Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the members and staff of the Youth Coalition for all of their hard work in 2006. It was another great year, filled with many accomplishments and challenges. Thank you to all of our funders for your support, without which we would not be able accomplish our goals.

Secretariat Staff 2006

Patricia LaRue - Executive Coordinator (June 2006)
Katie Chau – Executive Coordinator (June 2006 – Present)
Pamela Pizarro – Senior Communications and Outreach Officer
Rosario Castro - Administrative Assistant

Steering Committee

September 2005 – August 2006

Claudia Ahumada, Chile - Chair
Cristian Nita, Romania - Vice-Chair
Prateek Suman, India - Treasurer
Rikke Olsen, Denmark - Secretary
Femi Fasinu, Nigeria
Shannon Kowalski-Morton, USA/Australia
Joana Chagas, Brazil
Maria Eugenia Miranda, Argentina

August 2006 – Present

Prateek Suman, India – Chair
Maria Eugenia Miranda, Argentina – Vice-Chair
Yara Jarallah, Palestine – Treasurer
Victor Bernhardtz, Sweden – Secretary
Samuel Kissi, Ghana
Cristian Nita, Romania
Ariel Gonzalez Galeano, Paraguay
Rikke Olsen, Denmark

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Introduction

With a new year came new opportunities, members and staff. 2006 was a year of growth and change for the Youth Coalition as new advocacy priorities were set, publications were released, and challenges were overcome. The Youth Coalition’s commitment to advocating for the sexual and reproductive rights of youth and adolescents grew stronger this year as we continued to participate in international meetings and conferences, as well as training other youth in advocacy techniques.

Once again we have broken down our activities in this report under the 4 pillars of the Youth Coalition’s Strategic Plan: I. International Meetings and Networking; II. External Trainings; III. Information Sharing, Knowledge Generation, and Awareness Raising; IV. Membership/Internal Training. Whether we are organizing trainings or participating in a meeting or conference we make sure that our activities are in line with the goals and objectives that we have set for the organization.

Ensuring that the rights of youth and adolescents are protected and respected is not an easy fight. The members of the Youth Coalition are committed bringing youth voices to policy and other decision makers, so that appropriate youth friendly programs, services, and policies can be undertaken by national governments around the world. We thank all of the following Funders: The Summit Foundation; The Ford Foundation; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through CHOICE); Population Action International (PAI); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Ipas; Go Joven; and our Anonymous Donor, Networks: Lentsewa La Rona; Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA); Asia-Pacific Alliance for ICPD (APA) and Organizations: International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC); CHOICE; Youth Incentives; World AIDS Campaign; Dance 4 Life; The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) including the Uniting for Prevention Initiative, and The PCB NGO Review Working Group; and Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD) all of whom we have worked with over much of 2006 for all of their generous support, without which we would not have achieved so much.
I. International Meetings and Networking

Global AIDS Meeting: Mobilization and Advocacy for 2006 – London, United Kingdom
February 5th – 6th, 2006

This meeting, organized by the World AIDS Campaign (WAC), World AIDS Alliance, Global Movement for Children and OXFAM International, was attended by Youth Coalition member Ariel Gonzalez Galeano. The objective of this international meeting was to map out different organizations and networks plans for advocacy and campaigning in regards to HIV/AIDS in 2006. As well it was an opportunity to discuss and set priorities for joint action for the upcoming year. Participants at the meeting were also able to discuss what priorities should be addressed during the Special Session on HIV/AIDS, which took place in June of 2006. This meeting was a great opportunity for the Youth Coalition to work with other groups working in the field of HIV/AIDS.

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS - New York, NY USA
May 31st – June 2nd, 2006

2006 marked the five-year anniversary of the adoption of the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS). The original declaration was the first worldwide commitment to fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS. It established the pandemic as a global emergency and set time-bound goals and targets aiming to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS. The follow-up meeting held in 2006 aimed at reviewing and recommitting to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment, evaluating challenges and obstacles and reassessing what needs to be done in order to effectively combat the pandemic and generate the necessary political will. A large delegation of Youth Coalition members was able to attend the meeting with the generous financial help from a number of organizations. Claudia Ahumada (Chile), Imane Khachani (Morocco), Maiden Manzanal (the Philippines), Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Femi Fasini (Nigeria), Victor Bernhardtz (Sweden), Laura Villa Torres (Mexico), Moises Russo (Chile), Fredrik Lindahl (Sweden), Nino Susanto (Indonesia) Shannon Kowalski-Morton (Australia/USA) and Prateek Suman (India) along with staff member Pamela Pizarro were all able to attend this 3-day meeting.

