ABOUT THE IATT

on HIV and Young People

The Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV and Young People was established in 2001 to enhance the effectiveness of the global response to AIDS in relation to young people. The main purpose of the Task Team is to foster a joint accelerated, harmonized and expanded country-level response aimed at increasing young people’s access to and utilization of HIV prevention, treatment and care services. UNFPA is the convener of this Task Team, and at the time that these Global Guidance Briefs were developed, membership of the Task Team was limited to the UNAIDS Secretariat and the ten UNAIDS Cosponsoring Organizations. In May 2008, the IATT was expanded to include partners from civil society, academia, youth networks/associations, the private sector and the development partner community.

For further information on the IATT on HIV and Young People, visit: http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/iatt

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Young people are at the centre of the global HIV epidemic. It is estimated that 5.4 million youth are living with HIV. In 2007, about 40 per cent of new HIV infections among people 15 and over were in youth from 15 to 24 years of age. Despite the high numbers of young people living with HIV, insufficient priority is given to preventing future HIV transmission among this population group. Many of those who are HIV-positive face considerable stigma and discrimination, with inadequate access to health and social services or livelihood support.

In 2001, governments declared that “by 2005, at least 90% and by 2010 at least 95% of young men and women, 15-24, would have access to information, education including peer and youth-specific HIV education and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection”. Yet as of 2007, only 40 per cent of young men and 36 per cent of young women had accurate knowledge about HIV, showing that even basic HIV awareness programmes have had inadequate reach.

Purnima Mane
Deputy Executive Director
UNFPA

There is some progress but it is not adequate. It is essential that we sustain the efforts being made as well as scale up the response. In recent years, the UNAIDS Secretariat and the ten UNAIDS Cosponsors have sought to strengthen their technical support to national AIDS programmes and extend partnerships to national leaders and governments, development partners, researchers, non-governmental organizations, associations of people living with HIV and other stakeholders—especially young people. Towards this end, the Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV and Young People has developed a series of Global Guidance Briefs to help United Nations Country Teams and UN Theme Groups on AIDS provide guidance to their staff members as well as governments, civil society and other implementing partners on the specific actions that need to be in place to respond effectively to HIV among young people. We hope that these Briefs will be useful at the country level to accelerate the response.

Michel Sidibe
Deputy Executive Director
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Foreword

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