

# Let's Go!

Power to Change Fund update | June 2010

## Dear Friends,

Since mid-2009, when direct grant making to YWCA member associations began through the World YWCA Power to Change Fund, 49 exciting and empowering projects have been successfully implemented by YWCAs around the globe.

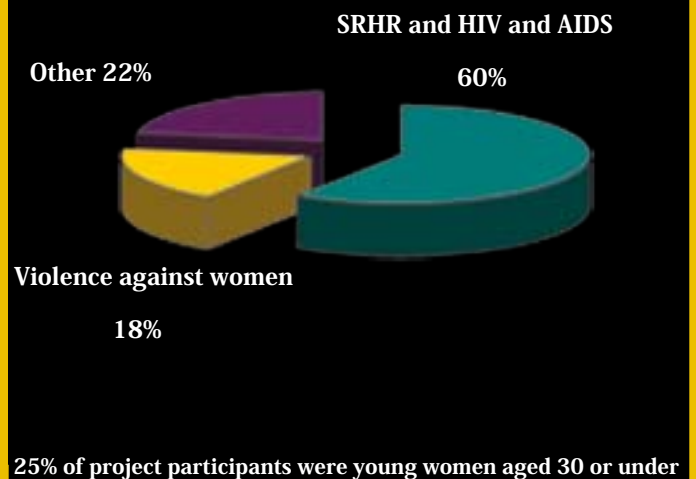
The Power to Change Fund provides support for innovative leadership programmes developed by YWCA member associations that give women and girls the power to change their lives and communities.

Projects are funded for a one-year period, for a maximum of USD 25,000, with the possibility of one renewal. This "seed funding" enables associations to demonstrate their skills and to develop projects for submission to other funders, or to achieve self-reliance for the project.

Each year, USD \$125,000 of income from the World YWCA Leadership Permanent Fund is allocated for Power to Change country-specific projects, and this amount leverages additional contributions from many partners. An additional USD \$125,000 is used for global advocacy and programmatic work coordinated through the World YWCA Office.



### Power to Change Fund projects April 2009 to March 2010



April 2009 - March 2010  
grants made to  
49  
YWCA projects  
for over  
USD 750,000



## Commitment to leadership of women and girls

The YWCA of Belize has caught the imagination of the community and the media, nationally and internationally, for their innovative approach of using barber-shops/beauty salons as resource centres for HIV and AIDS education and dissemination. This project addresses the increasing rate of HIV transmission and is being expanded to include violence against women, distribution of condoms, advocacy advertisements on local radio and follow-up training.

Through two one-day retreats, the YWCA of Belize also plans to increase young women's recruitment efforts and advocacy and provide capacity building skills for the YWCA of Belize Board and staff. Within a year, the project should reach 200 women, 125 young women, 75 men, and 200 children.

## Advocacy and leadership

In addition to grant making for member associations, the Power to Change Fund has continued to contribute to global advocacy, leadership training of individual women and policy development. Work supported through the World YWCA has:

### 1. Addressed women's rights

At the 2010 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the World YWCA had the largest delegation ever – 49 women from 19 YWCAs. Many women attended CSW independently as members of national delegations or representing other organisations, but they came together as YWCA women and were involved in over 100 events. Highlights included hosting an Intergenerational Conversation on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV and AIDS and violence against women, and presenting a panel on peace with justice, where the YWCA's of Sudan, Palestine and Sri Lanka shared their work, stories and impressions on progress. A Young Women's Caucus was co-facilitated by the YWCA, and the World YWCA Resolutions Committee proposed and influenced the CSW wording of the resolutions on young women's concerns. The YWCA was seen everywhere. As one YWCA member put it: "the YWCA was highly visible, credible and diverse in all our presentations".

## Girls Building Bridges in the context of HIV and AIDS

In Angola, extreme poverty often obliges young girls from 11-17 to prostitute themselves, rather than go to school. As a result, these girls are more prone to contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and have little or no understanding of the risks incurred. A YWCA programme in Luanda allowed 60 young girls to better understand HIV and AIDS and other STIs and how to prevent them.

Two women pastors, a nurse, a policewoman and a school principle shared their experience and motivation with the young girls at two forums, and a psychologist, a gynaecologist and a specialist in sexually transmitted infections participated in a debate on sexual rights. In addition to addressing these issues, the programme has also helped build the girls' self-confidence, made them aware of the importance of education, and inspired them to contribute to society.