The Youth Coalition held a one-day Progressive Youth Caucus for all young people attending the UNGASS session. This caucus was convened so that a common strategy to influence language negotiations could be agreed upon, as well as to discuss how the caucus could bring the voice of youth to the forefront of the HIV/AIDS agenda. Many members took the time to speak with their respective country’s delegation to push for the inclusion of youth issues in the outcome declaration. The Progressive Youth Caucus also produced 3 issues of The Watchdog that included relevant articles on youth and HIV/AIDS. In addition, the Youth Coalition produced a fact sheet on TRIPS. As well, the YC took the opportunity to launch a new publication “A Youth Activist’s Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Rights” at a side
event during the UNGASS session. Altogether the meeting was a great success with many of the proposed language changes by the Progressive Youth Caucus being accepted into the final negotiated text of the meeting.

16th International AIDS Conference – Toronto, ON Canada August 13th – 18th, 2006

In order to strengthen the gains made at the HIV/AIDS UNGASS review, the Youth Coalition decided to participate at the 16th International AIDS Conference. Executive Coordinator Katie Chau along with YC members Tanya Baker (Canada/Trinidad and Tobago), Moises Russo (Chile), Samuel Kissi (Ghana), Ricardo Baruch (Mexico), and Mirlande Demers (Canada/Haiti) all were able to attend this conference on behalf of the Youth Coalition and other organizations that funded each member’s participation.

During the conference, members of the Youth Coalition worked very hard to push for a more comprehensive approach to sexual and reproductive health and rights, one that includes the link between SRHR and HIV/AIDS. This is why the Youth Coalition decided to use the conference as the launching point for “Making the Linkages: HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Rights”. The launch of this guide was incorporated in a session that the Youth Coalition ran at the Women’s Networking Zone in the Global Village of the conference.


YC member Ricardo Baruch (Mexico) was invited by UNAIDS to attend a meeting to discuss a policy paper by the organization entitled “Intensifying HIV Prevention”. As the only young person in attendance, Ricardo was able to include language on sexual and reproductive rights perspective and condoms into the text concerning young people. The Youth Coalition’s relationship with UNAIDS strengthened in the last year given all the work that the Youth Coalition has been done around HIV/AIDS. This collaboration led to many successes at HIV/AIDS events throughout 2006.

Uniting for Prevention – Geneva, Switzerland October 9th, 2006

The Youth Coalition selected member Mirlande Demers (Canada/Haiti) to attend the UNAIDS brainstorming meeting Uniting for Prevention. This meeting was part of the initial planning stages for the United for Prevention initiative, which sought to establish a strong and unified front to develop guidelines and recommendations on prevention issues. By bringing the perspective of youth to this meeting the Youth Coalition wanted to highlight the importance of involving youth in prevention strategies.

Treatment, Care and Support for Young People Living with HIV/AIDS – Blantyre, Malawi November 13th – 17th, 2006

This meeting organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) was convened to produce a document on HIV/AIDS that will not only have statistics and medical information, but also “human points of view” from young people living with HIV/AIDS. There is an increasing interest in gathering information about the specific necessities of young people living with HIV/AIDS and how those needs differ from adults, as well as clarifying the needs of young people who were born with HIV and those who acquired it during adolescences. Youth Coalition member Ricardo Baruch (Mexico) attended the meeting to bring such perspectives to the outcome document. Ricardo, along with other young people in attendance, advocated for the recognition for the sexual and reproductive rights of young people living with HIV/AIDS.
Global Youth Advisory Panel Meeting – New York, NY USA November 29th – December 1st, 2006

