



SYMPOSIUM REPORT

How to Get the Message Across

The Education Sector's Response to the Challenge of HIV Prevention among Most-At-Risk Youth

UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education

December 2, 2009

Berlin, Germany

We demand meaningful involvement of the diverse youth communities, especially young people living with HIV as they are key role models and leaders in the movement, quoting the address of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at World Aids Day 2009 yesterday. We young people are here living, working, and ready to take responsibility along with your support and mentorship. We are not future leaders, we are leaders of today. And we want to lead it together with you. To repeat one of the World Aids Day Campaign slogans: Keep the Promise – Act Now!

Youth representatives at the Symposium

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AWOMI	African Women Millennium Initiative on Poverty and Human Rights
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IATT	Inter-Agency Task Team
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session

Background

The Symposium “How to get the message across – The education sector’s response to the challenge of HIV prevention among most-at-risk youth” took place in Berlin, Germany on 2 December 2009. The Symposium was convened by the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education and preceded the UNAIDS IATT on Education’s members meeting on 3-4 December 2009. GTZ hosted the Symposium on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in Berlin.

The Symposium was attended by more than 65 participants, comprising of members of the UNAIDS IATT on Education, representatives of bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations and governmental as well as non-governmental institutions (NGOs).

This report synthesizes the key issues discussed at the Symposium and the conclusions reached.

Rationale

In his Letter to Partners in February 2009, Michele Sidibé reiterated: ‘Mobilizing and empowering young people to prevent HIV infection is a goal of revolutionary proportions’. He highlighted the need to prioritize HIV prevention efforts given that for every two people who have recently begun treatment, five more are infected with HIV. Young people aged between 15 and 24 account for 45% of all new HIV infections worldwide (UNAIDS 2008). UNICEF data indicates that there is insufficient knowledge of HIV among youth in developing countries; only 19% of females and 30% of males aged between 15 and 24 have comprehensive knowledge about HIV and how to avoid transmission (UNICEF 2008). This falls far short of the UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session) target by 2010 to ensure that at least 95% of young men and women aged 15 to 24 have access to the information, education, including peer education and youth-specific HIV education. Preventing HIV infection among children, adolescents and youth is one of the key issues for social and economic development. Therefore providing HIV- and AIDS-related knowledge and skills to all children and young people, especially those who are most vulnerable and most-at-risk, both in and out of school is a central concern in the Strategic Approach of UNAIDS IATT on Education. It is widely accepted that education plays a vital role in HIV prevention. There is considerable evidence that well-planned and well-implemented HIV education contributes to delayed sexual activity, reduced frequency of sex, reduced numbers of sexual partners, and increased protected sexual intercourse. However there is still a lack of evidence as to which approaches are most effective. In many countries, most of the children and young people who are most-at-risk, and therefore need to learn about HIV prevention, have never been to school, dropped out early or are no longer in school. This is a challenge for the education sector, which must explore all possible approaches to reach vulnerable adolescents and youth in and out of school.

Young people aged between 15 and 24 account for 45% of all new HIV infections worldwide, yet only 19% of females and 30% of males aged between 15 and 24 have comprehensive knowledge about HIV and how to avoid transmission.

The boundaries between formal and non-formal systems of education can be blurred, particularly where community education is the norm. Therefore, ministries of education, national authorities and

youth service organizations play a critical role in developing and supporting non-formal education on HIV and AIDS. In this context, HIV prevention among young people must adopt a broad outreach approach to ensure information, resources and services are available in places, at times, and in formats appropriate for young people. To be effective it is important to adopt inclusive approaches, paying special attention to the 'feminization of the pandemic'. For those already engaging in high-risk behavior, additional and targeted responses are required. It is important to know what drives each epidemic and to respond with evidence-based combination prevention approaches. Partnerships with communities and the civil society promise positive impact on social standards and cultural values (that otherwise often hinder HIV prevention). Education can support activities that reduce overall vulnerability to HIV by ensuring learning environments that are enabling and protective, both in formal and non-formal settings. Traditional and mass media, public awareness campaigns, theatre and puppet shows use 'Edutainment' as a means to change attitudes. Linking health and social protection services in order to offer youth-friendly and non-intimidating services is essential for most-at-risk youth who need to overcome access barriers. And while there is a wealth of experience and considerable evidence of successful initiatives and approaches, the views and participation of young people themselves is a critical element that should not be ignored. In the era of global financial crises, the effectiveness and synergy of the AIDS response is critical in achieving the vital targets of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. As such, the education sector's ability to reach vulnerable and at-risk groups should be thoroughly utilized.

Purpose of the Symposium

The 2009 Fall Symposium provided a platform for exchange of experience and for reviewing evidence on promising national approaches by the education sector to reach most-at-risk youth. The objectives were set as follows to:

1. review existing evidence on education sector approaches to HIV prevention that reach out to most-at-risk adolescents and youth in different epidemiological settings, and identify the most efficient approaches;
2. exchange experience on factors influencing successful programme planning and implementation;
3. promote education initiatives to enhance HIV prevention measures among adolescents and youth in national and/or regional contexts; and
4. develop recommendations for outreach strategies that target adolescents and youth in an inclusive, gender-sensitive and gender-transformative manner.

