Acknowledgments

Thank you to all of the members and staff that worked so hard throughout 2004 to help achieve the goals of the Youth Coalition. Thank you to all of our funders without whom we would not be able to participate at different meetings or help train future youth leaders.

Secretariat Staff 2004

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Pamela Pizarro, Outreach and Information Officer
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Volunteers

Elena Maltseva, Central and Eastern European Researcher

Steering Committee

*September 2003 – August 2004*

Fredrik Lindahl - Sweden, **Chair**
Nadia van der Linde – the Netherlands, **Vice-Chair**
Tanya Baker – Canada, and Trinidad and Tobago, **Treasurer**
Maiden Manzanal - Philippines, **Secretary**
Gabriela Cano Azcarraga - Mexico
Gemma Hobcraft - United Kingdom
Maria Antonieta Alcalde Castro – Mexico

*September 2004 – September 2005*

Shannon Kowalski-Morton – USA and Australia, **Chair**
Claudia Ahumada – Chile, **Vice-Chair**
Joana Chagas – Brazil, **Treasurer**
Maiden Manzanal – Philippines, **Secretary**
Nadia van der Linde – the Netherlands
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2004 Annual Report prepared by Pamela Pizarro, Communications and Outreach Officer

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Introduction

The year 2004 was a year filled with new opportunities, organizational growth, and increased international participation for the Youth Coalition (YC). The members of the Youth Coalition were able to exercise their skills in advocacy, and facilitation to effectively participate in many international activities. A pivotal year for the Youth Coalition, 2004, marked the beginning of the organization's growth in both size and scope of work. Nine individuals joined the YC last year bringing the total number of members up from thirteen to twenty-two. This growth in membership brought new challenges for the organization, on how best to orient new members and how to give everyone a space to participate in activities. Choosing to accept these new members also shows that the Youth Coalition as an organization is stepping outside of the original work of the founding members, and entering into areas that youth have traditionally been absent from.

The main focus of the Youth Coalition in 2004 was to train fellow youth in new advocacy and lobbying techniques to ensure that a new generation of advocates are fully able to participate in high-level decision making meetings and bring the youth perspective that would otherwise be missing. The trainings that took place were a chance for the members of the Youth Coalition to bring their skills to youth in different regions, who will in turn train local youth in the same techniques.

This report gives a general overview of the activities over the past year. In this report we have outlined the different activities that the members were involved in last year to give a sense of what was accomplished in 2004. According to the Youth Coalition’s strategic plan for 2002 – 2004, there were three main areas of work that the organization wanted to expand its work in: I. Awareness raising to international policy makers about our issues; II. Training for members and youth working at the grassroots level; III. Generating Knowledge and information sharing on our issues. Accordingly you will see that we have divided our activities along these headings in this report.

The Youth Coalition is tremendously proud of all it was able to achieve last year, and hope that that in the years to come we are able to input more in international dialogues, and continue to train other youth advocates. We believe that our attendance to major international conferences, and the training or new youth advocates have had a direct impact on the ability of young people to exercise their Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRR). By increasing youth participation at high-level meetings we are able to directly influence decision makers by bringing a youth perspective to new policies, and also bring recognition to the barriers and issues that youth face.
I. Awareness raising to international policy makers about our issues

The Youth Coalition’s Strategic Plan for 2002 – 2004 strived to include goals and objectives that included youth participation at several international conferences. The belief was that through increased participation the Youth Coalition could bring attention to the need for a youth perspective in many of the declarations that were being put forth from the international conferences. At the review of both the Cairo and Beijing conferences, the Youth Coalition felt strongly that increasing member participation would be vital in order for youth to take the opportunity to directly affect the policies being considered.

International Conference on Population and Development – The Ten-Year Review

Our primary focus in 2004 was to participate in conferences where our members could effectively advocate for issues concerning young people’s SRHR. Youth participation at these meetings was crucial in ensuring the reaffirmation of the International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action (ICPD). YC worked intensively to ensure strong youth participation at five of the regional meetings of the 10-year review process.

