Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the members and staff of the Youth Coalition for all of their hard work in 2007. It was another great year, filled with many accomplishments and challenges. Thank you to all of our funders and partners for your support, without which we would not be able accomplish our goals.

Office Staff 2007

Katie Chau – Executive Coordinator
Pamela Pizarro – Senior Communications and Outreach Officer (2003 - June 2007)
Emily Turk – Communications and Outreach Officer (June 2007 – present)
Rosario Castro – Program Officer

Board of Directors

September 2006 – August 2007

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

August 2007 – Present

Yara Jarallah, Palestine – Chair
Victor Bernhardtz, Sweden – Vice-Chair
Ariel Gonzalez Galeano, Paraguay – Treasurer
Samuel Kissi, Ghana – Secretary
Claudia Ahumada, Chile
Maria Eugenia Miranda, Argentina
Nadia Ribadeneira, Ecuador
Nino Susanto, Indonesia

©2007 Annual Report prepared by Emily Turk, Communications and Outreach Officer

For more information on the Youth Coalition:

www.youthcoalition.org
Suite 405, 260 Dalhousie Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1N 7E4
admin@youthcoalition.org

Phone: +613 562 3522
Fax: +613 562 9502
Introduction

The year 2007 was a dynamic one for the Youth Coalition (YC). It marked an exciting chapter in the Youth Coalition’s organizational history, as we were officially incorporated as an independent non governmental organization (NGO) in January 2007. The year also saw new opportunities and partnerships, an incredible number of trainings and activities, as well as the introduction of new members and staff.

The YC was able to hold a phenomenal number of trainings and workshops this year, including an exciting project funded by Ipas which included five national trainings on Safe Abortion Advocacy and two related publications. In addition, the Youth Coalition’s commitment to organizational development was also underscored this year with the development of a new Strategic Plan for 2008-2011, as well as an extremely successful human rights training in Bangkok, Thailand.

All things considered, it has been an exceptional year of sexual and reproductive rights advocacy, collaboration, and training for the YC. We have worked hard to ensure that the rights of youth and adolescents are protected and respected, and that young people are able to participate meaningfully in the decision-making that affects their lives. We dearly appreciate the support of all the organizations and individuals with whom we have worked throughout 2007. Thank you to the following funders and organizations for all of their generous support, without which we could not have achieved so much:

**Funders:** The Summit Charitable Foundation; The Ford Foundation; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (via CHOICE); Population Action International (PAI); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and an Anonymous Donor; and **Organizations:** Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD); Advocates for Youth; Asia-Pacific Alliance for ICPD (APA); CHOICE; Dance 4 Life; Family Care International (FCI); Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA); International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC); Ipas; IPPF-WHR; The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights; World AIDS Campaign; YouAct; and Youth Incentives.

Within this report, we have broken down our activities according to the 4 pillars of the Youth Coalition’s current Strategic Plan:

I. Advocacy;
II. Trainings and Workshops;
III. Organizational Development;
IV. Communications.
From our advocacy work to trainings to our publications and beyond, the Youth Coalition always makes certain that our activities are in line with the goals and objectives that we have set for the organization, and that they adhere to the principles and values we dearly respect.

I. Advocacy

► UNFPA/World Bank Consultation on Poverty Reduction Strategies  
January 23 - 26, 2007 - Washington, D.C., USA  
On behalf of UNFPA’s Youth Advisory Panel, YC member Prateek Suman (India) attended this Expert Consultation which gathered various experts from the World Bank, UN agencies, governmental institutions, and civil society. Approximately ten young people participated; some who were members of the World Bank’s and UNFPA’s Youth Advisory Panels, while others were from various youth organizations. The objectives of the Expert Consultation were to identify opportunities to include young people’s issues in PRSPs, and to provide inputs for developing an inter-agency tool kit/manual for including young people in each of the processes of a PRSP from the consultation to monitoring and evaluation.

► IWHC Pre-CSW Workshop and CSW  
February 22 – March 9, 2007 – New York, USA  
The International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC) organized the first Advocacy in Practice training for advocates to learn how to effectively understand and advocate for sexual and reproductive rights at the UN. After the training, participants advocated at the 51st session on the Commission on the Status of Women. Four YC members attended both the CSW conference (Feb 26 – March 3) and participated in the pre-conference workshop. Neha Sood (India) and Nicole Juan (USA) were sponsored by IWHC to attend, Moises Russo (Chile) attended as a representative of IPPF, and Laura Ville Torres (Mexico) as a representative of Ipas.