A Global Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) composed of young people from both developing and developed countries was established by the Headquarters of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This panel meets annually to make comprehensive recommendations on planning, policymaking, and programming for the UN agency. Youth Coalition members Prateek Suman (India), Imane Khachani (Morocco), Victor Bernhardtz (Sweden) and Femi Fasinu (Nigeria) attended this meeting held in New York as members of the YAP. The objectives of this meeting were to review the progress on last year’s recommendations, facilitate a dialogue and exchange between UNFPA and young people in order to gather their perspectives on the implementation of the UNFPA Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth, and to initiate a discussion on what role the Global Youth Advisory Panel could play to help facilitate the coordination between other existing youth networks.

19th Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS – Lusaka, Zambia December 6th – 8th, 2006

Samuel Kissi (Ghana) was invited to attend the 19th Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) Meeting of UNAIDS as an observer to the working group responsible for reviewing the participation of NGOs and civil society at the PCB meeting. The main issues for discussion at the meeting were centered on monitoring the implementation and coordination of the national responses to HIV/AIDS, multilateral support at the country level, follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and strengthening of the global coordination on AIDS amongst others. As a member of the working group, Samuel worked with NGO delegates and alternates on developing and disseminating talking points for advocacy as a way to gain a better understanding of the PCB process and how it can be improved.

II. External Training

GoJoven Advocacy Training – La Ceiba, Honduras April 2nd – 4th, 2006

Organized by GoJoven, YC members Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina) and Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador) were invited to conduct an advocacy workshop on sexual and reproductive rights in Spanish for a group of Latin American youth activists. The objectives of the training were to; understand what advocacy is, explain how an advocacy campaign works, identify the steps to designing an advocacy campaign, and to apply all of the concepts learned in a practical way, designing an advocacy campaign that could be implemented in each county. The training was extremely successful with both the facilitators and the participants learning from each other.

Caribbean Regional Advocacy Training – Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago July 10th – 14th, 2006

The Youth Coalition chose to hold an advocacy training workshop for Caribbean youth because the region is often overlooked and lumped together with Latin America. With its unique cultures, languages, governments, and histories the YC felt that it was time to address region specific issues and problems in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The five day training conducted by Youth Coalition members, Svenn Grant (Trinidad and Tobago), Samuel Kissi (Ghana), Claudia Ahumada (Chile) and
organized by staff member Rosario Castro, included sessions on the history of sexual and reproductive rights, youth perspective in the field of SRR, human rights and gender perspectives, and analysis of UN texts. The training aimed to build the participants skills on advocacy, communication, and dealing with the media. An encouraging outcome of the training was the increase in inter-island networking and the sharing of knowledge and information amongst youth activists in the region.

III. Information Sharing, Knowledge Generation and Awareness Raising


This meeting was organized by Reproductive Health Matters and the International AIDS Alliance. Five Youth Coalition members were invited to attend, Svenn Grant (Trinidad and Tobago), Christabel Unobe (Nigeria), Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Femi Fasiniu (Nigeria) and Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina). The participants were asked to present the situation regarding condom use in each of their countries. The meeting was a great opportunity to meet other colleagues working in the field and to discuss the challenges surrounding condom promotion and how condoms can be incorporated into faith-based programs.


YC member Joana Chagas (Brazil) was invited to attend a one-day meeting by the Spanish Family Planning Federation (SPFF) aimed to create tools, and opportunities, for advocacy on young peoples sexual and reproductive rights. Joana was also able to help write the final declaration of the meeting that included positive language on youth and their rights. This was a follow-up to the SPFF’s December 2005 meeting, where Youth Coalition member Laura Villa Torres from Mexico was invited to give a presentation.

A Youth Activist’s Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Youth Coalition members Shannon Kowalski-Morton (Australia/USA) and Claudia Ahumada (Chile) collaborated to write a guide on sexual and reproductive rights for young activists around the world. The guide provides an overview of the sexual and reproductive rights that are protected by international and regional human rights treaties and other agreements, shows how these rights apply to adolescents and young people and discusses ways in which young people can advocate for their sexual and reproductive rights within their countries, regions, and globally. The guide was officially launched at the UNGASS meeting in early June and can also be found on the Youth Coalition website.