Welcome and introduction to the Symposium

Ms Dagmar Fuchs-Schmitz from the hosting agency GTZ opened the Symposium by cordially welcoming the participants, introducing the audience to the purpose of the Symposium and giving a brief outline on the Symposium's agenda. She introduced Mr. Klaus Brückner, Head of the GTZ Office in Berlin who welcomed the guests to the Symposium in Berlin. A particular welcome was extended to the representative of BMZ, Mr. Jochen Böhmer, Head of the Division Education, Health, and Population Policy. Mr. Brückner thanked BMZ for hosting the event, with GTZ offering the venue as well as technical support in preparation of the Symposium. He gave an introduction to GTZ as a federally owned international cooperation agency which provides services as requested by German

ministries as well as private and multi-lateral clients. Having been founded in 1975, GTZ today has about 13,000 employees worldwide.

Against the background of his own working experience in South Africa and looking at infection rates worldwide, Mr Brückner welcomed the IATT's efforts to take on the challenging task the Symposium's theme represents and emphasized that approaching youth is particularly important in tackling HIV and AIDS prevention. He appreciated the diversity of expertise present at the Symposium, wished the participants a valuable exchange of knowledge and ideas and expressed his hope to see concrete steps in raising awareness as a result of this Symposium.



© S. Schmitt 2009

On behalf of the IATT Steering Committee, Ms Margherita Licata, HIV and AIDS Technical Specialist at the International Labor Organization (ILO) and Chair to the IATT on Education's Steering Committee, welcomed the audience to the Symposium, extending a particular welcome to BMZ's representative, Mr. Böhmer. For those participants unfamiliar with the IATT, she explained that the IATT on Education is convened by UNESCO bringing together UNAIDS co-sponsors and multi-lateral organizations, bilateral agencies, private donors and civil society organizations with the purpose of accelerating and improving a coordinated and harmonized education sector response to HIV and AIDS. Every meeting of the IATT on Education is preceded by a Symposium on a selected critical issue. The discussions taking place during the symposia provide a crucial input into the work of the IATT. The Symposium held in Berlin will particularly feed into preparations for the International AIDS Conference which will take place in July 2010 in Vienna, Austria. Regarding the Symposium's topic, Ms Licata shared three observations with the audience: 1) Formal ways of spreading the message of prevention such as integrating HIV or, more generally, sexual and reproductive health in school curricula are a good starting point but may not be sufficient for most-at-risk youth, for whom alternative approaches and more open strategies might be needed. 2) The second remark was linked to the first and concerned the concept of vulnerability. The higher risk of exposure for most-at-risk youth is based on social and economic factors that go beyond knowledge and awareness – requiring a combination of prevention strategies but also the empowerment of in and out of school youth. 3)

Because of the “special” status of most-at-risk youth, the education sector alone cannot succeed. There is a critical need to coordinate efforts among different actors within the education sector, but also with actors outside the sector, e.g. looking at youth employment policies, vocational training programmes, gender policies, the role of youth associations, youth friendly harm reduction programmes, etc.

In order to make sure participants and speakers feel part of a common goal, Ms Licata invited participants to ensure the *active exchange of experiences leading to actionable recommendations that can effectively contribute to bring a change in attitudes and behavior among most-at-risk youth.*

Opening Address 1

Mr. Jochen Böhmer, Head of the Division Education, Health, and Population at BMZ, welcomed the participants appreciating the wide range of organizations present and thanked all of them for accepting BMZ’s invitation to Berlin. He emphasized that contributing to the global response to HIV and AIDS and mitigating the impacts of the pandemic is a key task of German development policy, in which the education sector plays a decisive role. In German development cooperation, education is a priority area which is supported in ten focal countries. As part of the education system, the formal schooling system is a major way to reach the young generation and HIV prevention needs to become firmly established in this system. At the same time, the quality of and access to education poses a severe challenge to many countries. Taking this into consideration, HIV and AIDS activities need to target not only those young people benefiting from school but also reach out to those out of school. Mr. Böhmer underscored the importance to address those who are especially vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, namely young women, injecting drug users, sex workers (male and female), and men who have sex with men (MSM). Despite the fact that in recent years impressive progress has been made in the response to HIV and AIDS, the pandemic is still spreading. Mr. Böhmer therefore called for intense efforts on developing effective prevention measures, and for the education sector to play a leading role in this. He considered the Symposium an excellent opportunity for contributing to the exchange of innovative approaches, to deepen the understanding of most-at-risk youth and their needs, and to bring the most vulnerable groups on the common agenda of HIV and education. Mr. Böhmer closed his opening address by wishing the audience an intense exchange of experiences and fruitful discussions that would hopefully contribute to solving some of the problems HIV and AIDS education is facing.

Opening Address 2

In her speech Ms Els Klinkert, Senior Advisor at UNAIDS, addressed the current state of the epidemic, reflecting particularly on the position of young people; the role of the education sector in HIV prevention; opportunities for the education sector; and necessary conditions for success. Ms Klinkert began by outlining the opportunities for the education sector to scale up HIV prevention for young people.

- 1) Create an enabling environment for students and especially for girls to enroll in secondary education. Girls’ education, especially if secondary education is being completed, contributes for instance to female economic independence, delayed marriage, use of family planning, and work outside the home.

