lack information of the nutritional aspects of the health of and HIV positive person - More discussion on cutting-edge technology, policy, and the controversial issue related to ARV access
BYF Visibility Campaign 1 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 79 Good (3-4): 19 Fair-Poor (1-3): 2	- "Great session [that gives] what we really need to be familiar with and equipped to [be engaged] in a young, respectful, knowledgeable way." - Great talking points, high energy	- Should have been held at the beginning of the workshop so people have more understanding of the BYF
BYF Visibility Campaign 2 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 79 Good (3-4): 18 Fair-Poor (1-3): 3	- "This was an excellent exercise with practical information - ammo for BYF members to use during the pre-conference. ... One of the results of this session...was the sense of cohesiveness it engendered amongst the attendants." - "I am incredibly pleased to see the planning and improvement to the co-ordination, goals, objectives of the 2004 BYF in respect to learning from the YouthForce strengths and weaknesses from Barcelona. It makes me proud to be part of the growing youth momentum." - Great role play, energetic	- Have youth as presenters - "One of the strengths of BYF is that there are youth from everywhere with different experiences, so I feel there should be more emphasis on practicing sharing relevant details about their personal experience, as well as BYF talking points/goals."
Gender (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 56 Good (3-4): 44 Fair-Poor (1-3): -	- Fun, good approach, participatory - Good balance between new info, discussion, and strategies for the conference - High score on the usefulness and importance of workshop topic	- More time needed - Did not cover gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues

Session	Evaluation Score (%)	Compliments	Recommendations
High Risk Populations (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 62 Good (3-4): 35 Fair-Poor (1-3): 3	- Great interaction, great lecture - High score on the importance of workshop topic, but not as high in newness of information	- Time constraint, could have generated more discussion - Handouts and group discussion report would be useful - More high risk groups should be covered
Media (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 86 Good (3-4): 14 Fair-Poor (1-3): -	- Very practical and helpful - Very high score on usefulness for the conference and importance of topic - "I enjoyed the session and thought the break out sessions exploring the intricacies of various mediums was well conducted and beneficial."	- Should be a mandatory session - Should focus more on making the media strategy on their own
Microbicides (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 71 Good (3-4): 19 Fair-Poor (1-3): 10	- Very informative and interesting, take-home materials - New information to many youth - "In all my attending HIV/AIDS workshops, not once has [microbicides] been mentioned... I also applaud this work which... will empower women who are most at risk."	- Time constraint, needed more discussion
Monitoring and Evaluation 1 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 55 Good (3-4): 39 Fair-Poor (1-3): 6	- Although many commented that this was a very informative presentation, the scores on usefulness and importance of topic varies quite a lot	- Needed more interaction - Too many acronyms, needed handouts
Monitoring and Evaluation 2 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 46 Good (3-4): 43 Fair-Poor (1-3): 11	- Important topic and information	- More interaction - More case studies - Not enough time to go into details, therefore making it less useful
OVC (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 50 Good (3-4): 38 Fair-Poor (1-3): 12	- Very important topic	- Time constraint - Should have hand out, "predictable" - Should have youth as co-presenter

Session	Evaluation Score (%)	Compliments	Recommendations
PLWHA & Stigma (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 40 Good (3-4): 60 Fair-Poor (1-3): -	- Important subject	- Needed more interactive activities - Lower score on newness of info, achievement of personal learning objective, and usefulness at the conference - Presenters did not address the questions and follow up with comments
Research Methodology 1 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 46 Good (3-4): 49 Fair-Poor (1-3): 5	- Good group work - Good examples to make the information clearer	- Difficult to cater this topic to an audience with different levels of prior knowledge - Some of the concepts were oversimplified
Research Methodology 2 (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 57 Good (3-4): 43 Fair-Poor (1-3): -	- Presenters "make numbers exciting" - "That was something I will use. It was actually my first time to hear three-quarter of things we were taught here. And that's amazing." - "The presentation was great. With a lot of info and statistics, [presenters] kept the group alive, interested, and informed. The activity was the best compliment to the presentation as we were allowed to use the knowledge and be comfortable with it."	- Very technical - Not complete enough to prepare attendees to ask question - The topic demand much greater depth, too fast, language difficulties for some youth - Should include component on research ethics
Vaccines (45 min)	Excellent (4-5): 27 Good (3-4): 53 Fair-Poor (1-3): 20	- Interesting topic	- Need interactive activity to break down this heavily-technical topic
VCT & PMTCT (90 min)	Excellent (4-5): 44 Good (3-4): 54 Fair-Poor (1-3): 2	- Great discussion, informative	- More activity, time constraint - Should keep time limit for each question/comments from audience - The focus seemed to be based more on common sense rather than professional ethics - Not as much technical knowledge

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