European Population Forum, Geneva, January 3rd – 9th, 2004

The World Population Foundation (WPF), the Summit Foundation, and CHOICE approached the Youth Coalition to facilitate an advocacy workshop for the members of the Temporary Steering Committee of YouAct, the new European Youth Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights. The objective of this training was to strengthen YouAct members as strong advocates for young peoples’ sexual and reproductive rights in the European region. As well the training aimed to help the new Steering Committee better organize itself and to strengthen the organization. Another objective was to ensure that YouAct members would be effective participants in the Europe Population Forum, which took place immediately after the training.

Two Youth Coalition members facilitated a 5-day twelve-person workshop for the temporary steering committee of YouAct, where they discussed advocacy and lobbying strategies, UN structure, issues of concerns for youth in the region, and organizational development of youth networks. On the last day of the workshop, facilitators, and participants discussed strategies to ensure young people’s sexual and reproductive rights was a visible issue during the European Population Forum. Along with the participants of the workshop, YC delegates wrote a Youth Statement entitled: “If the 1990s paved the road to reproductive and sexual rights, why do young people still need to hitchhike?” The statement discussed the pressing issues that young people still face as individuals and members of the largest generation of young people ever. It was widely distributed to conference participants and included in the final report of the meeting. YC and YouAct members were able to speak at every session of the technical meeting. Gemma Hobcraft (UK) talked about how to address SRR issues with a youth perspective, while Cristian Nita (Romania) addressed youth rights and migration. In the closing session, Thoraya Obaid mentioned how impressed she was with the youth presence at the Forum and committed to ensure greater youth participation throughout the rest of the ICPD at 10 regional meetings.

Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development of the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Santiago, Chile, March 10-11, 2004

In November of 2003, members Tanya Baker (Canada and Trinidad and Tobago) and Shannon Kowalski-Morton (Australia and the United States) attended the sub-regional meeting for ICPD’04 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. At this meeting they observed very little youth participation and felt that a youth advocacy training was needed for Caribbean youth to ensure greater participation in future meetings. Following the ECLAC sub-regional meeting in Port of Spain (November 2003) the Youth Coalition worked to ensure a strong youth participation at the meeting in Santiago, Chile. The Youth Coalition conducted a pre-meeting workshop in partnership with the Latin American and Caribbean Youth Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (RedLac) for young activists from the region. Initially, only a four-day Spanish-speaking workshop with twelve participants was planned, however in response to feedback from the Caribbean youth expressing concern that they continue to be excluded from these meetings, an additional three-day English training for six young
people from the English-speaking Caribbean was organized. The eighteen participants, selected from a pool of more than 120 applications, were all active in their own countries, working with the ICPD Programme of Action, SRR, and youth issues. They represented seventeen countries, ranged in age from 17 to 29 years old, and had a variety of experiences, expertise, and backgrounds. The trainings addressed the following points: UN and ECLAC structure, UN documents and negotiations, major milestones and conferences, the ICPD Programme of Action, youth participation, creating advocacy campaigns, and lobbying. The meeting also addressed gains and lessons learned during the sub-regional meeting in Trinidad and Tobago and how to push the agenda forward.

The day before the ECLAC meeting, a Youth Caucus was organized with the workshop youth and other youth participating in the meeting. During the ECLAC meeting, the YC-trained youth all worked together to make recommendations on the language of the draft declaration distributed on the first day of the meeting, and encouraged their countries to endorse their changes and the declaration. Many were asked to comment on their country statement and to ensure sufficient reference to the issues of youth in the region. The language suggested by the youth participants was fully adopted in the outcome declaration. On the final day, Nicole Bidegain (REDLAC) from Uruguay read the youth statement on behalf of the group.


In June 2004, the Youth Coalition organized two-day advocacy workshop for 15 African youth to provide direct advocacy experience and to participate at the 10-year African regional review of the ICPD. 12 of the participants selected by were from Anglophone Africa, and many from Southern Africa, thus the YC decided to invite 3 Senegalese youth to participate in the ECA strategy portion of the meeting and to the actual ECA meeting. The workshop reviewed advocacy skills and techniques learned at the Lusaka workshop (July 2003) and allowed participants to strategize to ensure an effective youth presence at the regional meeting. The group developed a youth statement, which was presented during the plenary session, and designed fact sheets describing their positions and demands for the meeting. The youth delegates decided to centre their advocacy efforts on four issues: improving the economic situation of young people, using culture as a positive tool for change, access to education and services, and youth participation.

