



Empowering Africa's Young People
*A Holistic Approach to Countering
the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*

**Report on
the First Stakeholders' Planning Meeting
August 10 – 16, 2002
Kenya**

**Submitted by the International Youth Foundation
On Behalf of
The Alliance of Youth CEOs**

Representing

World Alliance of YMCAs

World YWCA

World Organization of the Scout Movement

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

International Award Association

International Youth Foundation



Report: The Alliance of Youth CEOs' Stakeholders' Planning Meeting

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“This kind of coalition that has been forged between the seven major organizations to empower youth is unprecedented in the history of our struggle against HIV/AIDS.”

- Dr. Urban Jonsson, Regional Director, UNICEF for East and Southern Africa

Overview

For seven days in August, 56 leaders from 28 youth organizations in five African countries, as well as Regional Directors and chief executives of seven global youth organizations, met in Nairobi, Kenya. The mission: to discuss collaborative strategies to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has taken such an immense toll on Africa’s young people. Participants came from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Ghana. The Meeting brought together for the first time ever the affiliates of the seven largest youth-focused organizations - World Association of the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Organization of the Scout Movement, World Alliance of the YMCAs, World YWCA, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Award Association and the International Youth Foundation - in an effort to mobilize the collective power of the youth networks in fighting the pandemic. The Meeting was supported by the USAID, Bureau for Africa, Finnida and the seven global organizations.

The World Scout Movement Africa Regional Office in Nairobi provided logistical support for the Meeting, which was convened by the chief executives of the seven organizations, known informally as the Alliance of Youth CEOs, with the International Youth Foundation (IYF) serving as the Secretariat. Selected other invitees who attended as observers included representatives of UNICEF, USAID and Harvard University Global Community Partners.

IYF and the Alliance CEOs together designed the Meeting agenda to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop and map out collaborative efforts among country leaders
- Articulate a common vision for the Empowering Africa’s Young People Initiative – one that meets local needs and is locally owned.
- Incorporate the vision and priorities of the national affiliates through collaborative program planning at the country and regional levels.
- Consult with key partners and learn from each other

The desired outcomes at the end of the week were:

- Participant commitment to collaboration under the Initiative
- Draft of 5 country –specific Meeting follow-up action plans

An additional long-term outcome that was envisioned was for each country team to develop detailed plans including implementation strategies, budgets and local financing options.

With these overarching Meeting objectives, participants spent a day and a half learning about each another through community building exercises. Most of the sessions were designed in working groups of self-managed country teams. Each team designated a facilitator, reporter, and recorder from within its participants, which allowed the team building to continue beyond specific designated sessions. Later on, the delegates had the opportunity to meet in organizational teams to discuss the proposed structure and operations of the Initiative. All the Regional Directors and Alliance CEOs had several

sessions together concurrently with country team sessions. By the end of the week, country teams reached a new level of understanding about the proposed Initiative, and ways in which they could make a difference. They then translated this into action plans that reflected their collaborative approach to addressing the challenge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in their own countries.

Historical Perspective on the Alliance of Youth CEOs

Nicholas Nightingale, Secretary General of the World Alliance of the YMCAs, welcomed the delegates to the Meeting with an explanation of the genesis of the Alliance of Youth CEOs and its collective work that brought everyone to Nairobi. It began in 1995, he reflected, when, at the request of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the global CEOs of the International Award Association, the Girl Guides, the Scouts, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the YWCA and the YMCA met for the first time. The International Youth Foundation joined the group in 1999. Together, the seven organizations speak for 120 million young people around the world. Although the Alliance has published policy papers on Non-formal Education, National Youth Policies and Girls and Young Women in the 21st Century, it was and remains an informal group, meeting twice a year. The CEOs began to discuss the potential benefits of the National Movements working together in a similar fashion on the enormously challenging question of HIV/AIDS in Africa. The CEOs then held a series of consultations with potential funders, resulting in a decision to hold this exploratory meeting to identify how a joint initiative, specific to the country, could reverse the trends of HIV infections in Africa. The potential is enormous, he noted, as there is the possibility of parallel initiatives in other continents, such as Asia.

“It is only if we can believe that we can change the horizon in each of your 5 countries that we should contemplate going forward. We must set ourselves the task of changing the perspective so that we can really see the possibility of a drop in infection rates and a growth in effective treatment of people living with HIV. Some of us also want to address the broader issue of the other root causes of this pandemic, notably unacceptable levels of hunger and poverty in Africa.

So we must think big”

- Nicholas Nightingale, Secretary General, World Alliance of the YMCAs

Getting to Know Each Other

As few participants knew each other, the initial exercise of the Meeting was aimed at building community among the individual delegates. Community building exercises were designed to allow individuals to establish personal connections with one another based on what they held in common. Participants then formed a circle around the room organized chronologically by the year that each participant joined the youth development field. The combination of experiences of three delegates alone revealed more than 150 years of experience in youth development issues. Participants revealed their personal motivation for working in the youth field, and reflected on their inspirations and role models with colleagues from other organizations. Moving into country groups, participants continued to learn more about other organizations, articulated their hopes for the meeting, and established norms for working together for the remainder of the week.

A Snapshot of the Country Teams

Participants described their organizational experiences in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support programs. For many of them, the Meeting was the first opportunity to learn about the work of other youth-serving organizations in their own country. Overall, the country presentations served to illustrate the depth of experience, outreach capacity, and knowledge already present among the 28 organizations.

Kenya

Six organizations The Kenya Girl Guides, the Kenya Scouts, Kenya YWCA, Kenya YMCA, President's Award and the Kenya Red Cross – together have a significant outreach to youth with much in common in their program strategies and target populations. All six organizations offer peer education programs and use non-formal educational methods to develop young people's lifeskills, leadership ability and vocational skills. For example, the YWCA, with 7 branches in 8 districts, targets girls in its programs for out-of-school youth in church groups and among communities using materials in local languages. The YMCA operates vocational training programs for orphans while the President's Award, a voluntary program of youth activities with over 30,000 active participants in 7 provinces, develops lifeskills through awards. The Kenya Red Cross assists PLWA with opportunities to earn income by making and selling mosquito nets.