► Foro Latinamericano y del Caribe en VIH/SIDA e ITS  
April 17 – 20, 2007 - Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Youth Coalition members Ricardo Baruch (Mexico), Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) and Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina) attended this regional forum. Maria’s NGO (Fundacion Huesped) also organized a youth meeting prior to the Forum to map the situation of young people and HIV/AIDS in the Latin America and Caribbean region, and to provide information about a new project to create a youth network on the southern cone. Ricardo coordinated two youth meetings during the forum that focused on developing strategies for upcoming local, regional and international AIDS conferences. Throughout the conference, Ricardo noticed that the number of youth delegates had increased from previous years, but meaningful youth participation was still significantly lacking.

► UNAIDS Global Resource Needs Estimation, Advisory Board Meeting  
May 3 – 4, 2007 – Glion, Switzerland  
Claudia Ahumada (Chile) was selected to participate in this UNAIDS meeting, which aimed to discuss the process of developing global resource needs estimates and to present preliminary figures up to 2015. Another aim of the meeting was to help build an understanding of HIV and AIDS into the broader understanding of health-related MDGs, and to also serve as a guide for countries in determining their priorities, strategies and costs. The meeting’s participants represented a diversity of interests, including UNAIDS, NGOs, youth, an MSM organization and OGAC (PEPFAR). By participating at this meeting, the YC had the opportunity to input on the process to develop global resource needs estimates on HIV and AIDS and other health related
MDGs. In addition, it was an opportunity to emphasize the need to include young people in these estimates and to emphasize what the estimates should include in regards to youth. The meeting also provided a space for the Youth Coalition to gain greater visibility, particularly amongst the HIV and AIDS community.

► World Bank Youth Open House
June 11 – 12, 2007 – Washington, DC
Rosario Castro (Program Officer) and Katie Chau (Executive Coordinator) attended the World Bank Youth Open House, along with approximately 100 young people from Canada and the U.S representing a number of youth organizations and universities. The purpose of the conference was to initiate a long-term dialogue between the World Bank and young people in Canada and the U.S. in order to discuss the challenges in achieving a sustainable future. Overall, YC participation in the conference was beneficial in that it was an opportunity to obtain a better understanding of World Bank operations and how it can be linked to youth and to meet potential new partners such as Y2Y (Youth 2 Youth Community) and the YDP Network (Youth Development & Peace Network). Conversely, it was unfortunate that PAI was the only other SRR organization in attendance, and that the participants’ overall level of experience and knowledge about higher level international development processes and decision-making was limited.

► FCI LAC MDG Focus Groups
June 21, 2007 - Asuncion, Paraguay and Quito, Ecuador
In early 2007, the Youth Coalition began a collaborative project with Family Care International (FCI) with the main objective of creating a youth-friendly publication that discusses the linkages between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights specifically in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. In order to ensure that the LAC region manual was appropriate for the target audiences (young people in the LAC region, people working with youth in the LAC region, decision-makers, leaders, health-care workers, etc), YC members Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) and Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador) organized focus groups in both Ecuador and Paraguay. These half-day focus groups invited 10 young activists working in various sectors to read the LAC manual in advance and provide comments and suggestions about the publication. The participants’ input is being incorporated into the final version of the manual. The feedback from the focus groups was largely related to making the content and language more youth-friendly and clearly explaining technical terms.

► IASSCS Conference and Ford Foundation Meeting
June 26 – 30, 2007 - Lima, Peru
YC member Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) went to Lima, Peru to attend the International Association for the Study of Sex, Culture and Society (IASSCS) Conference and to attend a meeting convened by the Ford Foundation. Ford has supported the IASSCS Conference since its inception, and held a meeting the day before it began for all of its grantees inside of the Sexuality Program. The IASSCS conference emphasized advocacy and defence mobilization in light of evolving notions of ‘rights’, while the Ford meeting addressed sexual rights in political and cultural context across Latin America and the world. Ariel was also able to give a poster presentation at IASSCS about the YC’s national safe abortion advocacy workshop in Paraguay (see trainings section below for more details about this workshop).

