

World YWCA - Women Creating a Safe World at the XVIII International AIDS Conference Rights Here – Right Now

Vienna July 18 - 23, 2010

1. Introduction

The XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) will take place in Vienna July 18 - 23, 2010. Organised by the International AIDS Society (IAS) it is the largest and most comprehensive HIV and AIDS conference in the world. The World YWCA is a member of the Conference Coordinating Committee (CCC) representing women, young people and faith-based organisations and was also part of the CCC for the 2008 Mexico conference. As part of the planning committee, the World YWCA has worked to ensure that women and girls are integral to all aspects of the conference agenda.

The theme for AIDS 2010 is **Rights Here – Right Now**. It is clear that the global AIDS response will not succeed unless human rights are implicit in all advocacy, programming and services. The theme of this conference is timely, as AIDS 2010 will take place six months before the 2010 global target for universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention, care and support.

The International AIDS Conference is developed by hundreds of people working in collaboration to address global issues relating to HIV and AIDS. The information sharing is enormous and possibilities of engagement are endless. The World YWCA intends to build on involvement in AIDS 2008 and support women, especially young women and positive women to meaningfully participate in the conference, benefiting from the immense opportunity that this conference offers to change lives, shift perceptions, and increase knowledge and advocacy on HIV. As one of the largest women's organisations in the world and the convenor of the International Women's Summit on Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS (Nairobi 2007), the World YWCA is committed to supporting and encouraging women's bold leadership on HIV and AIDS at AIDS 2010 and beyond.

2. Global Context

Globally, women comprise about half of the 33.2 million people living with HIV and in every region of the world, the number of women contracting HIV is on the rise. Moreover, young women are increasingly vulnerable to HIV, with roughly 45% of all new infections occurring among 15-24 year olds. In some regions, young women aged 15 to 24 years are 2.5 times more likely to be infected than young men. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV due to biological factors, inadequate knowledge about HIV and AIDS, insufficient access to prevention services, a general lower status in society and a lack of female-initiated HIV-prevention methods. The danger of infection is highest among the poorest and least powerful members of society, which includes girls and young women. It is also exacerbated in situations of armed conflict where women and girls are likely to experience sexual exploitation, violence and hunger. In order to address these inequalities and reduce women's vulnerability to HIV, strong leadership is required at all levels—especially from women.

Vienna's location offers proximity in linking Eastern Europe and Central Asia. AIDS 2010 will be organised in partnership with the Government, scientific and civil society partners in Austria and international partners from civil society and the United Nations. Throughout history Vienna has been known as a crossroads between Western and Eastern Europe. This conference provides an opportunity to look specifically at the challenges facing the emerging epidemic in Eastern Europe in the context of hardest hit regions around the world and the overall global response.

According to UNAIDS, an estimated 150,000 people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were newly infected with HIV in 2007 bringing the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the region to 1.6 million. This compares with 630,000 PLHIV in 2001, an increase of 150%.

AIDS 2010 could have great impact at an international, regional and national level. Internationally there is an opportunity to hold leaders accountable given that AIDS 2010 will take place six months prior to the deadline for universal access targets and five years prior to the Millennium Development Goals deadline. With the theme Rights Here, Right Now, there are opportunities to increase treatment and prevention and make stronger links to all human rights and show how support for HIV programmes has strengthened the health care systems. Regionally there is a need to engage Western Europe and Central Asia, especially Russia. This is crucial given that 65% of people are infected through drug use and only 3% have access to harm reduction programmes. Building a bridge between the north and south of Europe will be equally important. Austria also currently does not contribute to the Global Fund and AIDS 2010 has the potential to influence leaders in the Austrian government to change this. Additionally this conference hopes to address the homophobia and xenophobia that exist in Austria.

3. World YWCA Response to AIDS

The World YWCA is a global volunteer movement of women leading social and economic change in over 120 countries worldwide. Founded on Christian values but working with women of many faiths, the World YWCA has been at the forefront of raising the status of women for over a century by advocating for peace, justice, human rights and care for the environment. The World YWCA equips women, including young women, to provide leadership to find local solutions to the global inequalities women face.