After the two-day advocacy workshop, 12 of the participants decided to continue their collaboration and create a new regional network of young African advocates. The group decided to utilize the three days remaining of the workshop to work on the organizational development of their new network. The group worked hard to develop concrete goals, a mission statement, objectives, and principles and values. They officially named their group Lentswe La Rona (Our Voice) – Young African Advocates for Rights, and developed an initial funding proposal and constitution. Throughout the organizational development meeting, YC members in partnership with Shamillah Wilson from the Youth Against Aids Network, acted as facilitators and resource people. They initiated brainstorming exercises to help the group develop specific goals and objectives and provided examples of how different networks are created. They also addressed the challenges faced by the YC and other networks and prompted discussions on how to avoid and/or overcome these challenges. The group members divided roles and responsibilities and created specific objectives, working groups and deadlines for themselves.

Throughout the ECA meeting, the newly formed network worked together to lobby African ministers and government representatives about the need to have youth-friendly SRHR policies and to involve youth in all decision-making processes that affect their lives. The group worked closely with UNFPA representatives who were very supportive of the group’s initiatives. There was a joint NGO meeting with Thoraya Obaid (UNFPA’s Executive Director) which most of the youth attended and presented their primary issues of concern. The group also worked closely with NGO representatives present to ensure that strong language on youth participation was included in the final declaration of the meeting.
On June 26th and 28th 2004, the YC held a follow-up workshop to the Santiago meeting before ECLAC’s Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development. The majority of the youth advocates from Santiago participated along with a number of new young people. In addition to reviewing advocacy techniques, the group created a strategy for their participation at the ECLAC meeting. The participants created a youth caucus called “Youth for Cairo” and developed a Watchdog, youth statement, as well as fact sheets and press releases on several issues, including sexual education, access to services, youth participation, problems with the ABC approach, and parental rights.

Throughout the ECLAC meeting, young people attended women’s caucus meetings, as well as youth caucus meetings, lobbied delegates, and followed the negotiation process for the resolution. One YC member spoke in a press conference organized by the “A Mother’s Promise” Campaign on adolescents’ sexual and reproductive rights. Youth For Cairo also held their own press conference, which was attended by U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and her daughter. The Youth for Cairo statement was read to the plenary, along with statements from women’s NGOs, indigenous women, and parliamentarians. The youth statement received warm applause from most in attendance.

As part of the activities around the 10th Anniversary of the ICPD, a Global Roundtable hosted by International Planned Parenthood Federation, was held in London in order to assess progress in implementing the ICPD Program of Action, and to develop strategies to realize the ICPD goals for 2015. Two YC members participated in the roundtable’s steering committee to ensure that young people’s sexual and reproductive rights would be a major crosscutting theme and that youth would be able to participate in the roundtable in large numbers. They negotiated with the organizers to ensure that 20% of the Roundtable participants would be under 30. YC members helped to organize a youth day together with the roundtable’s youth subcommittee. This youth day held prior to the start of the roundtable aimed to bring young people together to develop strategies for effective youth participation and visibility in the meeting. Fourteen YC members participated in the roundtable and many of them gave presentations in the main plenaries, special plenaries and in different working groups. The YC also coordinated the production of the Watchdog for the duration of the meeting.

The YC convened an agenda setting session on youth (Youth - Welcoming New Leadership) in partnership with Advocates for Youth. The objectives of the session were to identify advances, challenges, and new strategies for achieving the youth-specific goals of the ICPD Program of Action (PoA). The YC and Advocates for Youth produced fact sheets to guide discussions on Youth and the State of the World, Youth and the State of Culture, and Youth and the State of Science, Health and New Technologies, Ethics and Human Rights, to follow the themes adopted by the global roundtable, as well as a comprehensive background paper on young people’s rights, which was finalized with the input of session participants after the roundtable. The sessions provided a forum for networking among youth and adults, and between organizations. In addition, the participations in the agenda setting sessions developed strong recommendations on youth participation, young people’s sexual and reproductive rights, access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, sexuality education and gender equality.