All six organizations rely extensively on volunteers and have incorporated raising HIV/AIDS awareness through their programs, movements, and campaigns. The Kenya Scouts, for example, has integrated AIDS awareness education in all its scouting activities for its membership of 200,000 boys and girls and over 12,000 adult volunteers. The YMCA provides open forums and uses testimonials, home-based prayer, and other church-based activities to raise awareness.

Ghana

Six organizations The Ghana Red Cross, the Ghana Girl Guides, the Ghana YMCA, the Ghana YWCA and the Head of State Awards Scheme represented Ghana. These organizations serve the needs of rural and urban youth in HIV/AIDS prevention through (1) peer education programs; (2) mobile educational clinics for treatment and counseling; (3) addressing harmful practices by discouraging female genital mutilation, teenage marriages, and ritual cutting of body parts with contaminated instruments; (4) community-based distribution activities where people in communities are trained in family planning and able to distribute condoms. (5) community outreach and advocacy to sensitize opinion influencers, religious leaders, and tradesmen, and training health workers to be more youth friendly.

With varying levels of effort, the six organizations seek to incorporate aspects of lifeskills education on issues such as leadership, communication and negotiation skills or livelihoods training in areas like agriculture, as a means to offer young people opportunities and hope. They are also engaged in dealing with the problems of stigmatization and discrimination and in working with PLWA in general and young people living with AIDS, and orphans -- albeit on a more limited scale.

Uganda

Five organizations The Uganda Girl Guides, Uganda Scouts, Uganda Red Cross, Source of Nile Award Association and the Uganda YWCA are represented in all 56 districts and reach out to young people, both in and out of school. In terms of education and awareness on HIV/AIDS, training is provided, starting with leadership training internally for staff and members. Messages are promoted to young people through music, dance, drama, camping, sporting, and recreational activities.

A unique program in Uganda, the Save the Youth From Aids (SYFA) Clan program of the Guides and the Scouts, educates young people who are then required to reach out to other young people from their clans, not all of whom are Scouts or Guides, but who remain accessible because of their tribal bonds and village connections. Other activities include providing training of trainers to scout leaders, purchasing bikes to peer educators, developing training manuals, constructing shelters for child-headed households, using lifeskills to develop responsible citizenship and offering sex education to bring about behavior change.

Tanzania

Six organizations The Tanzania Red Cross, the Tanzania Scouts, the Tanzania Girl Guides, the Tanzania YMCA, the Tanzania YWCA and the Kuleana Centre for Children's Rights, an IYF partner, represent the team. All the organizations have institutional leadership at the community, district, regional and national levels and thus are able to provide countrywide coverage through numerous activities. Such activities include education, advocacy and lobbying, home-based care, running VCT centers, dispensaries and clinics, peer education, both in and out of school, orphanage centers. Activities also include supporting income generating activities, training traditional birth attendants and building the capacity of PLWA, and conducting baseline research. Activities are implemented through non-formal and informal education, providing basic care supplies, information, engaging young people in recreational activities and excursions, as well as volunteers.

Zambia

Five organizations The Zambia YWCA, the Zambia YMCA, the Zambia Girl Guides, the Zambia Scouts and the Zambia Red Cross are engaged a range of activities including peer education and training programs, development and production of IEC materials, advocacy, outreach and awareness raising, counseling, particularly at drop-in centers, home-based care and support and addressing policy issues. An example of engaging youth in bringing about policy change is the Youth Parliament where young people engage in debates with their peers, members of parliament and other government officials, highlighting the needs to people who can make a difference.

The target population served by the five organizations is 14 to 25 years, although the Scouts upper age limit is 30 years, and beyond. The team identified its strength in the fact that all nine provinces are covered by the organizations and all have decentralized operating structures.

The Reality of HIV/AIDS in Africa and Living With The Disease

"It never occurred to me that I could be infected. For me, AIDS was for adults, promiscuous persons and prostitutes. AIDS was not for learned people. In my mind, anybody who went through or was in the university would not be infected.

Now that I cannot dispute the fact that the virus is in me, I am living with a lot of anxieties, fears, wishes and regrets. I fear for my child's future. I get more sick when I think of my child struggling without me. While death is natural and part of life, it is not natural for somebody who is aware it is around the corner."

- Inviolata Mmbwavi

Inviolata Mmbwavi At the outset of the meeting, a poignant reminder from a young woman, Inviolata Mmbwavi, who contracted HIV and became pregnant during her first sexual encounter at the age of 19, moved the delegates. She spoke about what it means to live with AIDS. Recounting her mental anguish at the stigma and discrimination directed towards her and her siblings because of her HIV positive status, she urged listeners to be at the forefront of creating an enabling environment for those who are infected not as a gesture of sympathy – but because they are worth it. She pushed for continuing advocacy on the importance of every child continuing his or her education, creating jobs or other economic opportunities to enable people to provide for their families, and to do more to make

dreams a reality for those living with AIDS. She argued for the need to focus on the factors that increase vulnerabilities for young people such as unemployment, peer pressure, and poverty. Inviolata's words resonated with the delegates who solicited her advice on a range of issues including how to respond to negative peer pressure, shape values and form good behavior rather than the more challenging task of changing behavior, ways to improve adult-child relationships -- including how best to involve adults in the world of youth, and dealing with the imbalance of power between the sexes.

Dr. Urban Jonsson, UNICEF's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, called for nothing less than a "Liberation War against HIV/AIDS". The HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa reflects a shocking picture of a disease that has rapidly spread, dramatically increasing child mortality rates and adult life expectancy, and creating a situation in which Africa has 70% of infections but only 10% of the world's population. While the "conspiracy of silence" has been broken at political level, a "second wall of silence continues between husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers, and students and between boyfriend and girlfriend. A language of convenience has become acceptable – "gender disparities" instead of men exploiting women, non-consensual sex when we mean rape, or high-risk sexual behavior when we mean male pleasure, lust, and power. Such language builds a wall between language and reality, Dr. Jonsson argued, and urged the delegates to break down the world of hypocrisy.

