



Statement from the Global Young People Living with HIV Consultation Amsterdam, June 2010.

We, the participants of the Global Young People Living with HIV (YPLHIV) Consultation, came together in Amsterdam in June 2010, to discuss priorities within the YPLHIV community. Thirty five YPLHIV from over thirty countries from all regions of the world attended the consultation.

Through this consultation we learned that HIV-positive young people (aged 15-30) have a diverse set of concerns, some common and some not and a diverse set of needs some general and some specific. Addressing these concerns and needs requires a coordinated effort that respects our diversity. We firmly believe that a safe and supportive environment for YPLHIV around the world is needed for us to effect changes in our own lives.

Over the three days of the consultation we identified the following areas that need to be addressed as priorities:

Empowerment: The empowerment of YPLHIV requires urgent attention: our voices and our concerns are still unheard in many areas of the world. The ongoing empowerment of YPLHIV is crucial to create an atmosphere of opportunity that will ensure a sustainable movement of YPLHIV. The skills and experiences of previous leaders in the YPLHIV movement are of critical importance and of equal importance is the need to develop new leadership. We recognise the progress that has been achieved in the past and we must build on this and continue to develop our own agendas. Strong leadership in the YPLHIV community will foster a supportive and conducive environment for other young HIV-positive people to come forward and speak out.

Disclosure: For a young person living with HIV to be empowered and engaged in the HIV response, they must be able to exercise their human rights to the fullest. However in many settings our rights to confidentiality and privacy cannot be realised due to restrictive policies and laws and institutional discrimination. The issue of **if, when, how and to** whom to disclose our HIV status is a personal decision that must be respected. We must have all the elements necessary to create a safe and conducive environment for these rights to be realised and all the support we need to build our own skills and manage our own disclosure strategies.

Diversity: Being a YPLHIV does not mean that we necessarily share the same needs and desires as each other or our older counterparts. Beyond our age specific diverse needs YPLHIV represent a diversity in our sexuality, culture, religion, gender and age from a youth perspective. We are not a homogenous group, nor can we be treated as one.

Continuum of Care: We strongly believe that YPLHIV need a continuum of

comprehensive and accessible services that help us to live a safe, healthy and positive life, during the period of continuing development from childhood to adulthood. This continuum must recognise the different points at which we enter HIV care – from VCT from a health care provider to disclosure from a care giver for perinatally infected young people to our health care in general. There is a real need for specific psychosocial support for our emotional, mental and sexual and reproductive health needs as they change through different stages of our young lives through to adulthood. With the support of many partners we can make sure that this is a reality for all YPLHIV.

Greater and More Meaningful Involvement: We recognise the importance of our participation in the PLHIV community at national, regional and international levels and call upon networks of PLHIV to work with us to ensure that the challenges we face in our communities are addressed and with our full involvement. At the same time we must ensure that the community of YPLHIV has its own space to network, gain skills, share experiences and develop in a safe, supportive and sustainable way.

The partnerships and collaborations with youth initiatives and youth led organisations is essential to ensure we can contribute to advocacy agendas that can bring change to our lives. Moreover we have unique skills and experiences that can strengthen and enhance all aspects of the HIV response for young people: prevention, treatment, care and support. In particular we feel we have valuable contributions we can make to all HIV prevention efforts.

During the consultation we elected an advisory group, from the participants, to engage with the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and the World AIDS Campaign (WAC), in a guidance capacity to support the development and implementation of a programme by YPLHIV for YPLHIV. The Advisory Group will also have the role of keeping the community of YPLHIV in all regions connected with the YPLHIV programme, sharing information among the community and maintaining strong communication among as broad a group of YPLHIV as possible.

We call on all stakeholders: donors, governments, multilateral agencies, civil society, youth led and serving organisations, national and regional networks of people living with HIV and other affected communities, and service providers to hear this call and respond with support and guidance for our community, so we can effect change in all our lives.

This is the challenge of our time and is also the opportunity of our age!

“Nothing for YPLHIV without YPLHIV”.

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