- 2) Incorporate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and human rights including HIV prevention, gender, and drug issues in school curricula. For various reasons, it is still difficult for decision makers in the education sector to get these issues appropriately reflected in school curricula. In order to respond to these difficulties, in December 2009 UNAIDS will publish the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* aiming at decision-makers and professionals in the education and health sector. The publication was described as an excellent instrument supporting curriculum development and all participants were encouraged to use the *Guidance* and evaluate its implementation.
- 3) Adopt and enforce bold policies of zero tolerance for sexual coercion, gender-based violence and inter-generational sex. In order to make schools a safe place for everybody, the education sector has to take its responsibility and oppose sexual and gender-based violence more forcefully.
- 4) Support and build the capacity of young people to provide leadership. Where young people most-at-risk cannot be reached by the formal education sector, cooperation with organizations that provide services to young people should be sought. NGOs and others are often looking for educational expertise and suitable strategies to communicate with their clients.

Considering these opportunities, Ms Klinkert identified the following conditions for success:

- Leadership of the national governments and the political will to contribute to an enabling environment in which issues on sexuality and reproductive health can be openly discussed with children and young people.
- A multi-sectoral approach that encourages cooperation between the health, education, justice and social welfare sectors, in order to make sure all relevant factors are being addressed.
- Involvement of community-based initiatives, including parents, religious and traditional leaders, with the aim of ensuring that approaches and messages are in tune with the best of local culture and traditions.
- Listen to and involve young people themselves in HIV prevention. Programmes should not be designed for them but need to be designed and implemented with young people most-at-risk.

Ms Klinkert concluded her input by encouraging the participating agencies to expand opportunities for young people to collaborate in their work and reminded the audience of a quote by Ancient Chinese Philosopher:

*Tell me and I will forget,
Show me and I may remember,
Involve me and I will understand¹*

Ms Licata who chaired the morning session thanked Ms Klinkert for her opening address which had already highlighted a number of key issues for discussion during the course of the Symposium. Ms Licata drew the participants' attention particularly to the issue of defining the "enabling environment" and identifying appropriate partnerships for creating such an environment. Likewise,

¹ Philosophy of Dance4Life, an international movement to empower young people to become agents of change in the AIDS response.

the kind of education required in order to empower young people might need more in-depth discussion during the Symposium.

As the next speaker, Mr. Robert Carr, Associate Director of the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) was introduced by the chair.

Youth, Difference and the Right to Education: Challenges and Opportunities in Reducing Vulnerability of Young People

Mr. Carr presented HIV epidemiological data which showed that young people are at high risk of HIV infection, whether in generalized epidemics, or in concentrated or mixed epidemics. While UNGASS explicitly includes youth knowledge as an indicator of global progress, in many contexts there are significant barriers to youth accessing information, commodities, and safe, supported spaces for dialogue about risk and vulnerability. In epidemic scenarios driven by both sex and intravenous drug use, youth are often not provided with the kind of access to support that is needed to increase their resilience to HIV. For especially vulnerable youth –



gay and bisexual youth, youth drug users, or youth in especially difficult circumstances – access to protective

© S. Schmitt 2009

support is even less likely. At the centre of this contradiction are policy debates over the effect of providing young people with access to information and commodities that stymie effective programming. Mr. Carr emphasized that in order to respect the rights of youth to information and to the highest attainable standard of health, youth programs must live up to the commitments states and societies have made to young people as citizens and as the future of our globally interconnected communities.

The presentation made by Mr. Carr provided the audience with a lot of exciting information and analysis. Before taking these issues to the coffee/tea break where intense discussion in informal groups took place, Ms Licata outlined three issues raised during the presentation:

Young people are too often left to fend for themselves, receiving inadequate preparation for their sexual and reproductive lives.

1. The concept of “out-of-school youth” carries a number of negative connotations with it which might induce stigmatization. Hence, programmes which define their target group as “out-of-school youth” may actually contribute to the stigmatization of those who rightfully expect support from the programme. The design and wording of programmes need to take this unintended effect into consideration and adapt the programme accordingly.
2. The one distinction usually made in debate is between in-school youth and out-of-school youth. This two-fold perspective disregards the varied environments in which young people

live and which give meaning to their lives, be it the family, community, church, peer group etc.

3. It is imperative to honestly monitor and evaluate programmes. This will reveal if the intended target group is actually reached and whether the programme can make an impact on those “environments” which are meaningful to youth.

After the coffee/tea break, Ms Mary Joy Pigozzi from the Academy for Educational Development chaired the second half of the morning session. She noted that the meeting would now move from the global perspective to country level experiences and invited Ms Valentina Gorkina, Project Manager for the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education, to report on the ministry’s experience with HIV and drug addiction prevention programmes.