The Youth Coalition facilitated the participation of young people from Western Asia for the last regional meeting for ICPD, held in Beirut, Lebanon, from November 19th to 21st by bringing young people from the region together so they could exchange information, strategize on how to promote their rights, create alliances to work in the field, and affect policy change by advocating at the Arab Population Forum.
The first two days of the meeting were designed to discuss the work of young activists involved in promoting youth rights in the region. Participants shared information about their own experiences as young advocates and the barriers they face in their work. Each had prepared presentations on how youth sexual and reproductive rights and women’s rights were viewed in their country. Participants discussed how they incorporate a gender perspective and a youth perspective in their work. The second part of the workshop was to support participants in developing an advocacy strategy for their participation at the Arab Population Forum. The facilitators guided the participants in developing a map of the political situation surrounding the meeting: actors, allies, and opposition. In this section, facilitators also asked participants to think and brainstorm about the most relevant issues concerning young people’s sexual and reproductive rights in Western Asia.

In the past, young people from the region have not been given a space to promote their rights. Young people from Western Asia also have been under-represented in international forums. The activity organized by the Youth Coalition in partnership with the young people from the region, was an opportunity to raise the awareness of government representatives and NGOs in the region to the importance of youth participation and to the special needs of young people when it comes to sexual and reproductive rights. It was also an opportunity to show international organizations and NGOs that there are young advocates in the Western Asia region who are active in promoting their rights and that their voice should be included at the regional and international levels.

**Beijing+10 Meetings**

Ten years after the 4th World Conference on Women, the Youth Coalition participated to all of the regional meetings to protect and strengthen the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing +10 Review). In 2004, the Youth Coalition participated in the Beijing+10 meeting in Latin America, in Asia Pacific and in Africa.

*Beijing+10 meeting in Latin America, Mexico City, Mexico, June 7th – 12th, 2004*

A YC delegation made up of Gabriela Cano (Mexico), Maria Antonieta Alcalde (Mexico), and Joana Chagas (Brazil) as well as one YC-trained youth participated in the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and Regional Program of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico City in June 2004. The delegation’s main objectives were to raise awareness, and to promote and advocate for young women’s sexual and reproductive rights. They also sought to advocate for strong language on this issue in the Mexico City Consensus and to strengthen relations with young advocates and other members of civil society in the region.

The delegation participated in both the NGO forum and the official meeting organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Progressive youth at the meeting later formed a coalition “Las Jóvenes por los Derechos de las Mujeres” (Young Women for Women’s Rights) to advocate at the ECLAC meeting, and produced a group of fact sheets reviewing the most prominent issues of the meeting from a youth perspective. The youth group also created a special edition of the Watchdog as well as stickers that were distributed at the meeting.

*Beijing+10 meeting for the Asia Pacific Region, Bangkok, Thailand, September 7th to 10th, 2004*

Members Maiden Manzanal (Philippines) and Agniva Lahiri (India) participated at the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review the Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its Regional and Global Outcomes, held in Bangkok, Thailand, 7-10 September 2004. They participated in both the NGO Forum beforehand, and the official High-Level meeting. The NGO Forum proved to be effective preparation for the high-level meeting as YC members and other colleagues created alliances and built an advocacy strategy for the meeting. There was no negotiated outcome, but many senior ministers attended the meeting to review progress and setbacks in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. The Network for Asia Pacific Youth (NAPY) had a strong presence at the meeting and worked with Youth Coalition members throughout the meeting. They specifically developed a youth statement together, which they were able to present in the plenary. In the midst of all the activity, the Youth Coalition delegates were also able to put together a special edition of the Watchdog and distributed it widely to both government delegates and civil society.
The Youth Coalition sent members Shannon Kowalski (USA/Australia) and Gemma Hobcraft (UK) to attend the UNECE Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 10 year Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, in Geneva. Together they worked with members of CHOICE, YouAct, and the WPF in a Youth for Women’s Rights caucus. Prior to the start of the NGO forum, the delegation developed a factsheet, which explained who they were and what they were advocating for and why. At the NGO meeting, they worked in subgroups in order to make text recommendations for the 8-page NGO report attached to the ECE governmental report. The Youth For Women’s Rights caucus decided to write recommendations for all NGO groups encouraging them to use strong language as a starting point and also to make sure that we were all on the same page. The caucus integrated recommendations from the Youth Agenda Setting Session from the Global Roundtable (held in London in September). Youth representatives succeeded in including language about sexual pleasure, and sex education that is not heterosexist into the outcome document.