► World AIDS Campaign National Campaigners’ Meeting
July 2 -4, 2007 - Nairobi, Kenya
YC members Ricardo Baruch (Mexico) and Prateek Suman (India) attended the World AIDS Campaign’s biannual meeting of national AIDS campaigners, held in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting convened over 60 civil society campaigners from around 30 countries to explore joint
messaging and action on key mobilisation moments leading up to 2010. The meeting provided a space for sharing and learning amongst campaigning voices from diverse constituencies including people living with HIV, youth, women, labour unions, nongovernmental organisations and faith groups, with the aim of holding leaders to account on their AIDS promises, particularly those relating to universal access.

► International Women’s Summit on HIV and AIDS
July 4 – 7, 2007 - Nairobi, Kenya
YC members Shannon Kowalski (USA/Australia), Thoko Budaza (South Africa) and Ricardo Baruch (Mexico) participated in the International Women’s Summit in Nairobi. The theme for the summit was Women’s leadership on HIV and AIDS and it was the first-ever international conference to focus on women and AIDS, and it was jointly organized by YWCA and the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW). Almost 2,000 participants were in attendance and almost half were from YWCA national delegations. Each delegation had to bring at least 25% young people, which was commendable, although most of them worked on gender issues rather than HIV. The summit included workshops, plenary sessions and side events, and unfortunately the only youth-focused session at the summit was held as a side session, rather than as part of the main programme. This side session was organized by Y-Peer, FHI (Family Health International) and some local organizations. It is also noteworthy that Deborah Landey (UNAIDS’ Deputy Director) was in attendance, and committed to increase UNAIDS' work with youth.

► 2007 International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP)
August 19 – 24, 2007 - Colombo, Sri Lanka
Neha Sood (India) represented the YC and CREA at the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. Neha was able to work with the Youth Forum and Youth Pavilion organizers before and during the ICAAP to strengthen the program activities and make recommendations to the Congress organizers, she also facilitated a workshop during the pre-conference Youth Forum and attended many sessions. The YC’s participation at the ICAAP was significant in terms of meeting and learning about the work of activists and organizations in Asia and the Pacific, and was also very beneficial for the Youth Coalition’s visibility in the region and building contacts therein.

► Human Rights Council 6th Session
September 10 – 28, 2007 - Geneva, Switzerland
YC members Daniel Townsend (Jamaica) and Joana Chagas (Brazil) made an outstanding contribution to the Human Right Council’s 6th session. This session marked the first time the Youth Coalition participated at the HRC, and also laid the foundation for involvement in future HRC sessions. They worked closely with Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD), the Sexual Rights Initiative and other SRR and progressive NGOs to advocate for the integration of a gender perspective into the HRC’s work; for the introduction of procedures that will facilitate the participation of Southern-based (and other non-Geneva based) NGOs at the Council; and for strengthened attention to young people’s rights within the HRC’s work. In addition, Joana and Daniel networked with various people and organisations related to our issues.

► Multigenerational Feminist Dialogue
October 1 – 3, 2007 - New Jersey, USA
Members Neha Sood (India), Joana Chagas (Brazil) and Ioana Contu (Romania) went to Rutgers University in New Jersey for the Multigenerational Feminist Dialogue organized by
CREA, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) and the Youth Coalition. Approximately 35 feminist activists from 7 regions, different generations and diverse movements gathered to discuss the issues, challenges and opportunities that affect the strength and scope of feminist movements and activism over time.

► Women Deliver Conference  

Nine YC members and Executive Coordinator Katie Chau attended the 2007 Women Deliver conference in London, England. Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Samuel Kissi (Ghana), Tanya Baker (Canada/Trinidad), Yara Jarallah (Palestine), Joana Chagas (Brazil), Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador), Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina), Thoko Budaza (South Africa) and Laura Villa Torres (Mexico) all made significant contributions to the activities at the conference. The YC was involved in four different conference sessions: one Youth Coalition-specific panel; the launch of our Safe Abortion Advocacy publications at the Speaker’s Corner; a panel on “Coming of Age” (Yara); and a panel on engaging men in gender equity initiatives (Thoko). The Youth Coalition was also a core member of Women Deliver’s youth organizing committee (Deliver for Youth), which provided inputs on the conference agenda, reviewed youth scholarship applications, gave recommendations for youth speakers and organized other youth aspects of the conference. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of Deliver for Youth, young people were still under-represented at the conference due to several factors, including: the cost of registration, the limited number of scholarships, and the difficulty in obtaining a UK visa. The YC hopes to apply the lessons learned from Women Deliver to improve meaningful youth participation in future conferences. Overall, Women Deliver was an excellent networking and fundraising opportunity, and was also a useful occasion for YC internal meetings.

