

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE FUNDING: SPECIAL FOCUS: YOUTH

MTV's Staying Alive Foundation, HIV Young Leaders Fund, and the Washington AIDS Partnership

In July 2010 new data revealed that HIV prevalence among young people (ages 15-24) is dropping in many key countries.⁴⁵ According to UNAIDS, these declines are largely due to falling new HIV infections among young people, a possible outcome of changing sexual behaviors across the world. Still, with an estimated five million young people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, it remains one of the most vulnerable populations affected by AIDS worldwide. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently underscored the importance of the youth movement within his top recommendations for achieving Universal Access to HIV treatment, prevention, care, and support by 2015.⁴⁶

In 2010, youth ranked as a top target population among both domestic- and international-focused private HIV/AIDS funders. This feature shares just a few of the innovative strategies – including core support, technical assistance and volunteerism – that funders are using to mobilize and develop young leaders in the global response to HIV/AIDS.

STAYING ALIVE FOUNDATION

MTV established the Staying Alive Foundation (SAF) in 2005 to build on its commitment to tackle HIV prevention and stigma through its Staying Alive Media Campaign. With the mission to encourage, energize and empower young people who are involved in HIV/AIDS awareness, education and prevention campaigns, SAF makes grants to organizations that are run by and for young people (ages 15 to 27). To date, SAF has done this by awarding financial grants and personal support to 304 youth-led organizations in 61 countries around the world.

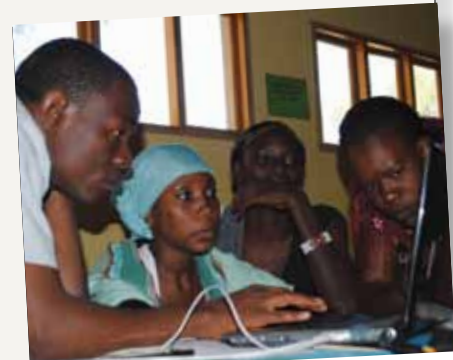
In October 2009, with support from ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action program, SAF launched a new Training and Development Program⁴⁷ designed to build stronger

and more sustainable grantee organizations. Conducted over four years (the length of a full grant cycle), the program includes a residential (in-person) workshop, a virtual grantee network (*Staying Alive Connected*), and continuous learning through e-courses, grantee exchanges and work placement. The first phase (Year 1) of the program focuses specifically on strengthening grantees' organizations, including building skills in project management, fundraising, and monitoring and evaluation. The second phase (Year 2 and onwards) focuses on strengthening these skills through continuous learning as well as demonstrating the benefits of cooperation, networking and sharing lessons.

A total of 56 people from 28 grantee organizations based in 21 countries across Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe have taken part in seven residential training workshops, including most recently in London, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Naivasha, Kenya.

In addition to building individual and organizational capacity, the workshops also focus on helping grantees to build relationships and partnerships. *Staying Alive Connected* is introduced at each workshop as a forum for grantees to continue to foster these relationships and engage in mutual learning and support.

In the past twelve months 64 young people have taken part in five e-courses that offered additional learning opportunities within political advocacy and project management. By both helping grantees see the



Staying Alive Foundation grantees during a residential training workshop in Kenya, April 2011.

45 Outlook Breaking News: Young People. UNAIDS. 2010. Available online at: data.unaids.org/pub/Outlook/2010/20100713_outlook_youngpeople_en.pdf

46 UNAIDS Press Release. UN Secretary-General outlines new recommendations to reach 2015 goals for AIDS response. 3/31/2011. www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2011/march/20110331prsgreport/

47 Learn more at www.viivhealthcareeffect.com/tour-our-programmes/staying-alive.aspx

connection between their current work and advocacy, and also by helping to develop their voice and confidence, the advocacy e-course serves as an essential tool in helping grantees become leaders in their own community.

The final stage of the program is currently underway and involves grantee exchanges and work placements. Most recently grantee exchanges have taken place between organizations in Malawi, Uganda and Kenya. The expected long-term outcome is that a natural network of powerful, well-functioning youth-led organisations that have experience working together, will be well positioned to take on joint youth-led research, policy and advocacy initiatives, as well as ongoing capacity building collaborations and partnerships in program delivery.

"Ensuring the development and sustainability of your grantees is a smart way to leverage your investment into long-term results."

– Sara Piot, Director of Grants, Staying Alive Foundation

HIV YOUNG LEADERS FUND

The HIV Young Leaders Fund (HYLF) recently entered the field in 2010 as a new funding mechanism that allows young people to fully govern and direct substantial funding to youth-led initiatives that focuses on, and enables leadership among, young key affected populations. In July 2010 HYLF announced its inaugural grantees representing 23 organizations from 19 countries. HYLF aims to close the gap in youth-led HIV initiatives

through supporting peer services, advocacy, and community mobilization by organizations of young people (30 years and younger) who are often excluded from or unreached by existing programs, including: young sex workers, young people from sexual minorities, young people who use drugs, young people living with HIV, and young women, depending on the context. HYLF is governed by a global Steering Committee that includes 11 young members from 11 countries representing different affected youth communities. Funding decisions are made by regional peer review panels to ensure regional expertise drives grant decisions. The HYLF has been supported by the Ford Foundation, John M. Lloyd Foundation, UNAIDS, New Venture Fund, Positive Action of ViiV Healthcare, the United Nations Population Fund and private donors.



