



**The Power of e-Advocacy and Young Africans for an Improved  
HIV/AIDS Policy Environment**  
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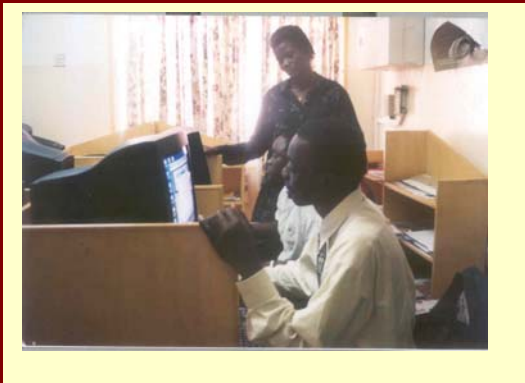
**Background:**

It is obvious that the HIV/AIDS programmes for young people in most African countries have inadequate and supportive policy environment. Many well-designed HIV/AIDS programmes have failed to achieve their objectives because these policies are either non-existent or where they exist, they are not implemented. The African Youth Alliance, which is a collaborative effort between three organisations, UNFPA, PATH and Pathfinder International, has a programme area designed with focus on policy formulation, review and implementations and has a strategy of meaningful youth involvement which gave birth to the “**e-advocacy**” for ASRH/HIV/AIDS.

**Program Description:**

The programme,

- Targets individuals, groups and networks of young Africans linked with UNFPA-supported youth and ASRH/HIV prevention programmes
- uses the Internet as a medium to discuss HIV/AIDS policies, laws, programmes and issues that are of concern to them
- Both young and old are encouraged to use this technology
- The programme gave birth to a network within UNFPA “Africa Division Youth Advocacy Network – “ADYAN” for communication between and among African countries
- Members of ADYAN are linked together through an e-mail list-serve.
- Capacity Building workshop for youth leaders



**Results / Findings:**

- The strategy reached a wider range of young people as they participated in the “e” discussions without any limitation.
- The strategy is cost effective
- It has initiated a revolution of attitudinal change among the target group in the use of ICT
- It served as a source of information gathering for young people in radio and TV programmes in their respective countries.
- Donors and countries have given recognition to ADYAN members as they are invited to meetings and conferences
- Strengthened young people’s capacity in HIV/AIDS programming

**Lessons and Recommendations:**

- The involvement of young people in policy and advocacy work has helped policy makers to include young people’s concerns in policy documents.
- The “e-advocacy” has brought together young people in Africa to present a common front as they discuss their issues to be presented at conferences well ahead of time to reach a consensus.
- It is recommended that critical to the operation of any such strategy is information technology, particularly Internet access hence this should be integrated into the capacity building programmes for young people.
- That all youth centres should be equipped with free Internet access to facilitate their advocacy efforts.

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