

# Youth AIDS Action

Latin American and Caribbean Youth HIV/AIDS Quarterly Newsletter

## Youth Declaration

During the Americas Youth Voice meeting held in Dominican Republic last July, youth leaders from around the Americas analyzed their current situation and evaluated progress made in implementing plans, programs and policies designed for them. A result of that analysis was a declaration where youth outlined their rights and responsibilities in terms of health (with emphasis on HIV), education, family, participation, employment, communication and citizenship, among others, reflecting on the challenges they face when working towards a comprehensive, sustainable development in the Region. Among other things, the youth committed themselves to achieve the following:



*“A united America, one which guarantees social justice, a peaceful environment and respect for human rights, where equal opportunity exists for comprehensive development, allowing youth to help decrease poverty through an active participation as key actors in public policy, where society and government have accepted this commitment to guaranteeing an America with a more dignified quality of life.”*

The youth leaders presented the declaration in its entirety during the **XII Summit of First Ladies, Wives and Representatives of Heads of State and Government of the Americas**, whose theme was “Youth and Poverty”. The summit was held October 15 and 16 in Dominican Republic. For more information, go to <http://www.xiiconferencia-primeras-damas.gov.do>

## IMAN Project

Well aware of the fact that youth are the leaders of tomorrow, and that their health is of concern to society as a whole, the PAHO Child and Adolescent Health Unit's adolescence team has created Project IMAN: *Integrated Management of Adolescents and their Needs*. The project will offer a comprehensive package of successful interventions in the health and development of adolescents and youth. The project is made up of **three components** covering the risks and prevalent diseases in this age group: Health services, development of human resources and interventions in families and communities. Focused on determinants of health, gender and risk and resiliency factors from a population approach, IMAN's goal is to improve the quality of health care for all youth, but especially those with few resources, both social and economical.

## What's New...

•XV International AIDS Conference, Bangkok:  
<http://www.ias.se/aids2004/>

•XI Meeting of Latin American Social Communication Departments (in Spanish): [www.felafacs.org](http://www.felafacs.org)



# Links

•Youth empowerment and tobacco control:

[www.americanlegacy.org/section.asp?Location=content/programs/research/define\\_youth.asp](http://www.americanlegacy.org/section.asp?Location=content/programs/research/define_youth.asp)

•PAHO HIV/AIDS/STI Unit: [www.paho.org/aids](http://www.paho.org/aids)

•YouthNet YouthLens Newsletter:

[www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/YouthLens+English.htm](http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/YouthLens+English.htm)

## Youth Participation: First Person Accounts

The youth leaders who met in Dominican Republic last July work in a variety of youth-targeted projects in their countries.

One of the participants, Sergio Sánchez of Bolivia, works with planning and management strategies in the Office of the First Lady, supporting a network of health-oriented youth organizations in La Paz. According to Sergio, the diversity of languages, cultures and areas of expertise of each participant in the Americas Youth Voice meeting did not stand in the way of them coming together to contribute and support youth demands through strategies such as forming a regional youth organization to ensure that international agreements protecting youth rights are carried out. He considered the work group to be highly effective, but points out that, despite the fact that the historical liberators and revolutionaries of Latin America were young people, youth have lost their place in the formation of policies that affect them, a trend that must be halted.



Of a similar mind is Lisa Yifan, the representative from Canada. A student at the University of Toronto, she is extensively involved in community-based projects, and feels that youth can provide a valid and genuine perspective to the often abstract process of legislation. She adds that, in order for the youth declaration to have any effect, youth need the support of entities such as their schools and organizations they work with. Lisa also suggests a mutual monitoring system be set up between youth and legislators to integrate the declaration in new policies, raise public awareness and examine progress periodically. Both participants agree that a better integration of youth in future meetings with country leaders, giving them greater opportunity to work and reflect on the issues at hand, will increase the chances of success in similar events.

## Research Shows...

### Youth Empowerment and Tobacco: Lessons Learned for HIV Reduction in Youth

Youth empowerment has been a successful strategy in decreasing adolescent tobacco use in the U.S., according to a 2003 Academy for Educational Development (AED) study: "When Florida teens embarked on a 'truth campaign' to reduce teen smoking, early teens' tobacco use dropped by 19 percent in one year—the first decline in nearly two decades. That's what can happen when teens lead." Something to keep in mind when working with youth to decrease HIV infections. For more information about the AED study, visit [www.aed.org/youth/youth\\_empower.html](http://www.aed.org/youth/youth_empower.html).

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**Family and Community  
Health Area**

**Child and Adolescent  
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