The Youth Coalition believes that it is crucial for trained and knowledgeable young people to be able to attend high-level meetings where policies related to youth are discussed and adopted. For this reason, the Youth Coalition sent member Kwabena Asare Asamoa (Ghana) to attend the regional meeting for Beijing+10. The Youth Coalition also felt that this meeting would be a great opportunity to work with Lentswe La Rona – Young Advocates for Rights, again. The Youth Coalition invited three Lentswe La Rona members to attend the meeting: Neema Mgana (Tanzania), Wala Nalungwe (Zambia), and Suzyo Ntazi (Zambia). The delegation fought hard to not only advocate for SRR issues throughout the meeting, but also at integrating youth perspectives and issues into the discussion of the meeting. The four delegates tried to cover as much of the NGO meeting, the pre-ministerial conference, the Africa Development Forum, and the actual Beijing +10 Ministerial Conference. The young delegation took part in writing the youth statement that was read at the end of the joint closing ceremony. The delegation also had a series of meetings with leaders from a number of youth NGO’s as well as youth leaders from a number of continents to strategize how to create a structure, within the African Union, that would coordinate the work of youth groups on the continent.

Many accomplishments have been garnered by the international community since the initial ICPD and Beijing conferences. Governments who opposed the conferences ten years before have now reaffirmed their commitments without reservations. As well youth participation in the last ten years has steadily increased and the involvement of youth is evident in the policies implemented by many governments that affect youth. The Youth Coalition’s presence and lobbying at many of these conferences has undoubtly lead to the shift in attitude by many governments. By being involved in the high level decision making process, Youth Coalition members have given a voice to youth and opened up a space for young people to advocate for their rights.

II. Training for members and youth working at the grassroots level

Another major objective of the Youth Coalition is to give other youth the opportunity to gain and develop new skills. By setting up regional advocacy trainings we are providing youth with the space to learn from each other. At the ICPD+10 regional meeting in the Asia Pacific region in November 2002, the Youth Coalition was surprised to see that only 1 young person from the region was attending the UN meeting. In January 2004, YC was also surprised to see that although Western European youth were present at the ECE regional meeting for ICPD, Central and Eastern European youth were absent from the advocacy movement. By contacting youth organizations in these two regions, the Youth Coalition realized that youth in these regions were not equipped with skills and resources to participate in these meetings. The Youth Coalition decided to organize advocacy trainings in these two regions to provide young people with the tools they needed to get involved in advocacy for SRR at the regional and international levels.

Regional Trainings:

Asia-Pacific Youth Advocacy Workshop, Bangkok, Thailand, December 8th-13th, 2003

The goals of the Asia-Pacific Youth Advocacy Workshop were 1) to build capacities of Asia-Pacific youth in the area of advocacy techniques and enhance their knowledge of the UN system; 2) to improve the ability of Asia-Pacific youth to analyze and use language related to United Nations documents specifically, the ICPD Programme of Action, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the A World
Fit for Children outcome document of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children; 3) to increase knowledge and advocacy skills related to young people’s sexual and reproductive rights among youth working in this field in Asia Pacific; and 4) to encourage and where possible, facilitate effective and meaningful youth participation in promoting sexual and reproductive rights at the local, regional, and international levels. The workshop allowed participants to discuss the regional context of SRR, to explore key issues at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels, and to review the ICPD process (ICPD, ICPD+5 and ICPD+10). The workshop also introduced participants to advocacy and lobbying tips, working with the media, UN structure, how to work with UN documents, and using and negotiating UN language.