Reducing the vulnerability of adolescents and young people to HIV and drug addiction

Ms Gorkina started her presentation by providing basic data concerning young people and HIV and AIDS in Kyrgyzstan. More than 40% of the total number of HIV infected people are youth between the ages of 15-24 which has led the Kyrgyz government to establish a multi-stakeholder approach. The Ministry of Education and Science is the key implementing agency of the *State Programme on HIV and AIDS Epidemic Prevention and its Socio-Economic Consequences in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2006-2010* and coordinates the activities of all stakeholders. For the implementation of the programme, various sources of funding and technical support have been secured, e.g. from UNESCO, UNAIDS, GFATM, and bi-lateral organizations. The activities being implemented target the various levels of the system: from the ministry level where clear policies have been developed via capacity building for educational specialists and teachers to active involvement of young people themselves as youth leaders as well as peer educators. For Kyrgyzstan to reach the aim of restricting the spread of HIV infection, STIs and drug addiction among young people, this approach and set up seems promising and might serve as an example to other Ministries of Education.

Following this presentation, Ms Elizabeth Kaloki, Senior Assistant Director of Education in the Kenyan Ministry of Education, contributed to the discussion by presenting her ministry’s experience on HIV and AIDS prevention strategies.

The Kenya education sector’s role in HIV prevention: Policies and experiences from Kenya with a special focus on most-at-risk youth

The presentation started with an overview on the key policy framework and background information on Kenya, the spread of the epidemic in the country and the education system, including an identification of those young people who are considered most-at-risk. The information was backed by findings from a number of surveys being conducted in Kenya in 2007-2009. In Kenya, the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) has been created to coordinate a multi-sectoral approach and to provide strategic direction to the various ministries. Initiatives of the education sector have been implemented through the Kenya Education Sector Support programme (KESSP) 2005-2010 which is funded jointly by the government and donors. Similar to Kyrgyzstan, the MoE’s programme targets all levels of the system, from political level via teacher training to approaches addressing learners.

The presentation identified a number of lessons learnt from the Kenya experience in reaching out to youth. In order to intensify the fight against HIV among youth, there is need to: (i) have open discussions on sexuality in schools to enable learners make informed decisions; (ii) come up with innovative strategies which can help translate the knowledge gained into positive behavior change among youth; and (iii) enhance coordination by ensuring there is alignment and harmonization of interventions amongst various stakeholders' to avoid duplication.

However, there are also a number of challenges which need to be dealt with:

- The issue of how much information on reproductive health should be given to young people (including parents, policy makers, faith-based groups and other influential people);
- The Education Sector Policy on HIV and AIDS does not adequately address issues of HIV positive learners and thus teachers are not equipped to deal with them;
- There is little translation of knowledge on HIV into behavior change which calls for more innovative approaches;
- Coordination of the stakeholders with interventions has been weak and needs to be enhanced;
- There is a need to include male circumcision and stigma reduction in prevention strategies targeting most-at-risk youth.
- So far, no sector-specific impact assessment has been carried out.

Discussion: Are we getting the message across to most-at-risk youth?

The plenary discussion was initiated by the chair who reiterated a number of key topics that were raised in the presentations. In order to “get the message across”, it is important that -

- educationalists work with young people, not for them.
- supportive environments for open discussion on sexual and reproductive health issues are created and judgmental environments are avoided.
- thorough and honest evaluations are conducted to ensure programme design and implementation is based on evidence.
- the information distributed is broadened and harmonized in order to avoid contradicting messages from different stakeholders.
- prominence should be given to the so-called most-at-risk youth.

In addition to discussing these topics, participants were also eager to find out details from the speakers of the morning session and thus, the discussion mainly focused on programme-related questions and answers. However, the role of youth in creating their education was debated intensely. It was noted that the quality of programme design and implementation increases if youth is involved as this ensures programmes are grounded in reality and based on the experiences of young people as this increases the likelihood of actual needs being met. At the same time, information is not only key to youth, specifically most-at-risk youth, but interventions need to make sure that those who work with young people also have sufficient information and feel comfortable to talk about issues that are important to their target group. A teacher who feels uncomfortable to talk about sexuality will most probably have difficulties in identifying questions and information gaps that learners might have. Therefore, an environment that encourages open discussion will be supportive to both teachers and learners.

The Symposium was designed around youth participation – youth representatives from different youth organizations on HIV and AIDS were invited to the meeting as observers and were asked to share their comments with participants as a kind of ‘reality check’. In addition, a youth representative from the Youth Parliament Foundation in India provided a presentation.

Youth representatives: How do the national responses relate to the needs and rights of youth?

By Ms Mary Mutupa, African Women Millennium Initiative on Poverty and Human Rights (AWOMI) Zambia, Mr Hippolyte Bwiza Muhire, Global Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS (GYCA) Rwanda, Ms Selbi Jumayeva, LABRYS Kyrgyzstan, and Ms Zauresh Amanzholova, Y-Peer Kazakhstan.



© S. Schmitt 2009

We are the young people from Africa and Central Asia representing our diverse peers back home. We acknowledge and recognize the importance of this symposium as a platform for open dialogue and developing our national strategies for the betterment of most-at-risk youth. We appreciate the work being done by the Ministries of Education in addressing the HIV pandemic through prevention programmes among young people. We further acknowledge the willingness of the state to develop best practices and increase awareness.

Today, all of us gathered here at this symposium are reminded again that young people make up more than a half of the new HIV infections.

We recognize the efforts that have been done, however we strongly feel that the existing programmes address the needs of young people inadequately. The research in this area should use relevant methodologies and be valid and responsive of young people.