► MSI Global Safe Abortion Conference  
**October 23 – 24, 2007 - London, England**

Members Joana Chagas (Brazil), Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador), Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina), Laura Villa Torres (Mexico) and EC Katie Chau participated at this landmark conference on global safe abortion. The YC’s panel was a great success and gained substantial visibility, as it was held in the conference’s main room. Laura also gave a terrific speech in the closing plenary. Unfortunately, youth participation in this conference was very low (as it was at Women Deliver), so there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that young people are able to articulate their needs and concerns about safe abortion access in international settings.

► 4th Asia-Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health (APCRSH)  
**October 29 – 31, 2007 - Hyderabad, India**

Nino Susanto (Indonesia), Prateek Suman (India) and Neha Sood (India) participated in this important regional conference. Attending the 4th APCRSH was particularly relevant to our work because this year, Youth and SRH was a key theme in the conference program. Nino worked closely with members from APA-ICPD to plan some of the youth activities at the conference, and also facilitated part of the youth pre-conference. The three YC members contributed to a youth declaration that was prepared during the conference and spoke out against the recent
ban in 12 Indian states against sexuality education, amongst other things. Prateek also gave some impressive media interviews on this topic.

► XVI Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Board Meeting
November 11 – 13, 2007 - Kunming, China
Ricardo Baruch (Mexico) participated in this meeting in his role as a member of the Developing Countries’ NGOs Delegation on behalf of the Youth Coalition. This is the 4th GFATM that Ricardo has participated in and although he encountered some challenges, he feels that the YC’s involvement is very important in bringing a youth perspective to the GFATM board.

► WGNRR Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Consultation Meeting
November 15 – 17, 2007 - Managua, Nicaragua
YC member Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) attended this Regional Consultation Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), hosted by the Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR). The purpose of the consultation was to strengthen linkages and to facilitate networking between WGNRR members both in LAC and in other regions. The meeting also addressed regional sexual health and reproductive rights issues - with a specific focus on access to safe and legal abortion - and linked them to the global development agenda.

► World Fit For Children – 5 year review (WFFC+5)
December 11 – 12, 2007 - New York, USA
Members Imane Khachani (Morocco) and Claudia Ahumada (Chile) represented the YC at this review meeting, and Laura Villa Torres (Mexico) also participated on behalf of Ipas. Prior to the meeting, Imane participated in an advocacy training organized by the International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC), which enabled a group of progressive young women to strategize for the review meeting. During the 2-day meeting, Claudia, Imane and Laura worked in collaboration with other advocates to push for the integration of progressive language in the outcome document. The members also produced a 10-page issue of the Watchdog.

► UNFPA Global Youth Advisory Panel
December, 2007 - New York, USA
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). The panel meets annually to make comprehensive recommendations on planning, policymaking, and programming for the UN agency. Prateek Suman (India) participated in the panel as a representative of the Youth Coalition; this was Prateek’s second meeting with the panel, whose aim is to input on UNFPA’s work from an international youth perspective. The Youth Coalition’s participation in this panel is a great way to strengthen/maintain relations with UNFPA and to stay up to date on key issues within the UN system in general. Prateek also mentioned that UNFPA greatly values the YC’s contributions to the group.