On Day 6 of the workshop, Zahra Ahmed and Lalaine Viado, the former moderators of NAPY, facilitated a strategy day for the workshop participants to allow them the space to decide what direction they wanted to pursue, if any, with the existing organization. The participants decided to get involved with NAPY and take over from the outgoing coordinators. They elected four new coordinators and established a new organizational structure. Participants left the workshop with feelings of empowerment and increased capacity to fulfill goals related to promoting youth SRR. Following the workshop, the Youth Coalition has been in regular contact with NAPY’s new coordinators and has been working with them on various projects. YC supported the participation of two of their members in the World Social Forum in Mumbai, January 2004, and invited two of their members to participate in the “Dialogue With Young Leaders: Building Capacity and Fostering Participation,” which the YC organized in partnership with the International Women’s Health Coalition in Ottawa, February 2004. YC staff and members continue to serve as advisors to the NAPY coordinators, providing tips on how the Youth Coalition and other youth networks were created and how to move forward as an organization.

Central and Eastern European Advocacy Workshop, Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, December 8th to 12th, 2004

The Youth Coalition organized a workshop for young people from the Central and Eastern Europe region to strengthen the skills that already exist in the region and to show how those skills can be used at an international level. The Youth Coalition decided to collaborate with two European-based youth organizations: YouAct and the Youth of Jazas. YouAct is a pan-European youth organization committed to mobilizing youth in the fight for their rights, while the Youth of Jazas is a Serbian based youth organization, which deals mainly in the fight against HIV/AIDS through educational and advocacy campaigns.

The workshop gave the participants the opportunity to explore youth sexual and reproductive health and rights issues in the Central and Eastern European Region and internationally. They discussed the opportunities available to promote youth sexual and reproductive rights in the region. The 4 facilitators showed the participants how advocacy can be used as a tool and how young activists can use it to their advantage. The workshop built the capacity of the participants on the issues of advocacy techniques and policy analysis. It also provided participants with skills and experiences that they may be able to pass on to their peers in their respective countries.

Feedback from Past Participants

We contacted past participants of the different advocacy trainings to see what skills they gained and strengthen, what activities they have been involved with since the training, and what they liked the best about the trainings. Below are some responses from our participants.

“The workshops did help to strengthen my advocacy skills, as I was exposed to different, better ways of delivering messages.” Melissa Gabriel, Trinidad and Tobago – ECLAC training participant

“Since my attendance at the CEE workshop, I have become the coordinator for a development project for HIV counseling in Macedonia. During my work I have had the opportunity to develop partnerships with other organizations and improve cooperation with government and public institutions, and non-governmental organization as well. I have had an opportunity to practice the skills gained at the workshop everyday.” Katerina Spasovska, Macedonia, CEE regional advocacy training participant
“I enjoyed many things in regards to the workshop, first the methodology of the workshop was fantastic, very dynamic, with a lot of participation. The way the issues were presented and the form that they were explained were very clear. The facilitators were young and amazing, and we can not forget the participants input into the discussions because it enriched the learning experience by talking about each participant’s individual experiences.” Claudia Arroyo, Bolivia, ECLAC training participant

“My advocacy skills have been improved, I feel now, more than ever, I can stand up for what I believe in.”
Ban Ahmed, Iraq, ESCWA training participant

“Since the workshop I have used the skills I learned to work and support other youth organizations working in the field of Sexual Health and Rights, such as the Youth Life Association, National Youth Council, and I have also worked with my University Association in doing an advocacy training. I was part of an advocacy campaign group that worked on changing family laws here in Mozambique. The new legislation approved last year by the government gives women the right to own land, rights over the family’s finances, and if a women lives with her partner for more than two years it is considered a “marriage” under the law and in the case that they separate, she can apply to be awarded half of what was acquired during the marriage.” Alex Muianga, Mozambique, Dakar training participant

Organizational Development Internal Training - Annual General Meeting, Brighton England, August 25, 2004

Before the Annual General Meeting members of the Youth Coalition were asked which issues they felt needed to be addressed with a half-day of internal training. The members decided upon holding a half day session on organizational development to address some issues that had come up throughout the year in specific; relationships with other youth networks, relationships between members and staff, and how to achieve sustainable growth in the next five years. The organization invited Ms. Laurie Prendergast, a consultant in the field of organizational development, to facilitate the session. Laurie went through different types of organization development, key issues, key stakeholders, and finished with exercises to get the members thinking of where that organization will be in five years. Many of the members felt satisfied with the session, but felt rushed with only a half day session and that more time and work needed to be dedicated to the issue of internal training and decided that at the following AGM, a full day would be devoted to internal training. Also instead of making only dedicating one day to organizational development that it would be ongoing within the organization so that the internal training sessions could be dedicated to topics that can be covered in such a small time frame.