We, as young people, share the same age, but we are diverse in our HIV statuses, lifestyles, practices, gender identities, sexual orientations, employment, learning opportunities, social and cultural environments.

We have noted that when it comes to HIV prevention we are categorized in different risk groups while we are all vulnerable to HIV and human rights violations. Yet there are some of us who are more neglected and excluded from the national programmes. Therefore we would like to make further comments on the presented programmes:

- The work is being done targeting most-at-risk young people; however we DEMAND that the definition of the most-at-risk youth is revisited with a view to make it more inclusive. We need to create more comprehensive discourse on most-at-risk youth in order to combat stigma and discrimination of the young people living with HIV, young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, sex workers, drug users, migrants, orphans, youth out- of- school and in prisons, and those with learning and ability differences. This definition is to exist not for the sake of defining, but for creating space and opportunities for as many young people at risk to have their rights promoted and protected in the context of HIV.*
- The presentations show that the national programmes see young people only as recipients and target group of their HIV preventative interventions. Today we recall the previous commitments of many international and governmental bodies to meaningfully involve young people as equal partners in decision-making and development. We further urge the Ministries of Education to ensure complementing youth representation and visibility in creating, implementing and assessing national programmes and further accommodate them within the existing country structures of coordination and strategizing.*
- We want national programmes to promote well-informed, evidence-based and POSITIVE messages on HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive rights of young people and images of our peers living with HIV. For example, in one of the presentations we can see the message “AIDS is not witchcraft, AIDS is a killer”. We demand that messages that are intimidating and judgmental be avoided.*
- We note that the presentations of national programmes inadequately reflect the young people’s practices, lifestyles and identities. We propose to address sexual practices and risks in the clear and frank ways as stated by Robert Carr as this will allow for open talk about sexuality, gender, and diversity. We believe one of the effective ways to address needs of most-at-risk young people is to integrate life skills, human rights and promotion of positive sensitive attitudes into HIV education, following it up with the adoption of non-discrimination policies within educational institutions and other settings.*

To conclude, we demand meaningful involvement of the diverse youth communities, especially young people living with HIV as they are key role models and leaders in the movement, quoting the address of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at World Aids Day 2009 yesterday. We young people are here living, working, and ready to take responsibility along with your support and mentorship. We are not future leaders, we are leaders of today. And we want to lead it together with you. To repeat one of the World Aids Day Campaign slogans: Keep the Promise – Act Now!

The presentation was concluded by referring back to the quote used by Ms Klinkert in her opening address which matched fully the youth’s message:

Tell me and I will forget, Show me and I may remember, Involve me and I will understand.

the youth's reflections on the presentations and discussions of the morning session have been instrumental in identifying gaps and "blind spots" in the approaches on reaching the youth.

After lunch, Ms Luise Lehmann, Consultant and chair of the afternoon session, gave an overview on the afternoon's agenda items. An input from India opened the afternoon session, followed by an opportunity to split into smaller working groups. The subsequent plenary discussion was organized as a "Fishbowl", which was followed by conclusions from the floor and closing remarks on the Symposium.

What needs to be done: Political recommendations on how to ensure Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and Rights in the context of HIV and AIDS reaching most-at-risk youth

In her presentation, Ms Ishita Chaudhry, founder and managing trustee of the Youth Parliament Foundation in India, noted those strategic and political requirements which need to be fulfilled if SRH education is to reach most-at-risk youth. The presentation focused on young people's need to be empowered – in order to be able to protect themselves - rather than to be protected by others. This requires meaningful youth participation in all stages of programming. She emphasized that young people are decision makers by themselves, and do not need intermediaries to interpret for them.



© S. Schmitt 2009

Ms Chaudhry pointed out that the definition of "at-risk youth" is tricky as it wrongly suggests a homogenous group. Adding to this, the association of the term "out-of-school" with "at-risk" ignores other contexts that at-risk youth come from. The association that not being in formal education generally puts you at-risk is politically problematic and can be assumptive. Demographically, policy needs to accept that there are large numbers of youth who go unmapped. Focus therefore should be not on quantifying data but analyzing/profiling the socio-political realities of at-risk contexts. In approaching SRH education from the broader perspective of human sexuality, HIV education has to be a component of this comprehensive perspective and not vice versa. Developing a learning climate that firmly and frequently re-affirms the principles of respect, responsibility and rights is extremely

important. Recognizing the powerful socializing influence that youth have over each other, this is very relevant as often peer communities provide role models and therefore behavioral patterns. Finally, Ms Chaudhry wondered why as a society, we are so scared to address any kind of sexuality education or rights cohesively? She asked: ‘What stops us from giving young people complete rather than half baked information that is critical and life saving and that can protect them from disease, empowers them to be informed individuals and that teaches them to be respectful to their own needs and desires and to be respectful towards the rights of others as well?’

Sexuality is a fundamental component of being human....yet why is sexuality so problematic that there is a failure to get basic information to young people to help protect them from HIV infection?