HIV and AIDS has been the World YWCA's priority issue for nearly a decade. In 1987 a World Council resolution on AIDS outlined issues around ignorance, awareness and prevention and stigma. The resolution resolved that "the World YWCA Council urges national YWCA to establish programmes providing preventative health education on the subject of AIDS". The World YWCA has extensive expertise and global programming on HIV and AIDS with YWCAs in over 70 countries implementing programmes on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV. The World YWCA's principal challenge is to sustain the current leadership and mobilise new leaders to respond effectively to the challenges HIV and AIDS pose for women and girls. With an outreach of 25 million women and girls, the World YWCA must strengthen partnerships and programmes with and for women and girls in order to ensure continued leadership in the response to HIV. The World YWCA was founded on the Christian faith and uses these principles to address HIV from a rights based approach and uses its Christian identity to address stigma and discrimination.

The World YWCA Global Strategy on SRHR and HIV 2008/9 – 2011/12, focuses on the following four areas:

- Building leadership and strengthening capacity, especially with young women as champions and leaders around SRHR, HIV and violence against women (VAW)
- Providing comprehensive prevention
- Creating safe, secure and inclusive spaces for women, young women and girls
- Ensuring quality monitoring and evaluation of YWCA programmes around HIV and AIDS.

4. World YWCA Preparatory Outreach

As the convenor of the International Women's Summit, 2007 and as a member of the CCC, representing women, young people and faith based organisations, the World YWCA has made a concerted effort to work with and reach out so that women have a more coordinated approach.

On September 5, 2009 in Berlin, leveraging the existing NGO Forum, a meeting was organised by The Foundation for Studies and Research on Women (FEIM) and the World YWCA to strategise around developing a framework and action plan for the involvement and coordinated participation of women in AIDS 2010. The purpose of this meeting was to develop a more strategic voice and approach for women at the conference, ensuring that the collective voice and solidarity of women will provide a more effective response for all women and girls.

In addition to supporting the global women's movement the World YWCA also supports YWCA women leaders from member associations to fully participate at AIDS 2010, building on from World YWCA participation at AIDS 2008. This commitment has been implemented by:

- a) Leveraging existing World YWCA training to implement sessions on effective participation in AIDS 2010. World YWCA outreach on AIDS 2010 was part of World YWCA Regional Training Institutes (RTIs) in 2009. The trainings included a half-day session on the conference and how to get involved in a substantial way. RTIs took place in the Caribbean - May 2009, Africa - June 2009 and Asia and the Pacific - August 2009.
- b) Promoting AIDS 2010 through communication products and by expanding existing YWCA networks and programmes. Promotion of AIDS 2010 to member associations and partners through expanding World YWCA web training materials and communications on writing abstracts.
- c) Offering technical support for YWCAs to enable participation in AIDS 2010. Technical support will be given to YWCAs so that they can document successful project models and prepare well-written abstracts that are likely to be accepted by reviewers. The World YWCA will also support online conference profile creations, registrations, and scholarship applications for increased involvement in AIDS 2010. The World YWCA will also facilitate communications with all member associations who were part of AIDS 2008 outreach and will also support their abstracts development and submission.
- d) Enable a delegation of 20 women to attend the conference, of which most will be young women and some HIV positive.

5. World YWCA AIDS 2010 Strategy

In Mexico, the World YWCA was involved in over 50 different sessions at both the Ecumenical pre-conference and during AIDS 2008. These included facilitating various workshops, hosting a satellite session, speaking on and chairing panels and plenary sessions, speaking at the women and girls march and rally, participating in the Women's Networking Zone and engaging with conference delegates at the World YWCA booth. Delegates also strategised and caucused regionally as well as met with multilateral and donor organisations and partners. Evaluation of the World YWCA participation at AIDS 2008 recommended active participation at AIDS 2010 but in a more strategic way.

