



# IF IT'S TEEN, IT'S LATE - REACHING THE WINDOW OF HOPE

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## Background:

Young people all over the world are vulnerable in this era of HIV/AIDS. Although they form over 30% of Ghana's population, they are not meaningfully involved in programmes that concern them. The African Youth Alliance (AYA) program is designed to increase young people's knowledge of reproductive health and sexuality issues and to build developmental skills that enable adaptation of safe sexual practices to reduce HIV and STD infections and prevent unwanted pregnancies. The program is designed and implemented through a partnership between UNFPA, Pathfinder and PATH and is being implemented in four countries – Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda.

## Program Description:

The programme uses

- An enter-educates strategy to reach out to in school young people between the ages of 10 to 14.
- HIV/AIDS game developed by AYA Ghana,
- A youth advocacy magazine popularly as GHAYA,
- BCC materials such as the junior graphic a national dailies for young people,
- Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana's leaflets on HIV/AIDS among others for interactive group discussions.
- Videos and role-plays for visual impacts.

Once the first groups are empowered enough, they are encouraged to "reach out" to other young people both in school and out of school

## Results / Findings:

- Student have reported that because of the knowledge gained, on HIV/AIDS they have signed a self contract to abstain from sex until a particular of age
- The programme started with 100 students but now has 1070 of young people with 800 in school and 270 out of school
- Students reported that the game developed by AYA is their source of information on HIV/AIDS
- They also said the GHAYA magazine and the PPAG leaflets are their source of information on ASRH laws and policies

## Lessons and Recommendations:

- Using young people to reach out to other youth on issues of sexuality and HIV/AIDS is the most effective way of interpersonal communication.
- The earlier the information is given out to the very young people the more confident and assertive they become.
- It is recommended that a youth-friendly mechanism be developed to assess the progress of young people in term of behaviour change.

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