"Armed conflicts and the HIV/AIDS pandemic dominate the lives of people in sub-Saharan Africa. Both are complex emergencies that kill people. Last year, armed conflicts killed some 300,000 to 400,000 people, while AIDS killed 3.4 million – almost 10 times more. While armed conflicts seem to have an almost limitless budget and world-wide media attention, external assistance to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa in 2000 was on \$215 million, equivalent to the value of two jumbo jets and is still not the daily headlines news in the world."

- Urban Jonsson, Regional Director
UNICEF

A rich discussion with the delegates followed Dr. Jonsson's his speech. When asked, "how do we mobilize African leadership to join the liberation war", he replied that the answer was about democracy, in being allowed to choose, and then in electing the right leader. It is not so much about political will, he said, but rather making political choices and choosing where to spend money. Leaders must be held accountable for their actions. One delegate commented that making choices about the right leader had more to do with socio-economic situation of people rather than the political situation. Other questions focused on the disparities in prevalence rates between countries -- and in particular in Thailand, where rates declined as compared to South Africa, where it continued to increase. A 100% condom use program implemented efficiently and effectively, made a difference in Thailand where sex workers are engaged in the trade for a few years before retiring.

In the context of the country teams' work with young people, an important initiative of UNICEF is the Right To Know Initiative. The basic premise that young people have the right to know about things that affect their lives is repeated in the overall theme of the Initiative.

The Road to Collaboration

Strategies to Achieve Results

Dr. Musimibi Kanyoro, Secretary General of the World YWCA, on behalf of the Alliance CEOs, presented the framework of the Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative, which was received enthusiastically by the delegates. "We are all living with HIV/AIDS, it is not us and them anymore," Dr. Kanyoro stated in exhorting delegates to think boldly in responding to the opportunities presented through the Initiative.

The Initiative plans to use three main strategies to achieve results: focusing on non-formal education to impact young people; investing in capacity building, leadership training, and skill development for practitioners to help in scaling up; and support for best practices. Six mutually reinforcing lines of action are proposed:

- developing the young person with emphasis on girls and young women
- peer education
- raising HIV/AIDS awareness
- advocacy -- especially involving young people
- encouraging volunteerism and creating economic opportunities
- providing care and support for people living with AIDS and orphans.

Joint activities are envisioned in teacher training, curricula development, training in evaluation, financial sustainability, reporting, and exchanging good practices and applied research and evaluation. Dr. Kanyoro emphasized the importance of solid data as the collective credibility of the group rests on having meaningful impact on youth. Young people, ages 10 to 25, both affected and infected, is the target population for this multi-year Initiative.

Similarities emerged in the country team's presentations on common program elements that fit within the Initiative as a response to the CEOs vision. All are engaged in developing a young person through a combination of lifeskills, behavior and values formation, using strategies such as guiding and scouting, leadership training, and prevention education. All have peer education programs for in and out of school youth through guide and scout troops, youth clubs, etc. Raising awareness through anti-stigma and discrimination campaigns is already being realized through art, music, theatre, health fairs, information distribution, and testimonials. Home-based care, counseling, support, referrals to VCTs and other health providers are also important to the participating organizations. Presenters described the ways in which young people are engaged in advocacy efforts. The Zambia team underscored the need to empower volunteers as well and pay special attention to the girl child. The Ghana team responded to the need to create more economic opportunities for young people as an important element of the Initiative.

Assessing the Benefits and Identifying the Obstacles

In country groups, organizations discussed the benefits of collaboration by identifying assets that they could “give” to others under the Initiative and what they hoped to “get” from others in exchange. A poster session in which flipchart presentations were papered around the wall enabled participants to browse and analyze responses. While this session was more meaningful for individual organizations in country teams as each was able to assess the benefits of collaboration, some similarities emerged in the “gives” across the 5 countries. They included:

- Human resources (young people and volunteers)
- Peer education (models, curricula, and other program information)
- Training of Trainers
- Life Skills materials
- Camping equipment

Participants could see the many ways in which young people would benefit from the “gives.” They included increased self-esteem by pooling together volunteer and staff expertise, reaching out to more young people and helping them to achieve their goals through lifeskills education, become more aware of their sexuality with reproductive health information, and being able to support themselves and their families through skills training and jobs.

Needs mentioned most often across the countries were:

- Leadership training
- Training of Trainers
- Skills in fundraising
- Skills in lobbying and advocacy
- VCT centers
- Networking among organizations
- Financial resources

In working through the potential obstacles to collaboration and ways to overcome such barriers, participants noted that the issues that most reverberated for them were the possibilities of loss of organizational identity and values, power struggles, personality clashes, and lack of integrity. Participants felt that in a collaborative effort such as this, if there is no transparency, it can affect the image of every organization, at the country, regional and global level. A healthy discussion on these issues among the participants gave the Regional Directors and Alliance CEOs many points to consider during their subsequent sessions. Other commonly mentioned obstacles to collaboration included weak financial management capacity, poor reporting and record keeping, and staffing. While participants were honest about the barriers and organizational weaknesses, teams were able to identify the potential risks and solutions to overcoming these barriers. Moreover, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats helped country teams recognize their strengths as a coalition.

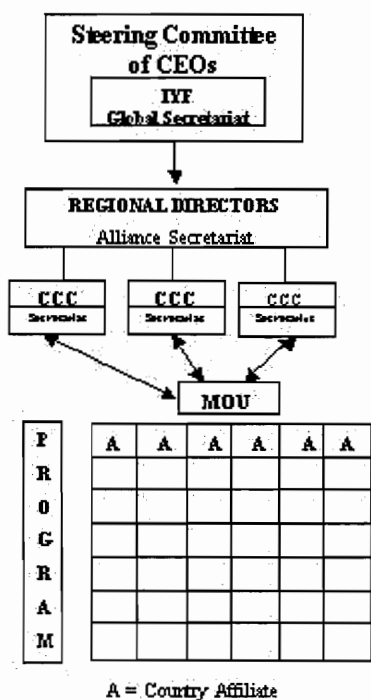
Structure for the Initiative and Clarification on Roles and Responsibilities

Obtaining agreement on the organizational structure and operational approach from the organizations at the country, regional and global levels -- while certainly the most challenging aspect of the Meeting -- was nonetheless successfully achieved. The proposed structure aims to duplicate at both the regional

and country levels the synergies that exist at the global level among the Alliance CEOs, while respecting individual organizational identities as expressed by the national affiliates. The structure also allows individual country coalitions or coordinating committees (CCC) some flexibility in the way it operates.