Making the Linkages: HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Rights

In preparation for the Toronto AIDS conference YC members Claudia Ahumada (Chile), Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador), Moises Russo (Chile), and Laura Villa Torres (Mexico) co-authored this publication to provide an overview of the linkages between sexual and reproductive rights and HIV/AIDS. As well, the booklet explains the importance of HIV/AIDS initiatives having a sexual and reproductive rights perspective as well as a youth perspective and discusses the ways that young people can advocate for their sexual and reproductive rights within HIV/AIDS frameworks, in their countries, regions, and in a global context. The booklet was officially launched at the International AIDS conference, and can also be found on the Youth Coalition website.
IV. Membership/Internal Training

Annual General Meeting and Internal Training – Buenos Aires, Argentina August 28th – September 1st, 2006

The Youth Coalition’s Annual General Meetings are a chance to bring all of our internationally placed volunteer members together to discuss the work achieved over the past year. This year, many new members were accepted into the organization, as well as a new Executive Coordinator. Katie Chau took over the EC position previously held by Patricia LaRue in June of 2006. One of the main challenges for the Youth Coalition has been the attempt to become a fiscally independent organization from its mother organization Action Canada for Population and development. At the AGM, members had to vote on new by-laws and amendments to the constitution, as well as discuss new procedures facing the organization on its way to independence.

The AGM is also an opportunity for members to receive training on themes and topics that the organization is facing. This year the internal training was on strategic planning in order to develop the Youth Coalition’s strategic plan for 2008 until 2011. Susan Anderson from Population Action International was invited as the external facilitator. The goals of the session were to build members’ knowledge base of tools and concepts of strategic planning as well as to cultivate their abilities and capacities to develop and carry out a strategic planning process. Following the day of internal training, the members of the Youth Coalition devoted time to developing a new strategic plan.

Youth Incentives Abortion Advocacy Training – Utrecht, the Netherlands October 19th – 21st, 2006

Amongst the variety of topics that Sexual and Reproductive Rights encompasses, the issue of choice is always at the forefront. Abortion has always been a sensitive topic, so in order to understand the issues and technicalities better, Youth Incentives invited YC members Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Femi Fasinu (Nigeria), Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador), Svenn Grant (Trinidad and Tobago), Christabel Unobe (Nigeria), Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina), Neha Sood (India), Yara Jarallah (Palestine) and staff member Pamela Pizarro to attend a three day training on the subject. This workshop was also used as an informational basis for a larger project on abortion that will be undertaken in 2007, where the Youth Coalition will organize 5 national workshops in India, Paraguay, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ecuador. The training helped the participants understand how to deal with the opposition, how to approach the subject of abortion, and why it is such an important issue that threatens women’s health around the world.

V. Organizational Development

This year also marked major milestones in organizational development for the Youth Coalition. In June a new Executive Coordinator, Katie Chau, was hired to replace outgoing EC Patricia LaRue. As well the Youth Coalition took the first steps towards independence and submitted an application for non-profit status with Industry Canada in November. As well at the Annual General Meeting, updated Bylaws and a Board of Directors were voted on by the general membership. The Board of Directors replaces the Steering Committee of the YC, this change was made to adhere to Canadian law. As well the Youth Coalition formalized several new partnerships with other organizations. In November the YC joined the Asia-Pacific Alliance for ICPD and formalized a Memorandum of Understanding with Dance4Life.
Both organizations work in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and share similar principles and values as the YC.

**A Final Thought**

With so much accomplished in 2006, the Youth Coalition is looking forward to building on the achievements in the years to come. By once again undertaking advocacy trainings for other youth, we have taken the expertise held by our members to help build the capacity of other youth to not only advocate on their own behalf, but also pass the skills gained at the workshops to youth in their local communities. By attending international conferences and meetings we are able to speak directly to decision and policy makers about the issues affecting youth and their sexual and reproductive rights. In focusing many of our activities this year on HIV/AIDS members were able to convey the message for the need for comprehensive prevention programs. We look forward to the upcoming year and all of challenges and opportunities that it may bring.