In her conclusions, Ms Chaudhry put forward the following political recommendations for ensuring SRH and Rights in the context of HIV and AIDS:

- **To invest** in young people as a priority in population and development strategies with programming specifically directed at increasing access to information, education, counseling and skills that enable young people to make decisions about their own wellbeing.
- **To guarantee** universal access to comprehensive sexuality education for all young people, and ensure that all existing Sexual and Reproductive Health services are youth-friendly, non-judgmental, recognize and respect diversity and are accessible to all young people, including underserved groups.
- **To fulfill** sexual and reproductive rights, as they are an inalienable aspect of young people’s right to health.
- **To ensure** the involvement of young people at all programmatic, policy and decision-making and budget planning and distribution at the national, regional and international level.

Right after this stimulating input, the plenary split up into four parallel working groups on

- (1) Meeting the HIV prevention needs of most-at-risk young people in concentrated epidemics**
With an input by Mr. Chris Castle, UNESCO, entitled *Refocusing efforts on young people most-at-risk for HIV in Asia and the Pacific - reviewing the evidence & the possible role of schools and the education sector*.
- (2) Meeting the prevention needs of most-at-risk young people in generalized or hyper endemic settings**
With a presentation by Ms Selwana Pilatwe, Botswana Training Authority (BOTA), on *Botswana’s response to the epidemic*.
- (3) Innovative approaches and methods: Reviewing achievements, identifying challenges**
With two inputs, one by Ms Paola Frattola Gebhardt on the *Join-in Circuit on AIDS, Love, and, Sexuality* and another on the *Theatre for a Change* by Mr. Patrick Young.
- (4) Addressing gender within programming for most-at-risk young people**
With a presentation by Ms Jessie Schutt-Aine, UNAIDS, on *Gender, HIV and Young People*.

Feedback from Working Groups & Discussion

The final session included feedback from the working groups as well as questions to presenters and a final discussion of the issues brought up during the Symposium was organized as a “Fishbowl” (an

interactive method of a plenary discussion) in plenary. The most crucial points of the working group debates and from plenary discussion were as follows:

- Evidence-based data are important for defining the most affected groups within the broad group of youth. A definition and, more importantly, **knowing the target group** well provides the basis for tailor-made programming which increases the likelihood of actually reaching those most in need. At the same time, a static definition of “at-risk” youth was questioned and the term characterized as an extremely fluid notion. The fact that most people might be at-risk at one point in time requires programmes to reach out to as many people as possible.
- The data available on HIV prevention needs of most-at-risk young people reveals very clearly the major routes of transmission. This knowledge provides the education sector with an angle for interventions. However, the **complexity and fluidity of human behavior** that might change patterns over time, needs to be recognized.
- In order to strengthen the evidence base, numerous surveys are being conducted by governments, national and international organizations. Little attention however is given to the risk of perpetuating stigmatization and increasing vulnerability through the ways in which **data collection**, use and reporting is done. Based on this observation, a key question was: Who defines the questions asked in data collection and along what criteria should questions be developed? One proposal was to follow a collaborative approach in data collection and use. Such an approach would not only involve representatives of the target group in formulating the right questions but also provide space for communicating and jointly reflecting the outcomes. In the research community however, qualitative social research and community-oriented research is rather marginal and qualitative data often is devalued. As a consequence, compared to quantitative research qualitative research designs are applied less often.
- One key issue in addressing young people adequately, is to use **gender sensitive approaches**, i.e. paying attention to concepts of masculinity, femininity, transgender and their influence on individuals’ identities, behaviors, and perceptions of health. With regard to the formal education sector, in many countries issues of sexuality, gender, reproductive health etc. are incorporated into the curricula and teachers are expected to discuss these issues with their learners. However, **teachers’ attitudes and values** often do not keep up with what the curricula propose and thus, teachers feel uncomfortable to talk about the issues. In addition, often they feel open discussion would diminish themselves in the views of their learners. In this context, transferring the right messages to youth is made difficult or even impossible. The challenge is to transform government policies and curricula into classroom action. A similar observation applies to services targeting injecting drug users: those health workers, who are expected to provide support, are they institutionally and individually in a position to deliver the right services? Some participants suggested not to simply expect service providers to fulfill their role but to continuously support teachers, health workers etc. in how to actually implement the expectations e.g. in classroom. If teachers are seen as change agents, they need to be individually touched by the issue and to know their contribution can make a difference in learners’ lives. In order to avoid resistance and achieve positive results, it is vital to make teachers feel comfortable with their role and

let them get prepared for what is expected of them before assessing their performance in classroom.