There was agreement on the need to have Secretariats both at the regional level, selected from among the regional offices of the seven organizations, as well as in the CCC, similar to the role of IYF as the Secretariat at the global level. This model uses structures and systems already in place and seeks to mitigate competition among organizations at the country level in the beginning, with the long-term objective of building national capacity to develop alliances.

At the country level, decisions and the power lies with the CCC that is the main center of accountability. A Memorandum of Understanding would clarify the roles and responsibilities of all the members of the CCC and also unite them under the Initiative. Under the MOU is a country plan. (The matrix in the diagram below represents the summary of the plan of all affiliate organizations.) Country plans may include mutually agreed upon goals and objectives, joint strategies and activities, an evaluation plan and a timeline, with each organization in the country contributing to and benefiting from the plan.



In each country, the CCC would be the center of coordination and decisions regarding activities in the country. As a committee, it can take action on requests for technical assistance, monitor progress, or review budgets. Within each CCC, a Secretariat would be selected – perhaps on a rotating basis -- by the members to facilitate and implement the decisions made by the CCC. While there is still the outstanding task of developing criteria for this Secretariat, country teams worked to elect provisional Secretariats that would contribute to sustaining the country coalitions after the Planning Meeting.

The proposed Regional Alliance structure would be based in Nairobi (three of the seven organizations maintain regional offices in Nairobi) and serve as the main accountability center assuming full fiduciary responsibility. Another Memorandum of Agreement would be developed and adhered to by all the regional offices articulating the roles and responsibilities of the seven regional offices. The Regional Alliance Secretariat would be responsible for maintaining proper accountability for funds, organizational plans, and budgets, and would provide technical assistance to countries as needed. Their role is to support the

project and the country teams and facilitate communications both up and down the structure, drawing upon their knowledge of country programs, personalities, and relationships, and using existing infrastructures and channels of communications. The value-added of the Regional Secretariat would be in setting benchmarks for good practices, developing and maintaining web-based databases and serving as role models for accountability and transparency purposes.

Preliminary criteria developed by the Regional Directors in selecting a Regional Secretariat includes having adequate office space that is most accessible, people to work on the development of the

Initiative, IT capacity, experience in managing funds on behalf of others, established procedures, and time to devote to the Initiative.

The Regional Directors proposed testing out this model initially, during the planning process. The priority is to put the funding where it is most needed by people, and use structures already in place drawing upon the best that each organization has to offer. Once the Initiative is funded and formally launched, the issues of formal registration of the CCC and other legalities could be revisited based on donor requirements. Finally, the Regional Alliance also proposed having two internships at the Secretariat for young people to work and learn with the staff as well as a youth council that would provide feedback and input to the Steering Committee of CEOs.

“We will start with who we are and build up consensus. We recognize that building trust is a process, so we want to be clear on the outcome – impact on young people.”
- Françoise Le Goff, Head of Regional Delegation, IFRC

The CEOs were advised to ensure that the vision of the Initiative be maintained at all levels. There was also a need expressed to have a joint identity and name for the Initiative in each country that reflects its unique composition, yet indicates the overall “brand” of the Initiative.

In view of model and structure proposed by the Regional Directors that was accepted, roles and responsibilities within country teams were finalized as follows:

Kenya - The team selected Kenya Coordinating Committee (KCC) as its name and chose the Kenya YWCA as the Secretariat. The KCC had been meeting once a month even prior to the event, and would continue to hold meetings to share information and develop an overall country plan.

Uganda – The Uganda Red Cross was selected as the Secretariat. The team planned to meet once a month to discuss program issues as well as develop guidelines for daily operations of the Secretariat, communications channels, and a plan for local fundraising.

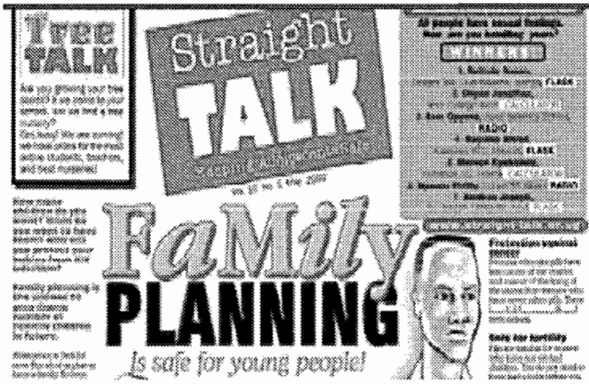
Tanzania – The Tanzania Scouts Association was selected to lead a national steering committee at the country level to sustain activities. The steering committee would be comprised of representatives of the other organizations. Communications would be maintained through ordinary and extra ordinary meetings of the committee. The country team also planned to work closely with their regional offices

Zambia – The Zambia Red Cross was selected as the Secretariat for its CCC, and set plans to meet once every two weeks to further refine its operations and procedures.

Ghana – The Ghana Girl Guides was selected as the Secretariat initially for the Ghana CCC and the team planned to make this a rotational position. Communications would be maintained through regular meetings and e-mail, and all organizations committed to cooperate with the CCC and Secretariat.

Learning from Best Practices: Case Studies from Participating Countries

Country teams analyzed programs and practices from within their country that could be offered as best practices because of their impact on young people, ability to reach scale, effectiveness in service delivery, sustainability, and other criteria. The presentations showcased the best that each country had to offer and served to inform and inspire participants in other countries facing similar issues.



Credit: USAID/Uganda

The **Uganda** team highlighted promising programs such as: (1) a once a week free pull-out from a national newspaper – Straight Talk: New Vision – and a Help-Line, a telephone hotline, helped to bridge the culture gap by answering young people’s questions on HIV/AIDS that could not be discussed with parents and relatives. Telephone counseling provided anonymous and non-judgmental help; (2) Save the Youth From Aids (SYFA) clan program involving peer education in a traditional clan setting; (3) Training those involved in traditional rituals

such as circumcisions in safe handling and use of instruments used in the rituals; (4) Shows such as *Bagala* and *Ndiwulira*, which use the best of Ugandan music, dance and drama to reach young people with positive messages; (5) Anti-stigma campaigns that helped to reduce incidences of suicides among young people. The team offered these activities as examples of responding to the needs of young people – offering them hope, providing information and referrals, changing practices with harmful consequences, and minimizing the stigma directed towards infected youth.