III. Generating knowledge and information sharing on our issues

The last goal of the Youth Coalition’s strategic plan is to generate knowledge and information while sharing on our issues. The Youth Coalition’s members often attend different conferences outside of the scope of decision-making to share our issues with other organizations working in the field of sexual and reproductive rights. As well our members increase their own knowledge base with this exchange of information. These meetings also prove to be successful in allowing the Youth Coalition to strategize with other organizations in advance of major decision-making meetings as well as on advocacy campaigns.

Other meetings:

The Youth Coalition carefully selects which meetings to send members to in order to create alliances, to get more information about what is happening in the field and press for youth issues to be recognized. Here is a list of relevant meetings we attended to:

World Social Forum, Mumbai, India, January 16th –21st, 2004

YC members Catherine Njoki Kamau (Kenya), Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina), and Nadia van der Linde (the Netherlands) attended the World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai, India in January 2004. Prior to the Forum, Maria Eugenia attended a Feminist Dialogue, which brought feminists from around the world to share issues and concerns and strategize on how to increase feminist visibility at the WSF.
The YC decided to participate in the WSF to increase recognition of young people’s sexual and reproductive rights, which are crucial to the lives of young people all over the world. The YC prepared a workshop entitled “Youth Advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Rights” to be presented during the Youth Forum. The WSF was also a good opportunity to create alliances with other movements and outreach to potential members. The YC also supported the participation of two NAPY coordinators to attend this event.

Dialogue with Young Leaders: Building Capacity and Fostering Participation, Toronto, Canada, February 15\textsuperscript{th} – 18\textsuperscript{th}, 2004

The International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC) and the YC partnered to organize a small meeting of youth leaders from different countries in Toronto in February 2004. The event aimed to provide a forum for learning and problem-solving; increase knowledge of programs and advocacy by or for young people; identify effective methods to ensure youth participation in design, management, and evaluation of youth-serving programs; generate recommendations for how to foster youth leadership and support and draw on youth activists at national, regional, and global levels; and foster a sense of solidarity and common purpose across issues, regions, and identities. The meeting brought together 16 participants from 5 regions with diverse expertise in program development, training, advocacy, communications, activism, service provisions, and varying degrees of experience with international meetings and events. The outcome of the meeting for the YC was a greater understanding of what youth working in the field, outside of YC, are doing and the obstacles they are facing in their work in grassroots movement or in advocacy. The recommendations developed at the end of the meeting will help the YC define how it can best support other youth and how to share information and create stronger alliances with other youth working in the field.

Are you Ready to Act? Lisbon, Portugal, May 6\textsuperscript{th} – 9\textsuperscript{th}, 2004

The official launch of YouAct, European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, took place in Lisbon, Portugal in May 2004. YouAct organized a youth conference called “Are You Ready to Act?” which included presentations, workshops, and group discussions. Thirty-seven young participants from all over Europe participated in this event. On the third day of the conference, participants officially launched YouAct during an artistic activity called “YouPaint!”. The final day of the conference was used to outline the organization’s next steps. Kathryn Faulkner (U.K.) attended the conference on behalf of the YC. She gave a presentation on youth-led organizations and on how the YC was created. Kathryn was also able to formalize a partnership with YouAct for a youth advocacy workshop for the Central and Eastern European region.

