



***Leadership Statement  
Youth Leaders***

***The Critical Importance of YOUTH in the fight against HIV/AIDS.***

Young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection and frequently carry the burden of caring for family members living with HIV/AIDS. Many are vulnerable to HIV because of risky sexual behavior or substance use, because they lack access to HIV information and prevention services, or for a host of social and economic reasons. Stigma can be particularly damaging to young people at a time when they are trying to consolidate their identity and establish their place in the world.

Youth were mentioned as 'hope' but not enough has been done in concern of youth problems. Even in the World AIDS Conference, youth were merely a decoration and given not enough space and attention. If the fight will have to go on, the future course of the epidemic depends on more efforts mounted today to prevent HIV infection among young people and make treatment available to sustain the life of young positives. World society will have to help young people to stand up for themselves and force for change. Open up the world to accept those who are both infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, learn from past experience and prevent it from happening.

***Objectives of the Youth to fight HIV/AIDS***

Youth should be major actors in policies and programs that are geared towards community prosperity, yet their initiatives and actions are hardly applauded, endorsed and rewarded. The activities and programs need to be connected to each other, to work together on a unified platform in order to facilitate experience sharing and to present a common voice for collective prosperity. Youth organizations need a pool of resources to support smaller groups so as to ensure that all worthwhile initiatives of youth are delivered to their communities successfully.

Address HIV/AIDS and other issues which affect youth, as well as related human development challenges and opportunities such as poverty and its alleviation, access to information, access to resources, access to care and services, access to policy making decision.

***Policies***

- Youth need to pressure national institutions and international organizations for political commitment
- Youth need to be involved in decisions and policy making; promotion of youth for publicity gains provides no real benefits for youth, proposals by youth which have been merely rejected in most countries should be weighted and implemented.
- Youth will work on guidelines of best practices to seek good examples

**Resources**

- Valuing and providing more resources in terms of financial, human and other unquantifiable resources (e.g. psychological support for affected and infected youth).
- More access to information, in term of media and exposure as well as information.
- Access to treatment for positive youth; especially positive youth in developing countries that are facing the blink of extinction as the generation has been wiped out.

**Scaling up**

- There need to be a forum for youth leaders to meet at least once a year to set the guidelines of what will happen year by year and to evaluate the work that has been done.
- Youth need to work on the Youth Global Coalition so as to form a base to link up. The setup will be by youth, for youth and from youth initiative, based on the needs that have been proposed by youth to put forward the activities in each region.
- Youth leaders need to involve other youth, not only youths that already belong to the network but normal students and those beyond the institutions as well.

**Accountability**

- Every year at the forum, youth will be evaluate the work that has been done and restructure the plan.
- Action will be made, not only those on paper

**Mobilizing Leaders**

- Youth need all partners to help as youth can only work alone halfway. Leaders of all sectors have to come and support youth in policy making, resources and scaling up to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.