- A key requirement for teachers and the education sector as a whole to effectively tackle HIV and AIDS prevention, is to be backed by **political will** through the government and the Ministry of Education. With regard to this, international discourse is an important lever for enforcing political commitment. In this context, one participant asked the government representatives at the Symposium to get into government-to-government communication on the question of how to make sure our governments support teachers in e.g. talking about (homo)sexuality. Taboos need to be lifted on the political level in order to allow the other levels of the system to have an open discussion. The audience was reminded that in many countries homosexuality is a very sensitive issue particularly among religious organizations. They as well as other stakeholders such as teachers' associations and community leaders therefore need to be involved in the discussion process.
- At the same time, teachers should not be regarded change agents automatically as in some cases they are part of the problem rather than of the solution. **Sexual exploitation** of learners by teachers and students is a commonly known problem that needs to be dealt with one way or the other by any HIV and AIDS prevention programme in the education sector. In certain environments, stakeholders other than teachers may be more appropriate to act as change agents.
- Too often, **M&E systems** are not being properly built into programme designs. As a consequence, the impact and whether interventions have been implemented in a cost-effective way frequently are not known. Therefore, it was suggested that M&E systems need to be firmly incorporated in programmes from the very beginning of conceptualizing the intervention. This led to a discussion on the challenge of integrating partner and project M&E systems and on how to properly integrate impact monitoring in programme design and implementation. One participant asked to bear in mind that what we would like to see is behavior change. For instance, the motivation to design innovative approaches and methods as were presented in one of the working groups was the evident gap between evidence-based knowledge on HIV and behavioral patterns. The use of interactive methods reflects the search for approaches that promote behavior change. How to monitor the change? It takes a long time to happen and is extremely difficult to monitor and quantify unless proxy indicators are used.
- While accepting **culture and traditions** as a part of people's identities, the education sector must be aware that they can also perpetuate risk behavior and might need to be questioned in a respectful way. In view of the manifold taboos related to sexuality, HIV and AIDS education needs to provide safe spaces in which information can be exchanged and discussed without young people fearing prejudices and discrimination.

At the end of the plenary discussion, before entering into closing remarks, Ms Lehmann provided the participants the opportunity to share any impressions with the audience.

Conclusions from the floor

Ms Jacqueline Chazema, teacher educator from Malawi and coordinator of NTERA (Network of Teacher Educators responding to AIDS) took a stand in favor of all the teachers who do their best in tackling HIV and AIDS in and outside the classrooms. During the Symposium the teachers' tasks have been defined as being a role model, an agent for change, a parent, a care-taker, etc. – there are often high expectations and little appreciation. Educationalists need to keep in mind that teachers need to be well equipped with knowledge and skills if we want them to live up to the expectations. While youth should be recognized as a partner in all interventions, the youth also has to play its role by contributing to a conducive environment of mutual respect and openness between learners and teachers.

Likewise, Anna Rau from GTZ underscored that for successful HIV and AIDS prevention, youth needs to be recognized as real partners. It should be seen that young people are to be found in and outside of the formal education sector and thus more attention should be given to the requirements of out-of-school youth. The education sector alone will not be able to provide all the services required, however a multi-sectoral, systemic approach to HIV and AIDS prevention needs to be followed in order to reach out to most-at-risk youth. Young people need to be promoted and empowered in order for them to stand up for their rights and reduce their vulnerability.

Ms Mary Mutupa, AWOMI Zambia, called the audience to move on from discussing and making promises to actually implementing the promising approaches being discussed: "Start including young people not only as recipients but as actors and partners! Programme for more comprehensive packages targeting youth and more comprehensive monitoring systems! Political will needs to be accompanied by action! And finally, please put on the red ribbon – it is not over yet!"

Concluding remarks

Ms Lehmann thanked the three participants for the readiness to share their observations and turned the floor over to Mr. Bradford Strickland, American Institutes for Research, who summarized the major issues discussed during the Symposium. In doing so, he appreciated the participation of the young people who openly voiced their views and contributed to the success of the Symposium. Closing remarks were subsequently made by Ms. Fuchs-Schmitz who thanked all those involved in organizing the event and the participants for the lively discussion.

The Symposium provided a valuable opportunity for bringing together members of the IATT on Education with other international and German stakeholders. The discussions of the Symposium were subsequently used as a basis for reflection during the IATT member meeting which took place on December 3-4, 2009 following the Symposium.

Appendix 1 Participants List

	Name	First name	Organisation
1	Agert	Bianca	Consultant
2	Amanzholova	Zauresh	Y-PEER Kazakhstan
3	Ampar	Alla	UNESCO
4	Bekoe	Ransford	Association of African Universities, AAU
5	Beyer	Michael	GTZ
6	Bichmann	Wolfgang	KfW Development Bank
7	Böhmer	Jochen	BMZ
8	Bwiza Muhire	Hippolyte	Global Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS
9	Carr	Robert	International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, ICASO
10	Castle	Chris	UNESCO
11	Chaudhry	Ishita	Youth Parliament Foundation India
12	Chazema	Jacqueline	Network of Teacher Educators Responding to AIDS, NTERA
13	Chebet	Aloysius	East African Community
14	Coppard	Dorothea	GTZ
15	Cornu	Christophe	UNESCO
16	Deerberg	Romy	GTZ
17	Eckert	Michael	Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Federal Centre for Health Education)
18	Frattola Gebhardt	Paola	Consultant
19	Fuchs-Schmitz	Dagmar	GTZ
20	Gorkina	Valentina Andreevna	Ministry of Education Kyrgyzstan
21	Herbst	Susanne	InWEnt
22	Hoffman	Anna Maria	UNICEF
23	Huefner	Angelika	Secretariat of the KMK (Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Länder in Germany)
24	Jahn	Ulrich	KfW Development Bank
25	Jumayeva	Selbi	LABRYS Kyrgyzstan
26	Kaloki	Elizabeth	Ministry of Education Kenya
27	Karpov	Sergey	UNESCO
28	Khalikulov	Bakhtiyor	UNESCO
29	Kirsch-Woik	Thomas	GTZ
30	Klinkert	Els	UNAIDS
31	Krumbiegl	Heike	GTZ
32	Lehmann	Luise	Consultant
33	Li	Galina	UNESCO
34	Licata	Margherita	International Labor Organization, ILO
35	Ligouri	Ana Luisa	Ford Foundation