Global Health Council, Washington, DC, USA, June 1\textsuperscript{st} – 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2004

From June 1-4, 2004, the Global Health Council hosted its 31\textsuperscript{st} Annual Conference, in Washington, D.C. The theme for the conference was “Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge.” Claudia Ahumada (Chile) and Belinda Amatekpor (Ghana) attended the conference on behalf of the YC. Maria Antonieta Alcalde Castro, also a YC member, was co-chair of the conference. YC members networked with other people in the field and attended different presentations. They continuously raised the issue of meaningful participation, challenging adults to move from tokenism to real youth involvement. Belinda Amatekpor gave a presentation on youth participation in advocacy movements in a panel entitled In Their Own Hands: Health Initiatives for Youth, Led by the Young. In her session, Belinda discussed the importance of youth involvement in decision-making on issues that affect their health and lives and the need to ensure the creation of successful intergenerational partnerships in reproductive and sexual rights advocacy movements.

Sex in the Hemisphere: The Millennium Development Goals and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Latin America and the Caribbean, New York, NY, USA, October 20\textsuperscript{th} 2004

In October 2004 Youth Coalition members, Claudia Ahumada and Joana Chagas, attended a meeting hosted by IPPF, called “Sex in the Hemisphere”. The meeting brought together a number of NGO’s and activists, in order to jointly discuss and strategize for the MDG process.
Communications

One of the goals of the Youth Coalition is to be a resource for other organizations, or for other young people working in the field. By providing relevant information, the Youth Coalition hopes that more young people participation in the decision-making processes that affect them. Other than participating at meetings, we try to raise awareness about Youth SRR and youth participation through our website, our quarterly newsletter and our electronic distribution list.

Website:

In 2004, the YC totally restructured and redesigned our website www.youthcoalition.org. The YC Website is a tremendous resource to raise awareness about sexual and reproductive rights and youth issues with the general public. YC has increased the amount of information available online and included additional resources on sexual and reproductive rights and youth participation, and links to other organizations working in the field. It also includes information on our activities, background, and history to inspire other youth.

YCNews:
The Youth Coalition administers an electronic distribution list reaching over 300 subscribers. Managed by the Youth Coalition Communications and Outreach Officer, the YCNews is a source of information on SRHR. Every week, we send information about upcoming conferences, policy development in different regions, and issues of concerns for young people.

Watchdog:
The Watchdog is the Youth Coalition’s quarterly Newsletter. It brings together articles written by Young people (YC members and others) about what is happening in the field. On top of producing 4 regular editions of the Watchdog per year, the Youth Coalition also produces special editions during UN meetings we participate in. The special editions of the Watchdog recap the events of the meeting from a youth perspective.

Beijing Backgrounder:
The Beijing Backgrounder was written as a background document that could be distributed to youth that were attending the Beijing review meetings for the first time. The document outlines that Beijing process in 1995, and in 2000. It gives suggestions on how young advocates should approach the most recent review and how to develop strategies for the future.

The Youth Coalition Secretariat

The Youth Coalition's Secretariat is stationed in Ottawa Ontario, Canada. During 2004, the Youth Coalition had three full time and one part time staff at the office: the Executive Coordinator, an Outreach and Information Officer, a Policy Researcher, and a Logistics Coordinator.

Patricia LaRue, Executive Coordinator, was responsible for the overseeing the day-to-day management of the organization. Her position includes overseeing staff, finances, and fundraising. The Outreach and Information Officer, Pamela Pizarro, was responsible for general correspondence, membership, supporting YC members, administrative work, and developing content for the YC’s website and newsletter The Watchdog. Monika Rahman was the secretariat’s Policy Researcher was responsible for researching a full range of issues underpinning the Youth Coalition’s mandate, monitor policy development related to Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRR), current international issues, as well as media coverage on SRR. Finally, the logistics coordinator, the position was served by two individuals Marta Blackwell and Nick Carkner, were responsible for organizing all logistics related to YC members' participation to different conferences, workshops, and meetings.
A Final Thought

The Youth Coalition is extremely proud to be a youth based, youth run organization. We are privilege to be able to share that information gathered by our member with other youth advocates either in person through trainings or through other means of communication. It is important to bring the youth perspective to international meetings and conferences, and without direct youth participation it would be impossible to influence the policies and decisions being made. It is the Youth Coalition's hope that in 2005 we are able to build upon the lessons learned in 2004 to further our goals and objectives. We look forward to being able to help ensure that the youth perspective is being effectively presented at different meetings and that youth and adolescent sexual and reproductive rights are being respected.