► International Dialogue on Gender, Sexuality HIV/AIDS and Human Rights
December 6 - 11, 2007 - Johannesburg, South Africa
YC member Daniel Townsend (Jamaica) attended the International Dialogue in Johannesburg, South Africa. The conference aims were to strengthen regional organizing and the continued development of the African LGBTI rights movement; to develop strategies for effective engagement with regional and international mechanisms in support of LGBTI Rights; to advance the Millennium Development Goals of combating HIV/AIDS and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women; and to focus on regional needs and priorities, while enabling activists to share experiences and best practices with those from other regions. The conference proved to be a great opportunity for networking for the YC; on the last day, a small international caucus decided to meet to discuss ways to build cooperation and support for each others work, and to confer on issues of funding, access to information, networking and solidarity. The caucus

II. Trainings and Workshops

► 2007 National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshops
In October of 2006, the Youth Coalition (YC) received a generous grant from Ipas, which allowed eight YC members to travel to Amsterdam in the Netherlands to attend an internal training delivered by Youth Incentives on safe abortion advocacy. Once the training was complete, the YC organized and facilitated its own national workshops on safe abortion and advocacy. The YC members who participated in the Netherlands training organized trainings in five countries: Paraguay, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, India and Ecuador. The national workshops varied in format and in execution depending on the country, and the methodology used for each workshop was largely based on each country’s legislation and culture toward safe abortion, as well as the country’s level of activism and momentum for reform. Cultural context was also considered in choosing which exercises suited each workshop, and in how to best explain the training’s important concepts.

● Paraguay National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop
February 7 – 9, 2007 – Asuncion, Paraguay
Members Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) and Laura Villa Torres (Mexico) organized and facilitated the Youth Coalition’s first national safe abortion advocacy workshop in Asuncion, Paraguay. Fifteen Paraguayan youth participants attended the training where they learned practical skills and tools in order to become effective advocates for safe abortion. Before the workshop, the facilitators sent out a preliminary questionnaire to the participants in order to gauge their knowledge and experience on the issues. This questionnaire gave the facilitators insight into specific national concerns and knowledge-based shortcomings, and they were able to tailor the training accordingly.

● Nigeria National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop
February 21 – 23, 2007 – Abuja, Nigeria
YC members Femi Fasinu (Nigeria) and Christabel Unobe (Nigeria) facilitated this three-day workshop in Abuja. The Femi and Christabel had an overwhelming response to their call for participants, and received more than 400 applications to attend the workshop. Throughout the training, the participants focused on effective safe abortion advocacy, learning safe abortion language, responding to opposition, etc. Participants were also
encouraged to discuss the challenges facing safe abortion advocates at the local and grassroots levels. The participants and facilitators were also invited to visit the Ipas Nigeria office to learn how they are working on safe abortion issues in Nigeria.

- **Trinidad and Tobago National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop**  
  **March 23 – 25, 2007 – Cumana, Trinidad**  
  Svenn Grant (Trinidad and Tobago) and Yara Jarallah (Palestine) facilitated the National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop in Trinidad. The training was very thorough in its inclusion of regional and local perspectives and material, as well as having a very strong analysis of gender within Trinidadian society. The gender analysis examined the ways in which ethnicity, race, religion, class, and geographic locations define gender roles and identity. This analysis also addressed popular and socialized attitudes toward gender and sexual health, including the reluctance of Trinidadian men to seek health care, the discrimination faced by young women, and the issue of availability versus accessibility.

- **India National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop**  
  **April 12 – 14, 2007 – New Delhi, India**  
  Neha Sood (India) and Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) facilitated a workshop for 14 young people in New Delhi, India on safe abortion advocacy. They conducted a highly participatory workshop that examined abortion issues and advocacy strategies from an Indian and international perspective. In planning the workshop, the facilitators consulted with Ipas and Ipas-India staff, who offered suggestions on addressing issues such as HIV and abortion. A session was given on the specific challenges facing safe abortion advocates in India, including sex selective abortion, the bias and discrimination facing women and girls, and the need for stricter implementation of the law against prenatal sex determination.

- **Ecuador National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop**  
  **May 11 – 13, 2007 – Quito, Ecuador**  
  Laura Villa Torres (Mexico) and Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador) facilitated the YC’s final 2007 National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop in Ecuador. Laura and Nadia adapted the workshop content to Ecuador’s specific national situation, taking into consideration the country’s strong momentum toward abortion law reform. The facilitators also benefited greatly from their collaboration.
with local organizations, including Family Care International – Ecuador and Coordinadora Política Juvenil (CPJ), and invited their representatives to be guest speakers at the training. Prior to the workshop, several pro-choice events took place in Quito. The facilitators were invited to participate in a radio interview on Radio La Luna to defend the legalization of abortion in Ecuador. Laura was also able to participate in a conference with a diverse group of pro-choice women and to speak about her experience as a youth advocate in the legalization of abortion in Mexico City.