36	Liu	Yongfeng	UNESCO
37	Lukosiunas	Marius	UNESCO
38	Matz	Peter	GTZ
39	Mbilima	Musiba	Association of African Universities, AAU
40	Meier	Marwin	World Vision Germany
41	Melles	Meheret (Mimi)	Advocates for Youth
42	Mutupa	Mary	African Women Millennium Initiative on Poverty and Human Rights
43	Neale	Palena	UNESCO
44	O'Connell	Tara	World Bank
45	Ofosu-Koranteng	Benjamin	UNDP
46	Otieno	Mary	UNFPA
47	Otto	Nina	KfW Development Bank
48	Permyakova	Larisa	UNESCO
49	Pigozzi	Mary Joy	Academy for Educational Development
50	Pilatwe	Selwana	Botswana Training Authority, BOTA
51	Pulizzi	Scott	Education Development Center
52	Rau	Anna	GTZ
53	Richmond	Mark	UNESCO
54	Roschnik	Natalie	Save the Children
55	Sanglan	Delphine	Education International, EI
56	Sass	Justine	UNESCO
57	Scharlowski	Boris	GTZ
58	Schmitt	Sylvia	GTZ
59	Schutt-Aine	Jessie	UNAIDS
60	Sekuler	Todd	Advocates for Youth
61	Strickland	Bradford	American Institutes for Research
62	Tembon	Andy	World Bank
63	Visser-Valfrey	Muriel	Consultant
64	Wilkinson	Moira	UNICEF
65	Winkelmann	Christine	Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Federal Centre for Health Education)
66	Wright	Alex	Commonwealth Secretariat
67	Young	Patrick	Theatre for a Change

Appendix 2 Programme of the Symposium

Tuesday 02 December 2009; 9-17:30 h At GTZ-Haus Berlin, Reichpietschufer 20, 10785 Berlin, Germany

Chairs: Mr. Mark Richmond, Global Coordinator on HIV and AIDS, UNESCO

Ms. Luise Lehmann, Consultant

- 08:15-09:00 Registration**
- 09:00-09:20 **a) Welcome and introduction to the symposium**
Mr. Klaus Brückner, GTZ; Dr. Dagmar Fuchs-Schmitz, GTZ
- b) Welcome from UNAIDS IATT on Education**
Ms. Margherita Licata, ILO, Chair of the IATT on Education Steering Committee
- 09:20-09:35 **Opening Address I**
Dr. Jochen Böhmer, Division Education, Health, Population, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- 09:35-09:50 **Opening Address II**
Ms. Els Klinkert, Senior Adviser, Programmatic Priorities and Support Division, Evidence, Monitoring and Policy Department, UNAIDS
- 09:50-10:20 **Youth, Difference and the Right to Education: Challenges and Opportunities in Reducing Vulnerability of Young People**
Dr. Robert Carr, Associate Director, ICASO
- 10:20-10:50 **Coffee / Tea break**
- 10:50-11:10 **Reducing the vulnerability of adolescents and young people to HIV and drug addiction**
Ms. Valentina Gorkina, Ministry of Education Kyrgyzstan
- 11:10-11:30 **The KENYA education sector's role in HIV prevention: Policies and experiences from Kenya with special focus on most-at-risk youth**
Ms. Elizabeth Kaloki, Senior Assistant Director of Education, Ministry of Education Kenya
- 11:30-12:15 **"Are we getting the message across to most-at-risk youth?"**
Discussion of the presentations of the three plenary speakers
- 12:15-12:30 **Youth representatives' comment: How do the national responses relate to the needs and rights of youth (focus on most-at-risk youth)?**
Ms. Mary Mutupa (AWOMI Zambia), Mr. Hippolyte Bwiza Muhire (GYCA), Ms. Selbi Jumayeva (Labrys Kyrgyzstan), Ms. Zauresh Amanzholova (Y-PEER Kazakhstan)
- 12:30-13:30 **Lunch**
- 13:30-14:00 **What needs to be done: Political recommendations on how to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of HIV and AIDS reaching most-at-risk youth**
Ms. Ishita Chaudhry, Youth Parliament Foundation India
- 14:00-15:20 **4 Parallel working group sessions**
- (1) Meeting the HIV prevention needs of most-at-risk young people in concentrated epidemics
 - (2) Meeting the prevention needs of most-at-risk young people in generalized or hyper endemic settings
 - (3) Innovative approaches and methods: Reviewing achievements, identifying challenge
 - (4) Addressing gender within programming for most-at-risk young people
- 15:20-15:40 **Coffee / Tea Break**
- 15:40-16:55 **Fishbowl discussion: HIV prevention among most-at-risk youths - Lessons learned, challenges and perspectives**
- 16:55-17:20 **Conclusion from the floor**
- 17:20-17:30 **Closing remarks**