Among the elements that made these programs successful: strong leadership at all levels, involvement of religious leaders and communities from the beginning, and participation of youth and volunteers.

The **Kenya** team showcased the Kenya Girl Guides award-winning peer education program that has reached 25,000 girls and young women since 1999. The program, for both in- and out-of-school girls, uses a core group of teachers in schools who are trained as trainers on the curriculum, and then are required to facilitate the training through a patrol system. Patrol leaders, trained in the curriculum and equipped with simplified talking points, usually lead the discussions in small groups of 6 to 8 girls. The structure of the Girl Guides Association facilitates communication between the management down to the grassroots and vice versa, and partnerships with theatrical organizations help young girls to develop skills in acting, puppetry, and drama. A special HIV badge can be earned and serves to motivate the troops. Senior girl guides (ages 50 and above) serve as role models and custodians of the tradition.

The team highlighted the program’s cost effectiveness – by using teachers in the same schools where Girl Guides operate, using existing patrol structures and patrol leaders and existing monitoring and evaluation tools. Despite its current scale, the potential for further replication exists, particularly given its usefulness in bringing about behavioral change in young girls. The key lesson learned: given correct information, girls and young women can make right decisions about their reproductive health.

The **Zambia** team gave the participants a flavor of their nation’s pioneering work in providing home-based care to those infected and affected by the virus and the youth-friendly approaches to prevention and care. In that country of 10.2 million people, 68% are youth. The rising numbers of people and households who are affected as a result of the spread of HIV/AIDS has meant that more and more young people have been thrust into the role of caregivers. Such responsibilities place greater pressure on young people -- who respond by spending increasing amounts of time away from home. Lead by churches and community organizations, training in home-based care and supporting young people through emotional support, skills development, and economic opportunities has strengthened prevention among youth. Successful strategies also include peer education programs, drop-in centers in both urban and rural areas, recreational activities, school-based programs, and support and care for orphans that involve churches, schools and communities are yielding success.

The **Tanzania** team selected the kuleana Centre for Children’s Rights program as an exemplary model. kuleana promotes sexual and reproductive health rights in four regions of the Lake zone in the northern part of the country. Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the organization seeks to mobilize communities and influence policy changes. Interventions are designed based on research, data gathered through baseline studies, and evaluations of process and impact. For example, kuleana’s research indicated that sexual encounters occur early – below the age of 15 years and as early as age 9 – and that 15% of new incidences of STIs occur among 10 to 24 year olds. Interventions are thus focused on young people, both in and out of school, through programs that integrate life skills and HIV/AIDS education, build capacity of teachers, and mobilize communities, health workers, and the media to advocate for children’s rights. Focusing on children at an early age with education provides them with the chance to make responsible life choices. kuleana acts as a catalyst in initiating networking among grassroots organizations – using advocacy, innovative teaching methods, and strategic monitoring and evaluations to demonstrate the effectiveness of its programs.

The **Ghana** team shared its collective experience with peer education programs. These programs have a multiplier effect, by reaching out to youth in the same socio-economic background, tapping existing channels of communication among them, and providing youth with safe places to communicate among themselves.

Perspectives from Donors and Leaders ¹

Over the course of the meeting, participants had the opportunity to learn from a diverse group of speakers, engage in discussions with the presenters on the serious challenges facing young people, and appreciate the different strategies used to address the underlying causes of the disease.

Janet Hayman, Regional HIV/AIDS Advisor, USAID/REDSO/EA, USAID has launched an expanded response to the HIV/AIDS crisis with more resources being devoted to fight the spread of the disease. In this plan, youth is a primary target group. By 2007, the goals of USAID are to reduce the prevalence rate by 50% among the 15 to 25 year age olds in high prevalence countries and maintain HIV prevalence below 1% among 15 to 49 year olds in low prevalence settings. In particular, REDSO/EA focuses on capacity building with direct input into the adolescent reproductive health policies of 14 Ministries of Health. The agency also works with regional institutions in creating a multiplier effect and building capacity at the grassroots. Two USAID missions in the region focus on youth: USAID/Kenya’s work with the Kenya Girl Guides Association and USAID/Zambia supports youth-led organizations that provide numerous interventions to youth. The experience of these youth organizations in managing their projects and in reporting directly to USAID is very empowering, and such models in which youth are the leaders are to be encouraged.

Ms. Hayman expressed USAID’s concerns regarding the content of messages to young people, and its appropriateness in the context of segmentation of the population. Is there a right balance in the ABC (Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condom use) prevention message? Is there an overemphasis on condoms? While there is evidence of decline in having multiple sex partners (research from Uganda shows a decline in the percentage of people reporting multiple partners, from 30% initially to only 7% by 2001), is it because of condom use or changing social practices or as a result of strong personal communication networks? Ms. Hayman emphasized that while condoms are important, it is important to present the whole range of messages, particularly as “youth” is a varied group.

¹ These comments are summaries from notes taken during the sessions and are not verbatim remarks of the presenters.

The deciding factors for sexual behaviors are different for different segments of the youth cohort. For example, the *matatus* are fast living young men who need a different type of message from other urban youth. She urged the participants to closely examine these factors when developing programs aimed at youth that are less privileged as well as ensuring consistency of messages. She was concerned about different messages coming from parents, churches, schools, and peers that could be confusing to young people. Other issues needing attention are efforts that promote youth friendly services, address the needs of child headed households and orphans, and fill research gaps. For example, little is known about pediatric AIDS, in how parents relate to young people in areas of sexuality and in understanding the social context of high-risk groups.