Building on the World YWCA participation at AIDS 2008 the World YWCA objectives for AIDS 2010 are to:

- Share the work of the YWCA on SRHR and HIV and AIDS with the global AIDS community
- Influence the policy debates and impact programmes at the country level, though highlighting local perspectives to ensure women's voices from communities are heard at the international level
- Ensure capacity building by widening knowledge and understanding of successes and challenges in HIV programming
- Build on the momentum of the International Women's Summit in Nairobi, AIDS 2008, Regional AIDS conferences and to promote the International Women's Summit on "Women Creating a Safe World" to take place in Zurich in 2011.
- Make young women and HIV positive women visible in the conference

6. World YWCA Advocacy and Key Messages

The World YWCA's advocacy and key messages will focus around human rights and continue to channel the global focus on Universal Access. It is essential to continue to advocate for the following:

- For Universal Access to be universal the rights of young women and women living with HIV must be upheld.
- Invest in HIV comprehensive prevention strategies, that are grounded in sexual and reproductive health and rights and that address violence against women
- Ensure that all AIDS responses promote and build on young women's leadership
- End stigma and discrimination

7. World YWCA Activities and Events at AIDS 2010

a. Youth Pre Conference, July 14 – 16, 2010

The 2010 **Youth Pre-Conference** constitutes a youth oriented 3-days event, which aims to provide 300 delegates with the opportunity to network and connect with their peers prior to AIDS 2010, as well as provide youth attending the conference with technical information and skills for effective participation. The Pre-Conference is organised by the Youth Programme of the International AIDS Society and the Vienna YouthForce. All World YWCA delegates that are under 26 years of age will attend the first two days of this meeting.

b. World YWCA Consultation, July 16, 2010

The World YWCA will hold a one-day consultation and training for YWCA representatives on July 16. The objectives of the session are to provide an opportunity to:

- Share successes and challenges relating to YWCA work on HIV in a safe space
- Develop a World YWCA delegation participation plan for the conference
- Build advocacy skills for effective interaction and engagement at the conference
- Ensure that the delegation has a clear understanding of the conference programme
- Demystify the conference programme including bridging sessions, abstracts and how they are used, the Global Village and the importance of plenary sessions
- Build skills on how to network and track contacts made and the importance of following up after the conference.

c. Multi Faith Pre-Conference, July 17, 2010

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, churches in Vienna and partners around the world will join in planning for a one-day Multi faith Pre-Conference. The aim of the event is to learn from and contribute to the global response to HIV and AIDS, through sharing experience and engaging actively in AIDS 2010. The pre-conference will provide an opportunity for participants to explore the challenges HIV and AIDS poses to people of faith, evaluate action taken and plan strategies required to put faith into action in the AIDS response. The World YWCA delegation will participate in this one-day meeting.

d. AIDS 2010: July 18 – 23, 2010

Abstracts

The World YWCA has been working with the YWCA movement to support the development of abstracts that will be submitted for oral and poster presentations at AIDS 2010. An online video introduction and training on abstracts has been prepared and disseminated throughout the World YWCA movement and partners. Through the World YWCA regional programme directors, technical support will be given to member associations whose abstracts are accepted in order to prepare presentations.

Scholarship Applications

The World YWCA will encourage women – especially young women and HIV positive women to apply for conference scholarships through the conference secretariat. The World YWCA will also support a delegation of twenty three women, most of whom will be young women aged 30 or under in July 2010 as well as women living with HIV members of the YWCAs, through an internal scholarship process. For more information on this visit www.worldywca.org

e. World YWCA Satellite Session

**WANTED: Comprehensive Solutions for All Women
Empowerment + Safety + Information = Prevention**

Given that HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect women and girls in most regions of the world, a gender sensitive response must invest in changing the social, cultural and economic factors that put women and girls at risk. YWCAs are ideally positioned to provide safe and inclusive, non-judgmental and confidential spaces for women and girls to discuss and disclose challenges

they face in SRHR, HIV and AIDS, and VAW. It is vital that all women, irrespective of HIV status and age have access to evidence informed information, support and comprehensive services as they face issues relating to SRHR, HIV and AIDS and violence.

Today, over 15 million women are living with HIV¹. An estimated two million women living with HIV become pregnant annually², but less than 35% have access to medication that reduces chances that their infant will be born HIV positive. And only a small fraction of the women who need Antiretroviral to save their own lives have access. Numerous reports of human rights violations of women living with HIV who want to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights have been reported.³ Today one in three women have experienced some form of violence.