## Improving sexual and reproductive health of women

In collaboration with partner organisations, the YWCA of Peru implemented a programme in Lima and Callao – the areas with the highest incidence of HIV and AIDS – to educate women on their sexual and reproductive health and rights and to promote the use of the female condom to help prevent sexually transmitted infections.

14 women, 4 of them under 30, attended workshops organised around these core issues. An awareness campaign was implemented and some 1000 information guides were distributed in the community and at conferences. Information on and access to female condoms were provided and 12 women received gynaecological care. All phases of the programme are ongoing.



## Awareness training on women's health, HIV and AIDS, and condoms

Over recent years the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Nepal has gained ground particularly among women and young women. The awareness training project led by the YWCA of Nepal attracted 23 enthusiastic participants, mostly young women aged 30 or under, and some from remote areas of the country. In addition to becoming aware of their own reproductive health and rights and being guided where to go for information on these matters, these women could also share their newly acquired knowledge about HIV and AIDS, the use of condoms and other health issues with their families and community.



## Know your Rights!

120 women, including 75% aged 30 or under, participated in three one-day workshops run by the YWCA of Ukraine on human rights, gender stereotypes and civil society, and a two-day training on the development of communicative skills. These women are now equipped to participate in advocacy processes that build civil society and help resolve gender problems in their communities. They have also gained new skills to apply at home, in the workplace, and in governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Over the next six months, training on democratic leadership will be held, as well as a round-table where participants will share ideas on the project's dissemination. The project will reach 200 women - 100 of them young women - and at least 10 men.

## 2. Provided leadership opportunities and capacity building

In 2009-2010, the World YWCA convened Regional Training Institutes (RTIs) in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia and the Pacific under the theme "Women Creating Safe and Secure Communities". A total of 286 YWCA members, including 83 young women, joined one of the RTI in 2009, contributing to the long-term visioning of the movement, by developing regional strategies on sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and AIDS and violence against women. In all RTIs, the power of young women leaders was evident. A Young Women Leaders' Dialogue pre meeting allowed them to discuss in a safe place their issues of concern and develop recommendations for the regional strategies. In 2010, RTIs will be held in Europe, Middle East and Latin America.

Funding also supported 38 young women from 18 member associations from the Asia and Pacific region to meet in Melbourne, Australia for the "Our Bodies, Our Rights: Young Women Leading Change in Asia Pacific" conference in December 2009. Participants took part in skills sessions and a panel engaged them in dialogue with women working with sex workers, injecting drug users and young women living with HIV. "I think the change has to begin with me. I have to begin the initiative. I cannot wait for others because it is my responsibility. I am responsible for the girls and women in my community," said Sarah Arumugam from the YWCA of Sri Lanka at the end of the leadership training.



Sources of income include income from the capital of the Leadership Permanent Fund and additional support for Power to Change projects comes from a range of partners and from individuals (via their national associations and through online or other direct donations) to the World YWCA.

Supporting partners include: YWCA member associations and individuals; AusAID; German Church Development Service (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst - EED); The Ford Foundation; Women's World Day of Prayer, German Committee; Horyzon (Switzerland); The David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Oak Foundation; SUPPORT for female condom training; UNDP; UNFPA; UNICEF and UNIFEM. Through the Women's Funding Network, we share experiences and skills with similar women's funds.

The heart of the YWCA movement is about leadership and empowering women and young women to champion change in their communities, as well as to help create safe and secure spaces that protect the rights of all women. Our principle focus for the coming year will be on the International Women's Summit (IWS) and World Council 2011 – to be held in Zurich, Switzerland, from July 10-16, 2011. IWS will bring together some 1000 women from all horizons and continents to reflect on the theme 'Women Creating a Safe World', to share progress on Power to Change projects and the work of YWCAs around the world, and to meet with partners and participate in skills building and business sessions.

Empowering women and young women through education and skills building is the primary goal of YWCAs, and through your support to the Power to Change Fund, we can continue to meet this goal in 125 countries.

Your continued commitment and belief in the World YWCA purpose is special and we genuinely appreciate your support.

We thank you.

Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda  
General Secretary, World YWCA

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