Dr. Changu Mannathoko, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF, presented findings from a recent seven-country research report in which the experiences and identities of young people were examined through youth-centered, gender sensitive research. The *Regional Study on Young People, Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Education* focused on young people from Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study used qualitative methods such as loosely structured interviews, diaries, group work, and drawings, thus providing a rich and varied insight into young people's lives. The findings from the study found that parents and girls are still more concerned about pregnancy rather than being infected by the HIV virus. Boys are not socialized to stay at home and are in fact, sent outside if they spend too much time in the house. Violence is very much a part of young people's lives, both boys and girls, and is intertwined with sexuality. Sexual harassment of young girls, both at home by male relatives and in school by teachers came up often in discussions with interviewers. Only girls were blamed for violating cultural values, and the discussions of "good" girls and "modern" (bad) girls evoked different responses from boys and girls in different settings.

The study found that the dominant theme in interactions between boys and girls was sex rather than friendships. Young people's diaries revealed a need for friendship – suggesting that lifeskills curricula should reflect this for both girls and boys, as well as address the double standard for girls. Multifaceted approach that addresses that varied identities of girls is essential to bring about behavior change in a different social settings. Furthermore, parents need to be educated, as they do not sufficiently understand the issues of HIV/AIDS or sexuality to discuss them with their children. The same HIV/AIDS life skills education is also needed for teachers who provided "moralistic" responses emphasizing the dangers of sex and virtues of pre-marital virginity. In responding to audience questions, Dr. Mannathoko emphasized the need to educate boys as well as girls and to vocalize discussions on sexuality, as abstinence is more likely to be adopted when young people are able to talk about it. Moreover, the empowerment of young people is linked to being free from sexual harassment and building self-esteem with the support of schools, communities, and parents.

Dan Wamanya, Program Officer, USAID/Uganda updated participants on the pandemic in Uganda, where youth constitute 20% of the population. As a major bilateral donor since 1998, USAID/Uganda collaborates with many partners in supporting a comprehensive prevention, care and support approach to HIV/AIDS. USAID and Uganda have achieved much success in terms of results -- including a reduction in prevalence among youth and an increase in the mean age of first sexual activity by 1 to 2 years. Yet challenges remain, particularly in youth outreach. There is still limited coverage of current youth programs and limited technical capacity to design youth-specific programs. Youth need encouragement to be tested, and for those found to be infected, to seek care. Establishing sex education in schools and families also continues to be a challenge. Finally, mobilizing communities, setting up supportive youth policies, and evaluating the effectiveness of programs

continue to confront the mission. Future USAID priorities for youth include integrated basic education, life skills, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health and expanded support to orphans and children in areas of conflict.

Cheryl Sönnichsen, Senior Advisor HIV/AIDS, USAID/Kenya and John MacWilliam, Country Director, IMPACT a project run by Family Health International, and the largest USAID contractor in the country, provided an overview of activities in Kenya. The Behavior Communication Change strategy used is known as “question your relationships” – such as encouraging young people to question relationships before starting relationship. The BCC objectives are to increase the perceived distance between the first meeting and fidelity (youth should be encouraged to get to know each other better before having sex); between exposure and HIV infection; and between HIV infection and AIDS. Also important is to improve young people’s negotiation skills. IMPACT’s communications strategies rest on five pillars: interactivity, ownership of information, direct response, feedback, and demonstration of conversion. Examples of BCC activities in Kenya include interactive radio opera and a comic book with the same youthful heroine and youth as characters, school murals and suggestion boxes, magnet theatre for out of school youth, and youth friendly VCT services and campaigns, among many other examples. The lessons learned from IMPACT’s experience is that youth are not homogenous group; therefore programs have to be short, specific, innovative, dynamic and captivating. Reaching out to girls is particularly complex. It was underscored that dialogue -- not lecture -- is a more effective strategy.

Steve LaVake, Private Sector Involvement, YouthNet, introduced the newest USAID/Washington-funded youth-focused initiative, a partnership of several organizations specializing in health, private sector involvement, youth, research and policy development, and the media. The three main components of YouthNet include *global technical leadership* to help organizations support high quality youth programs, *focus countries* activities such as support for youth and reproductive health programs, and *short-term technical assistance* in the field. It is through these kinds of activities that YouthNet brings added value to issue of youth engagement, raises visibility to youth concerns, and strengthens adult-youth partnerships.

Dr. Maryann Burris, Program Officer for Eastern Africa, Ford Foundation Nairobi, described the foundation’s experience in youth development and HIV/AIDS from a human rights rather than a public health perspective. Thus, programming principles are in the context of young people’s lives, sexual health and sexual behaviors are linked to issues such as livelihood, sanitation, and security. In the experience of the foundation, and documented through research, young people want a clear, coherent and articulate value system that they can internalize. Instead, young people are most frequently confronted with hypocrisy in the behavior of adults who do not practice what they preach to youth. Dr. Burris spoke about the need to send positive messages about the importance of having good role models of husbands and fathers in order to demonstrate safe and responsible sexual behavior to young people.

Country Plans and Follow-up Actions

Country teams presented their preliminary sketches of collaborative strategies to expand HIV/AIDS prevention in their country.

KENYA



The overall goal of the Kenya Coordinating Committee is to expand HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support to young people in the country through three specific objectives implemented over five years.

Objective I: to contain levels of new infections through prevention by:

- imparting knowledge and skills through education, awareness, and sensitization programs for youth
- expanding advocacy
- promoting VCT

Under this objective, the collaboration strategies include sharing knowledge and skills in peer education programs, culturally sensitive information, education and communication materials, training, development and dissemination of additional IEC materials, influencing policy, addressing harmful cultural practices, establishing VCT centers and promoting their use.

Peer education activities would be carried out by all six organizations and all six under this Initiative would conduct advocacy and awareness raising campaign, with increased participation of its members. This campaign would mean bringing visibility to youth issues not only on World AIDS Day but also national events, holidays, organizational events, and major sporting events. Only selected organizations in the CCC -- those with the most capacity and skills -- would initiate VCT centers.

Objective II: to reduce the pain and trauma of both the infected and affected through:

- promoting a sense of caring for and among the infected and affected
- providing knowledge and skills in home-based care and counseling
- expanding advocacy

Collaboration strategies for this objective require training in advocacy, home-based care skills and acquiring supplies, counseling and developing training materials and aids. All six would be engaged in developing counseling skills, destigmatization materials, and home-based care activities.