Satellite Session Focus

The satellite session will focus on bringing all of these issues together allowing for better linkages to be made between SRHR, HIV and VAW. The satellite session will inform participants on:

- Defining the concept of safe spaces for women and girls
- Why comprehensive prevention is critical today
- Create linkages between SRHR, HIV and violence against women and how to progress AIDS responses that take all the challenges women face into account. Is it possible for organisations to do this and not have a single-issue focus?
- Address how this work is funded.

The World YWCA is seeking partners to co-host and support advocacy on comprehensive prevention for SRHR and HIV that includes VAW. The World YWCA will partner with organisations representing civil society, non-governmental organisations, the United Nations, foundations and faith-based groups.

f. Satellite Session Supported by the Ford Foundation

An Intergenerational Conversation: Does The Struggle For Realising The Human Rights Of Women Still Matter To Young Women?

Supported by the Ford Foundation, the International Women's Health Coalition, World AIDS Campaign and World YWCA, are organising and hosting a satellite session. This satellite session follows on from two previously held sessions that the World YWCA has facilitated in Bali at the Regional Training Institute as well as at the 54th Commission on the Status of Women. This session will identify the challenges facing young women, as well as opportunities for action, with key leaders of the United Nations system as well as leaders from other sectors included in the discussion. The session intends to raise issues and debate how key UN agencies and governments are setting policy and implementing programmes that address the priorities of young women, especially young women living with HIV over the next 10 years.

The objective: To generate strong political will and commitment from stakeholders of diverse sectors for ensuring the rights of young women, especially positive young women, and engage in quality intergenerational conversation around how all young women are impacted by HIV, sexual rights and reproductive health, violence, and the importance of diverse young women

¹ UNAIDS, 2008b

² Maria de Bruyn, 2008

³ Human Rights Watch, 2004; Feldman and Masopha, 2003; Vidal et al., 2004).

playing active roles in the response. This is also important at a time where there is stronger recognition of the inter-section of the issues. By bringing the voices of young women as leaders, we are also calling for accountability around guaranteeing the human rights of women and girls and creating imperatives of action now and for the future.

The approach: The event is intended to be an informal conversation, moderated by a skilled person who ensures that participants engage with one another and the audience in a mutually respectful and affirming manner. It will be co-moderated by two persons, a young woman and a head of UN agency.

There will be seven people engaged in leading the dialogue (young women, young women living with HIV, UN representatives, and government officials, all from different regions, diversity of age and social status). These key persons will lead the conversations; then the space is opened to the audience, still maintaining an inter-generational perspective and on the sexual and reproductive health, HIV, and human rights of young women. The panellists will then be given time to wrap up or give some comments. A summary of the conversations and succinct recommendations and action points that can feed into our programmes and activities will be developed at the conclusion. This space will be to engage in crucial conversations, identification of challenges, and strategies for action.

g. World YWCA Exhibition Booth

Safe Spaces for All Women

The World YWCA exhibition booth in the Global Village (GV) of the International AIDS Conference in Vienna will allow AIDS 2010 participants to meet with YWCA women from around the world.

As the GV is open to the public, many people from Vienna and the surrounding areas will visit the GV. The World YWCA booth will provide an opportunity to showcase the work of the World YWCA so that IAC delegates and visitors understand this dynamic movement and its work on SRHR and HIV around the world. The booth will also allow conference participants, visitors and YWCA women to network and connect with each other. These important connections and discussions will ensure that the global community engages around women's concerns, especially European women's issues, and linking these to global concerns.

As the conference can be an overwhelming space, delegates will also be able to simply rest in what the World YWCA delegation will ensure is a 'safe space' for women. The booth will also creatively explore what the World YWCA understands to be a safe space for women, young women and girls and will use creative methods to get conference participants and visitors to contribute their ideas.

World YWCA resources such as training manuals, the World YWCA Common Concern magazines, brochures, publications, documentaries and the Nairobi 2007 Call and Pledge to Action on HIV and AIDS will be available at the exhibition booth.

h. Our Bodies, Our Rights: Young Women's Forum on SRHR

The World YWCA believes young women's leadership is central to addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic and will host a Young Women's Forum on SRHR to unite young women involved

in the conference. The purpose of this Forum is to provide a safe space where young women, especially young women living with HIV and young women with diverse sexual identities, can reflect and discuss the issues that will be addressed at AIDS 2010 such as SRHR and linkages to HIV and violence against young women. This forum will also offer an opportunity to ensure young women's participation at the event is coordinated, engaging and valuable so that they are able to get the most out of the conference.