- **National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop Follow-up Meeting**  
  **November 19, 2007 - Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA**  
  Having completed the National Safe Abortion Advocacy Workshop project, Ipas requested that the Youth Coalition send one facilitator and participant from the workshops to meet with them at their head office in North Carolina. YC member Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), who had facilitated in Paraguay and India, and Cedriann Martin, a participant from the Trinidad training, were selected to attend the meeting. Ariel presented Ipas with the outcomes of the workshops and the lessons learned throughout the process, while Cedriann spoke about her experience as a participant. While at the Ipas office, Ariel was also invited to participate in an internal meeting on the topic of men and abortion.

- **Pacific Youth Advocacy Training**  
  **December 5 – 9, 2007 - Nadi, Fiji**  
  Fredrik Lindahl (Sweden) and Nino Susanto (Indonesia) facilitated a 5-day workshop for 10 young people from across the Pacific region. Program Officer Rosario Castro provided staff support and a guest speaker, Sarah Haddock from PAI, helped facilitate specific sessions during the training. The Pacific region was selected since it is often neglected when seen as part of Asia Pacific. The YC also believes that there is a need for capacity building in this area, as Pacific youth seem to be under-represented in sexual and reproductive rights work and advocacy. The aim of the five-day training was to increase the participants’ awareness about SRHR, youth participation, and rights-based approaches to sexual and reproductive health education and services, and to increase the effective participation of Pacific youth in SRHR advocacy movements regionally and internationally. The training included sessions on the history of sexual and reproductive rights, youth perspective in SRR, gender analysis, Human Rights perspective, United Nations texts, as well an analysis of the MDGs.
III. Organizational Development

► In-Person Board Meeting
March 1 – 4, 2007 - Pune, India
Since becoming an independent organization in January 2007, the YC held its first official in-person Board of Directors meeting in March in Pune, India. Board members Prateek Suman (India), Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina) Yara Jarallah (Palestine), Victor Bernhardtz (Sweden), Samuel Kissi (Ghana), Cristian Nita (Romania), Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay), Rikke Olsen (Denmark) and Katie Chau (Executive Coordinator) were in attendance. The BD approached the meeting with energy and enthusiasm, and began with a series of evaluations including the EC’s evaluation of the Board and vice versa, and the members’ evaluation on the BD and their work over the last six months. The group also reviewed the recommendations from the former Steering Committee, and discussed their priorities and plans for the rest of 2007. The Board agreed to create a “positioning matrix” as a tool to help ensure that the YC remains focused on the key issues and strategies that will help achieve our goals and objectives. With regard to finance, the Board reviewed the 2007 budget, discussed the appointment of an auditor, and examined funding proposals and possibilities. However, the broader theme of the in-person BD meeting was the implications and challenges of our newfound independence, in which the issues of bylaws, taxes, insurance, etc. were considered.

► Human Rights Internal Training
June 24 – 29, 2007 - Bangkok, Thailand
The Human Rights Task Force was established at the YC’s Annual General Meeting in 2006. In order to build capacity in human rights, one of first major activities organized was a training on Human Rights for Youth Coalition members. Ten members went to Thailand for the Internal Training on Human Rights. Joana Chagas (Brazil) and Gemma Hobcraft (United Kingdom) were selected as internal human rights facilitators, while Sandeep Prasad, Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD)’s HR Advisor, was selected as the external trainer due to his extensive experience with the Human Rights Council. Katie Chau (Executive Coordinator) also facilitated a session on facilitation skills. The training provided an opportunity for the Youth Coalition to strengthen its human rights advocacy, and for YC members to become more familiar with Human Rights issues and become highly effective advocates of sexual and reproductive health and rights locally, regionally, and internationally. The internal training also gave the YC’s Human Rights Task Force the chance to strategize its involvement and objectives at the UN Human Rights Council.