Objective III: to enhance and promote support systems through:

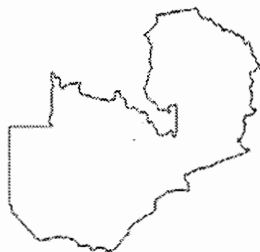
- promoting and supporting home-based care
- promoting VCT
- Building the capacities of the affected and infected to enable them to manage themselves and their families
- Initiating and promoting of social support groups

The team's collaboration strategies include providing vocational and skills training, setting up income-generating activities, increasing access to education, and initiating social support groups. The team considered a range of income generating ventures from their current portfolio of training programs. These could be offered to enable affected and infected young people to earn income and support their families. The team also considered establishing a credit plan, setting up a mechanism to sponsor education and form support groups to assist the most vulnerable groups of young people.

The team developed the following timetable in its action plan:

- Detailed country strategic plan - September 30, 2002
- Final feedback from the Regional Directors – October 31, 2002
- Commencement of implementation – January 2003
- Continuation of the Kenya Coordinating Committees planning meetings – First formal meeting on August 27, 2002

ZAMBIA



The vision of the Zambia team is to reach out to all youth in the country, both in and out of school, including those who are infected, affected and orphaned.

The team conducted a mapping exercise to analyze where each of the five organizations is active in the country and the types of programs and services offered. The following chart summarizes the team's analysis and identifies the programming overlaps and gaps.

Zambia HIV AIDS Prevention Services

Red Cross	YMCA	YWCA	Scouts	Girl Guides	Total Districts
Condom Distribution					53
Peer Education	Peer Education	Peer Education	Peer Education	Peer Education	42
Orphan Care & Support	Orphan Support				6 <i>Need more</i>
Home-Based Care				Home Based-Care	4 <i>Need more</i>
Youth Skills Enterprise Initiative	Youth Counseling & Exchange	Child/Youth Counseling & Skills Enterprise Initiatives			5 <i>Need more</i>
	Reproductive Health Education				4 <i>Need more</i>

Based on core organizational competencies, the Zambian country plan focused on best practices in peer education, youth skills enterprise, and home-based care as interventions to be offered over a period of time. The team identified some of the essential life skills needed by young Zambians to succeed, such as practical skills in industrial arts, home economics, and business management skills. Advocacy efforts should focus on removing stigma and discrimination and promoting VCT use.

As a result of the Initiative and the collaborative structure of the CCC, the teams would be able to identify communities with little investment and respond in appropriate ways. Peer education programs could be strengthened and expanded to address issues of stigma and discrimination and include referrals to VCTS. Youth would be able to participate at all levels, including in the design of the CCC plan, implementation and evaluation. Post-VCT support services could be strengthened and home-based care expanded. The team planned to engage local actors, including donors and service providers such as the National AIDS Council, and also exchange visits to share experiences on best practices. Immediately after leaving Nairobi, the team planned to brief their respective organizations and include other staff in follow-up meetings.

TANZANIA



The vision of the Tanzania team is to reach out to youth countrywide, in both urban and rural areas, to ensure that preventative interventions and services are available through the collaborative Initiative. As AIDS is the leading cause of death in the country, a multifaceted approach will be used to target boys and girls between the ages of 10 to 24 years, including orphans, with peer, family life, reproductive health, and HIV education services, while actively involving youth in all facets of these interventions.

A mapping exercise showed that of the 25 regions in the southern part of Tanzania (Lindi Mtwara, Ruvuma Rukwa, Singida and Shinyanga) are inadequately covered by the six organizations, thus identifying a possible area for expansion under the Initiative.

The Tanzania team will emphasize youth-friendly approaches among counselors, and will involve more youth in all stages of planning, implementation, follow-up, and particularly in counseling. It will seek to make counseling and testing centers more accessible to young people. Activities will include production and distribution of IEC materials, community mobilization and sensitization, advocacy and lobbying, organizing national youth forums to give voice and visibility to young people, and conducting further research to support program interventions.

The team felt that additional partners could support the country team’s efforts and planned to consult with a number of agencies including UNICEF, AMREF, TACAIDS, PSI, USAID, among others. Like the Zambian team, the Tanzanians planned to debrief their staff and set up meeting times to further develop the country plan.

UGANDA



The goal of the Uganda team is to have a marked decrease in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among young people in Uganda. The vision is to have the active involvement and participating of young people, both in and out of school between the ages of 10 and 25 years. The focus would be on HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support in urban and rural areas.

The mapping exercise revealed that participating organizations were primarily located in the central and western parts of the country, with the exception of the Red Cross, which covers 90% of the country. Fewer services were being provided in the north and far eastern side as well as rural areas of the country. The Initiative is viewed as a five-year effort initially, providing much needed life skills in communications, negotiations, assertiveness, decision making, and sexuality education. The initiative would use music, drama, camping, and other recreational activities to reach out to more young people, and would include training trainers in peer education, leadership, counseling, and guidance. Additional planned interventions included forming youth clubs as a way to mobilize young people, promoting advocacy at all levels, creating youth-friendly training materials including a video, radio and television programs, launching anti-stigma and discrimination campaigns managed by youth and PLWA themselves, and developing a newsletter through which youth can contribute to the team’s plans.

The following action plan illustrates Uganda’s post-Nairobi plans.

Action Steps	Key Output	Responsibility	Resources Committed	Time Frame
Planning Meeting of the CCC	Commitment to the Alliance Strategies for mobilization and publicity	Uganda Red Cross to host the meeting	Staff, volunteers and time	August 26, 2002
Orientation of Management	Informed and involved management	All members of the CCC Uganda Red Cross	Venue, personnel, time, money	Date to be proposed at the first meeting (within 1 month)
Needs Assessment	Knowledge of strengths and gaps in organizations	CCC	Personnel and time	Within one and a half months
Joint Publicity	Youth and public informed about Alliance	Uganda Red Cross	Stationary, secretarial services, volunteers	Three months

Action Steps	Key Output	Responsibility	Resources Committed	Time Frame
Launching of the Alliance	Increased awareness Partnerships developed	CCC	Personnel, money	Determined at the first meeting
Development of communication network	Systems established	Individual organizations	Personnel and resources	Within two months
Identifying other partners	Partnerships established	CCC	Personnel, volunteers, time	Within three months
Fundraising	Funds Networking	CCC	Red Cross Band, personnel and volunteers from all organizations	Within three months host a one day fundraising event
Developing a proposal	Country proposal	CCC	Personnel	Within two months

The Ugandan country team agreed to support one another during the process by sharing resources including personnel in certain areas, volunteers and staff, local fundraising information, technical knowledge and infrastructure for meeting and communication purposes.