The Young Women's Forum will be run over two half days; starting at the beginning of AIDS 2010 to share expectations, strategise on participation, gauge understanding on SRHR knowledge and identify advocacy opportunities and techniques for young women. At the end of AIDS 2010, the same young women will reunite and share outcomes of the conference to reevaluate their expectations and put forward recommendations to the next CCC as well as to the World YWCA as part of the broader strategy and vision for the International Women's Summit in Zurich, Switzerland in 2011.

In order to ensure that young women are represented from each region of the world, the World YWCA will work with its implementing partners in the AIDS 2010 World YWCA Reference Group and beyond⁴ to invite them to suggest two young women, from different regions, who will be a part of their delegation able to participate in this forum. This forum will also be open to other young women delegates who are not officially invited and can also be used as a space to caucus.

8. World YWCA Delegation

The World YWCA will support a delegation made of representatives from the World YWCA movement, members of the Board and World YWCA staff. The delegation will include 23 women from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

Member associations will be asked to complete a form expressing interest to participate in the conference. The World YWCA will support members not already being supported to attend the conference through any other means. HIV positive and young women are especially encouraged to apply. Selection will be based on the following criteria. All delegates should:

- Be a young woman, 30 years or under in July 2010 or an openly HIV positive woman
- Be members of the YWCA
- Be able to speak and work well in English, as there is limited translation only into Russian in a few sessions.
- Be engaged in community work relating to HIV and/or AIDS at the local or national level
- Commit to full participation and be present and active during all the meetings
- Act as a resource person for the World YWCA. Women are expected to support the YWCA delegation with assignments and staffing the World YWCA exhibition booth
- Be accountable to the movement (when at the conference and upon returning home, sharing information and skills with your association)
- Provide the World YWCA office with information on your association, before the meeting
- Submit a report within two weeks of return.

⁴ Athena Network, International Women's Health Coalition, Foundation for Study and Research on Women, Women Wont Wait, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Lutheran World Federation, World Student Christian Federation, WCC, World Alliance of YMCAs, YWCA of Zurich.

9. Outcomes

A strong presence of YWCA women at AIDS 2010 will ensure that:

- Women and girls remain on the global agenda in the push for Universal Access to be achieved
- Build on member associations leadership and expand young women and community women's leadership to effectively respond to HIV
- Increased YWCA capacity for effective HIV programming - emerging issues and new strategies reach community women and challenge YWCAs to build and improve their HIV and AIDS programmes
- Community women's and young women's voices from at least five regions are heard at the international level
- The priorities of the World YWCA Global Strategy on SRHR and HIV and AIDS are promoted at the international level
- Enhanced networks and partnerships developed with other organisations addressing HIV and AIDS and women
- Implementation of YWCA regional strategies on SRHR, HIV and violence against women.

10. Communications and Publications

- a. Leading up to Vienna, World YWCA messages will be disseminated through a number of electronic products such as:
 - Press releases and communiqués
 - Statements released before and during the conference
 - World YWCA monthly Electronic Bulletin
 - Women Voice – World YWCA weekly news.
- b. The World YWCA website will be an important tool in creating awareness and focusing attention on women and girls in the run up and during AIDS 2010. In Mexico, the World YWCA website had nearly 2000 unique visitors on the first day of the conference and the month of August, when the conference took place - saw the most activity yet for the website, with over 100,000 pages viewed.
- c. Another successful learning from Mexico was the branded banners, posters and YWCA t-shirts that many delegates wanted to wear. This was a great way of ensuring the World YWCA messages were visually captured and the profile of the brand raised. If funding allows, the same will be prepared for AIDS 2010.
- d. The World YWCA will also take to Vienna current publications that are prepared for Vienna such as:
 - The Common Concern – June issue, which will focus on achieving comprehensive prevention within the context of achieving Universal Access beyond 2010.
 - A short video available on DVD developed by the World YWCA.
- e. The World YWCA will ensure that following the conference a report is available on the World YWCA participation, including lessons learned and recommendations.

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