► Annual General Meeting and Internal Training
August 5 – 9, 2007 – Casablanca, Morocco
The Youth Coalition’s Annual General Meeting brings together our members from across the globe in order to discuss the work we have achieved over the past year and our future goals. This year, we accepted new members into the organization, as well as a new Communications and Outreach Officer. Emily Turk has taken over the COO position, previously held by Pamela Pizarro from 2003 to 2007.
At this year’s AGM, sessions focussed on the presentation of our proposed 2008-2011 Strategic Plan and the evaluation of our previous SP, the implications of our organizations’ newfound independence, and on taking a close look at Human Rights and the current state of international SRR advocacy. The Youth Coalition’s AGMs are also an opportunity for our members to all receive training on strategic themes and topics, and to build capacities and skills in these areas. This year the internal training was on facilitation skills, and Amy Boldosser was selected as our external facilitator. The topic of facilitation was selected by the YC Membership Committee with the aim of increasing members’ knowledge of facilitation skills and techniques, assisting individual members in improving their personal facilitation skills, and paying special attention to facilitation with regard to sexual and reproductive rights.

IV. Communications

Published October, 2007
Published in October 2007, Freedom of Choice is an effective and accessible tool for advocates of all ages. The guide includes facts on abortion rights and legislation, the international agreements and policies that address abortion and their implications for abortion rights, strategies and tips on how to discuss abortion issues, effective advocacy strategies for young people, suggestions on how to advocate for abortion rights, information on safe abortion care, media strategies, and a list of organizations that advocate for abortion rights on an international level. The guide serves as an excellent reference tool for young people around the world to enhance their capacity to advocate for access to safe abortion services in their own countries and beyond. Freedom of Choice was authored by four Youth Coalition members, Tanya Baker (Canada/Trinidad), Joana Chagas (Brazil), Maria Eugenia Miranda (Argentina) and Nadia Ribadeneira (Ecuador), and one staff member, Pamela Pizarro (Sr. Communications and Outreach Officer). Prior to publication, the guide’s content was submitted for a technical review by Ipas staff, as well as sent to all YC members for feedback and constructive criticism, and then edited by staff.

► International Youth Perspectives on Abortion
Published October, 2007
The booklet “International Youth Perspectives on Abortion” is a follow-up to the five national abortion advocacy workshops run by the Youth Coalition in 2007. The workshops’ participants contributed their stories, illustrations and essays about abortion and pro-choice advocacy work, and the submissions were compiled into one poignant collection. The Perspectives booklet is a useful advocacy tool, as it expresses the necessity for governing bodies to address the needs of youth related to abortion and sexual and reproductive rights. It also demonstrates how concerns about abortion are still pervasive among youth worldwide and that there is a strong global network of young
people who are working to promote pro-choice legislation and initiatives.

► Regional FocalPoint for Huesped Foundation
September 2007- present

In September 2007, Huesped Foundation (http://www.huesped.org.ar/) asked the Youth Coalition to become part of the regional project Jovenes Latinoamericanos Unidos en Respuesta al VIH/sida (JLU). Since then, YC member Ariel Gonzalez Galeano (Paraguay) has been a part of the network as the focal point for his country. Ariel's main activities are to ensure that organizations working on youth, SRHR and HIV and AIDS issues are contacted, kept informed about JLU, and invited to participate in the network. The network’s main objective is to coordinate and advocate the regional responses to HIV and AIDS, SRHR and young people. JLU Paraguay now has a website thanks to the Paraguayan Society of Human Sexuality Studies - SPESH (www.estudiosdesexualidad.org).

A Final Thought

The Youth Coalition has unquestionably accomplished a great deal in 2007. The year saw new opportunities and partnerships, legal independence, many achievements – including an incredible number of trainings and activities, as well as the introduction of new members and staff. Certainly, in focusing many of this year’s activities on safe abortion advocacy, members were able to convey the need for pro-choice youth involvement and advocacy at the national, regional and international levels. In order for young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights to be adequately integrated into policies and programs, it is vital for young people from all regions to have opportunities to develop their skills and capacity to effectively participate in decision-making and policy-making arenas.

The Youth Coalition has been building on the success of our activities since our inception in 1999, and this year has been no different. We will continue to promote young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) at a national, regional and international level, and we look forward to the upcoming year and all of challenges and opportunities that come with it.