GHANA



The Ghana team's overall goal is to expand and intensify educational and HIV/AIDS awareness programs among young people, drawing on their enthusiasm and exuberance. In analyzing the location of the six organizations and their programs and services throughout the country, the team found that with the exception of the upper west region, at least one or more organization has a presence in the other regions.

Over a five-year period, the country team members plan to collaborate in expanding peer education, counseling, and HIV/AIDS awareness programs. In Ghana, there is a particular need to develop life skills that promote self-esteem and teach negotiating skills and also improve and expand counseling services to youth. Specific organizations plan to address these needs. There is also a need to create more demand for VCT services, which would be done through community sensitization and social mobilization. While initially they would make referrals to VCT centers, the team plans to consult with the Ministry of Health on setting up additional VCT centers. Similar to the plans of the other countries, the Ghana team plans to collaboratively work on campaigns that would seek to address harmful cultural practices through sensitization, lobbying, and educating opinion leaders, community members, and religious heads about the modes of transmission and prevention.

Youth would be represented in the CCC and would be trained in participatory learning appraisal skills to enable them to take leading roles in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the programs. Before the Initiative can be launched, it is critical to strengthen organizational capacity in some areas, such as monitoring and evaluation tools and training of trainers through a formal needs assessment. Other local partners who would be consulted include the Ministries of Health and Education, Ghana AIDS Council, National Youth Council, National Population Council, District Assemblies and selected NGOs.

Following the Stakeholders' Planning Meeting, the Ghana team planned to meet within two weeks to debrief their organizational staff and management. The Ghana Girl Guides accepted responsibility for

hosting the first formal planning meeting of the Ghana CCC, set for September 25, 2002. The end of November was targeted for all stakeholders to agree to a memorandum of understanding to guide the workings of the CCC.

By World AIDS Day, the Ghana team hoped to have publicly launched the country alliance and completed a country proposal and implementation plan.

Moving Ahead – Next Steps

During the final session, IYF, as the Secretariat for the Alliance, presented its strategy and timeline for follow-up actions from the global and regional levels to support the country plans. The biggest challenge ahead for the Alliance and its members is in raising funds globally to support the ambitious country plans. In order to facilitate the development of a global proposal and accompanying budget, IYF will send guidelines to the country teams. The projected date for the completion of a full proposal is end of November 2002. However, in the interim, IYF would start marketing a concept paper to targeted donors. IYF also took note of unfinished tasks that would be shared with all the Regional Directors following the meeting and shared with the country teams later.

Results Achieved

The response to the Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative from the country affiliates was very encouraging to IYF and the Alliance of Youth CEOs. Among the results achieved:

- *Identifying the affiliates' existing program priorities and aligning them with the Initiative's strategic lines of action in addressing HIV/AIDS* The participants responded favorably to the proposed principles, strategies and lines of action and embraced these in their preliminary country plans.
- *Securing affiliates' commitment to collaboration* The evaluation data indicated that 95 % agreed or strongly agreed that their organization could collaborate with others in their country. This was a significant achievement in view of the fact many of these organizations had never worked together before while others had a history of competition. Participants recognized the unprecedented nature of the challenge and rose to the occasion by taking this extraordinary step of forming a coalition to respond to the pandemic.
- *Forging strong bonds among leadership at the country level* For many of the participants, the Meeting was the first opportunity to learn about the other organizations, even in their own country. Participants had the invaluable opportunity to learn from each other, by sharing experiences – successes and failures – and exchanging ideas through organized discussions as well as more casual conversations. An overwhelming number of the participants, 98%, agreed that they had learned more about their colleagues and the work of their organizations. By the end of the week, participants were eager to continue the collaborations and discussions that began in Nairobi back in their home country with the same level energy, and a wider circle of management and program staff of the participating organizations.
- *Developing agreement on structure and operations* There was agreement among national, regional and global offices on the structure of the Alliance at each level and the modalities of

operation. The plan is to begin testing the model even during the development stages of the Initiative.

- *Preliminary action plans completed* – Plans were developed at the country level as well as the regional and global levels on ways to move ahead and keep the momentum going. Participants committed to working on detailed plans with the support of the global Secretariat and their Regional offices.

Conclusion

While only a first step in the launching the Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative, the Stakeholders' Planning Meeting was nonetheless a watershed event in the history of the seven organizations and in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Given the planning and team building that started in Nairobi and is continuing in the 5 countries, the Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative is poised to make a critical difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS, based on strong national leadership, effective collaboration, and unparalleled reach to Africa's young people.

Annex I: Acronyms

ABC	“Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condom Use” message of prevention
CCC	Country Coordinating Committee
Finnida	Finland’s development agency
IEC	Information Educational Communication materials
IYF	International Youth Foundation
PLWA	People living with AIDS
REDSO/ESA	Regional Economic Development Support Offices/ East and Southern Africa
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
SYFA	Save Youth From Aids program in Uganda
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	Voluntary counseling and testing centers

Annex II: List of Participants

Ghana

Suffix	First name	Last name	Title	Organization	Street address	City
Mr.	Samuel	Clement	Coordinator for Youth Programmes	Ghana Red Cross	PO BOX 835	Accra
Mrs.	Patience	Aniagyei	National Trainer	The Ghana Girl Guides Association	PO Box 98	Accra
Mrs.	Rose	Mortagbe	Chief Commissioner	The Ghana Girl Guides Association	PO Box 98	Accra
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Kenya

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Ms.	Caroline	Maneno-Oketch	Deputy National General Secretary	YWCA Kenya	Nyerere/Mamlak a Road PO Box 40710	Nairobi
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Mr.	James	Gomez	Executive Secretary	Africa Alliance of YMCAs	PO Box 608565	Nairobi
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Tanzania

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