

## **Global Fund ATM Youth Leadership and Involvement: 25 Youth Leaders convened at the Global Fund Youth Training**

May 25, 2010; By: Igor G. Mocerro

*“Being a huge financial mechanism that supports programs for HIV & AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria across the world, without proper understanding of the Global Fund, it can be confusing and overwhelming to a lot of young people, including youth leaders and advocates.”*

- Participant, GF-ATM Youth Training



With the goal to build youth leadership and to meaningfully involve young people at the global and country levels of the Global Fund for HIV & AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria (GF-ATM), twenty-five HIV & AIDS youth leaders and advocates (excluding facilitators) from at least fifteen countries attended the Youth Leaders' Training: Understanding the Global Fund held on May 22-24 at Cape Town Lodge Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa.

The three-day training, sponsored by the Youth Coalition for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (YC) in partnership with the World AIDS Campaign (WAC), included dynamic activities such as presentations, discussions, and workshops for participants to understand the Global Fund. UNFPA Africa Regional Office also supported several participants to attend the training. According to Ricardo Baruch and Liping Mian, training facilitators and representatives of YC and WAC, it is aimed that through the training, participants will have deeper understanding of the complexities of the Global Fund. It is also expected that participants will be empowered and can implement their action plans about the Global Fund ATM at their respective regions or countries to increase awareness, participation, and inclusion of young people and their issues at various levels of the Global Fund ATM processes.

The first day of the training focused on the structure of the Global Fund ATM, which participants learned its different components from the top level down to grassroots level. Activities include learning about the different roles of the Global Fund ATM governing bodies and implementers such as the Global Fund Secretariat, the Global Fund Board, the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) at each country level, and the principal recipients versus sub-recipients of Global Fund ATM projects worldwide among other components that were discussed. Participants were given opportunities to experience how meetings and discussions are conducted at various levels of the Global Fund through experiential learning and fun games. After presenting some examples of and lessons learnt from CCMs around the world, participants were provided with case analysis exercises to talk about issues that concern decision-making processes done by the Global Fund and the CCM. Also, there were discussions of issues concerning the implementation of Global Fund supported programs throughout the training, which participants shared their experiences working with the Global Fund within their community, at the grassroots level.

The second day of the training covered presentations and discussions regarding the roles of United Nations agencies such as UNAIDS, World Health Organisation, and World Bank in the Global Fund. Contents of memorandum of agreements between the Global Fund and these agencies were presented to youth leaders to improve their awareness of resources available for them. These resources include technical assistance provided by these organisations, which can support young people and other civil society groups in the development and implementation of their Global Fund proposals and/or projects. The roles and information about other partners and organisations, including civil society and international agencies such as Roll Back Malaria, Stop TB, Friends of the Global Fund, were also among the topics that were discussed.



**GROUP PHOTO:** Youth leaders feel empowered after completing the 3-day Understanding the Global Fund Training-Workshop sponsored by Youth Coalition.

A space was also provided for young leaders who are currently involved with the Global Fund Board and those who attended some of its meetings and initiatives at the global level. One of them is Shantih van Hoog from The Netherlands, the current youth representative of Point 7 (one of the voting members of the Global Fund ATM Board representing Norway-Denmark, Ireland, Luxemburg, Netherlands, and Sweden). She shared her experiences joining Point 7 this year. According to her, she is responsible to come up with recommendations and decision points that concern young people, which she presents to the Point 7 delegation. *“I hope to see other young people at the Global Fund Board, representing other members or delegations,”* Shantih said to the group. She encouraged

other youth participants and youth advocates around the world to work with her through sharing of experiences and insights, and for them to get involved with the Global Fund ATM, particularly in policy and decision-making processes.

To give equal attention to the other two diseases, information about the Global Fund on malaria and tuberculosis were presented during the third day of the training. Also, the integration of reproductive health and sexual rights in Global Fund country proposals was tackled. It included discussion of the guidelines and principles set by the Global Fund and some examples of incorporating sexual orientation and gender identities (SOGI) strategies in Global Fund proposals. SOGI strategies focus on addressing the epidemic among key affected populations, such as but not limited to men who have sex with men, members of LGBTQI communities, and sex workers.

During the same day, participants started to develop their regional or country-specific action plans. Some follow-up activities related to the Global Fund that were identified and are planned to conduct by participants included the development of youth friendly fact sheets or toolkits about the Global Fund; conducting Global Fund trainings and mentoring young people; engaging young people in various discussions about the Global Fund and the CCM; building strong youth networks that aim for youth engagement at various Global Fund processes, either through membership or constituency to a youth-serving CCM member; and/or becoming recipients of projects supported by the Global Fund.

According to Mr. Baruch, these action plans are expected to be completed and submitted to the Youth Coalition within a month and later to be implemented by participants. Youth advocates and/or activists may contact participants who represented their region or country for any collaboration. While these action plans may not be implemented before the deadline of the Call for Application for Global Fund Round 10 (application has started this May and will end on August 2010), youth leaders, advocates and/or activists, and youth organisations working on these three diseases are encouraged to get involved with the development of any proposals that their respective Country Coordinating Mechanism may submit to the Global Fund.

Participants (including facilitators) came from the following countries: Brazil; Canada; China; Ghana; Jamaica; Kenya; Madagascar; Mexico; Namibia; Netherlands; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; South Africa; Switzerland; Tanzania; Uganda; and Zambia. Ms. Gail Steckley of the Global Fund ATM Secretariat based in Geneva, Switzerland; Mr. Adam Garner of the Global Network of people living with HIV (GNP+) based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; and Ms. Angela Kageni of AIDSPAN based in Kenya also served as presenters and facilitators of the training.

*This article does not cover a report of the whole activities of the training and is solely intended to share some information about the training to youth leaders and advocates and other interested parties. For questions or comments, e-mail the writer at [mightyigor\\_RN@yahoo.com](mailto:mightyigor_RN@yahoo.com).*