Importantly, HYLF supports activities underfunded by existing funding mechanisms, including core funding for youth-led HIV initiatives. By providing this funding option, HYLF hopes to address a common problem youth-led initiatives face, which is that often donors want to fund short-term projects (not core costs). Many youth-led initiatives end up being unable to meet their basic needs, such as paying staff salaries or renting office space, and they are unable to become sustainable over the long run. By enabling grantees to strategically build and protect their organizational capacity, they are better able to amplify their mission and build a long-term movement. Some grantees, such as the Male Attitude Network in Nigeria, have leveraged core support from HYLF into new support from other donor sources. Often, donors are more willing to fund a youth-led organization after it has been able to establish a successful track record of attracting and managing other grant resources. HYLF also recognizes that certain young people were still left out of important conversations, and not visible in terms of advocating for what they need to create a better HIV response. Many of these groups are young people who face very high levels of stigma and discrimination in their communities on a daily basis, and are not reached through general "youth" HIV programs. As a small grants program—with grant sizes ranging from \$1,500 to \$20,000—HYLF is able to quickly mobilize, and thus grow, the leadership of most affected youth communities working at the grassroots level.

"HYLF's core funding goes straight to build the capacity of youth-led organizations... at the rate we're going, I'm sure we can build our capacity to a level where we can apply to much bigger grants to eventually scale-up the services we provide."

– HYLF Grantee Oliver Anene, Male Attitude Network in Nigeria

Due to the demand their launch created among youth-led organizations globally (they expected 500 applications, and received close to 3,000), HYLF has decided to take a regional approach in 2011-2012, and is focusing on three priority regions, as well as continued support to existing grantees. HYLF's priority regions are: Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and West and Central Africa. HYLF also seeks to connect the knowledge of grantees with the broader HIV response, and is currently participating in the development of a soon-to-be-released UNAIDS youth strategy. HYLF continues to advocate that funders and

other stakeholders not consider youth as one distinct population, but instead, think of youth comprehensively when addressing key affected populations (i.e. within MSM, transgender, sex worker or drug user populations).

WASHINGTON AIDS PARTNERSHIP

The Washington AIDS Partnership (the Partnership), an initiative of the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, is the largest private funder of HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and advocacy services in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region, awarding over \$1 million annually. The Partnership invests resources in local organizations to improve HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, and care services in the Washington, D.C. region. The Partnership also provides technical assistance to local organizations, and facilitates local public policy initiatives to improve the HIV/AIDS system of prevention, testing, and care.

In Washington D.C., home to the highest HIV prevalence rates in the United States, 1% of young people ages 13-24 are living with HIV.⁴⁸ The Partnership has a strong tradition of supporting young people living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS in the D.C. area, providing more than \$700,000 to local youth-serving organizations and programs in 2010 and 2011. In addition to essential operating support, the Partnership also funds projects that range from HIV prevention education for area LGBT youth and female condom promotion among young D.C. women of color, to public policy and organizing work to improve HIV/AIDS and other sexual health-related policy affecting D.C. youth.

Another important effort of the Partnership is their recruitment and mentoring of a team of young people who commit to a year of full-time volunteer service at local nonprofits as AmeriCorps members. A renowned national program, AmeriCorps provides youth volunteers with a small monthly stipend and educational benefits in exchange for a year of service. The Partnership has served as a site of the AIDS United AmeriCorps program for the past 15 years.

Every year, a group of 12 volunteers are assigned to local organizations providing HIV/AIDS services where they work four days a week. While at their host site,



The 2009-2010 AmeriCorps team during a two-day HIV testing and counseling event at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in D.C.

members provide HIV testing and counseling services in the community, conduct HIV prevention education and outreach, and provide care services such as meal delivery, case management, and hospice care. Once a week, the AmeriCorps members work together on a joint service project benefiting the community, such as local health fairs and park clean-ups. In 2011-2012, the dollar value for the 2011-2012 team's services is estimated at \$360,000, a significant resource brought to the community. When thinking about their year of service, a former Partnership AmeriCorps member noted that: "Many of the women we work with are facing unbelievable and seemingly insurmountable challenges—poverty, homelessness, joblessness, drug addictions, criminal convictions, histories of domestic abuse, etc.—and we are often coming into their lives at the point when they have reached rock bottom. It is tremendously inspiring to be a source of knowledge and support for my clients and to watch as they create real and lasting change in their lives."

"Not only does the AmeriCorps program bridge serious staffing needs at many local organizations, but it has given us the opportunity to develop future leaders in the health field. Our past members are now doctors, lawyers, social workers, public health officials and service providers working in the field of HIV/AIDS."

*— Channing Wickham, Executive Director,
Washington AIDS Partnership*

48 Metro TeenAIDS Issue Brief, May 2009. metroteenaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/mta_issue-brief_apr09_57_3.pdf