



## Let young people most affected by HIV shape the future of UNAIDS

We have all been stunned at the recent news from the Global Fund, that Round 11 has been postponed and the signing of many Round 10 grants be delayed. The impact that this has on the HIV response could be devastating. Reaching 15 million people living with HIV with treatment by 2015 is now unlikely to become a reality. Ensuring that new infections among young people are halved by 2015 is now unlikely to become a reality. UNLESS - we act now to support and strengthen existing structures to shape and drive the HIV response to meet all of our needs. **Lets start taking collective action.**

In launching the CrowdOutAIDS platform, UNAIDS Executive Director, Michael Sidibe highlighted *“It is absolutely critical that we engage young people—not as recipients of our messages but as the actors and creators of change.”*

UNAIDS are currently developing their New Generation Leadership (NGL) strategy and in order build a sense of greater ownership and buy in from young people, they decided to crowd-source a part of this process, i.e. let any young person from anywhere around the world share their opinions, their experiences and their needs to help shape NGL strategy.

CrowdOutAIDS has created a unique opportunity for young people to shape and feed into the way in which UNAIDS engages and supports young people and coordinates the HIV response to meet the needs of those most affected. However, unless those most affected are actually engaged meaningfully in this process, it can never achieve its objective. We all have a responsibility to take this opportunity and make the most of it and help shape the future of the way UNAIDS works alongside young people.

Before we can even hope to input into a strategy, young people must be equipped with a clear, understanding of the following:

- What does UNAIDS want to achieve through this process?
- What would a strategy for UNAIDS look like? What is the role of UNAIDS in the HIV response?
- How young people best work with the framework above to provide much needed direction and support to UNAIDS in this process.

The Y+ programme and the MSMGF Youth Reference Group would like to try to answer some of the above questions and call on each of our communities: young people living with HIV, and young men who have sex with men and other young key affected groups to meaningfully participate in this exciting initiative.

Firstly UNAIDS is intent on achieving 3 things with the CrowdOutAIDS approach:

1. Creating a sense of ownership among young people living with HIV of their NGL strategy

2. Developing a strategy that is based on real needs, experiences and opportunities, by identifying the key obstacles and facilitators to young people from different communities from effectively engaging with the HIV response.
3. Fostering of and development of new collaborative relationships between youth networks, communities of young people most affected by HIV and UNAIDS to strengthen the HIV response.

Secondly, we must be clear about what UNAIDS is and what UNAIDS is not. UNAIDS is not an implementor or a donor. UNAIDS is a facilitator, a coordinator, a knowledge manager and an advocate.

- UNAIDS facilitates processes at the national level, such as National AIDS Strategy development, Global Fund proposal development. In particular, UNAIDS provides spaces and support to civil society, specifically communities of people living with HIV and those most affected by HIV to ensure they are meaningfully participating in such processes.
- UNAIDS coordinates the global AIDS response, through its mandate to support and guide the cosponsors in each of their unique roles.
- UNAIDS is a knowledge manager. Through its annual epidemic updates, based on national level reporting mechanisms, UNAIDS is in a position to provide accurate data to support civil society's advocacy efforts in holding governments accountable.
- UNAIDS advocates through the provision of guidance notes, policy papers, technical support and other mechanisms. UNAIDS are leaders of the HIV response, in the sense that they provide up-to-date, relevant, evidence informed guidance to national level processes.

We must be clear about how we want UNAIDS to use its mandate, listed above to meet our needs. We can't tell UNAIDS to provide more condoms, or give more money for needle exchange programmes. However, through CrowdOutAIDS platform we use this to articulate our needs and guide UNAIDS to provide the support, the evidence, the coordination and the leadership that young people most affected by HIV need to be effective actors in the HIV response.

Thirdly we need to provide, concrete, practical and realistic recommendations that UNAIDS will be able to work with in the development of their strategy.

**Such recommendations could include:**

1. **Be the strongest and bravest advocate for fully financing the Global Fund, as the most effective means of reaching millions of people with services who need them most.**
2. Develop a clear mechanism that UNAIDS can use to identify frequently provides support to young people – but these decisions are not transparent nor prioritize the needs of those most affected.
3. Facilitate better and more frequent dialogues (both formal and informal) between youth movements and networks of KAPs and YPLHIV at national level, regional and global levels (to be more collaborative and draw on each others strengths rather than compete for funding and opportunities). The youth movement is disjointed and often competing with itself. UNAIDS should prioritize support to greater collaboration.

4. Facilitate and support the participation of young people most affected by HIV in CCMs, NACs, PCB, GFATM board etc. UNAIDS play critical broker roles on Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms and National AIDS Councils and Global decision making processes. The voices, capacities and contributions of these groups are much needed in these spaces, UNAIDS can do a lot.
5. Support the gathering of evidence at national/ and global level of epidemic data relevant to young people most affected by HIV which allows them to hold their governments accountable. UNGASS indicators must reflect the realities of an adolescent living with HIV failing to adhere to treatment, or a young MSM failing to access condoms and lubricant.
6. Young people from key affected populations need information about laws and policies that affect them, in order to advocate and to know what implications they have on their lives. UNAIDS has a responsibility for making this information available and accessible.
7. UNAIDS must institutionalize the involvement of young people from key affected populations – mechanisms and structures need to be in place to support this, which connect young people on the ground to UNAIDS Country Offices and then to UNAIDS Headquarters.

## Next steps

### ***SO HOW DO WE PROVIDE OUR INPUT NOW?***

While the online discussions have now ended, UNAIDS is still looking for input into their CrowdOutAIDS initiative through “Offline Meetups” from young people. We have 2 weeks to have discussions amongst ourselves, in our organizations, in our networks and with our peers. UNAIDS have provided a guide for these meetups:

<http://www.crowdoutaids.org/crowdoutaids-meet-ups/>

and then a template for reporting back to UNAIDS

[http://www.crowdoutaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/CrowdOutAIDS\\_ReportingTemplate\\_v1.0.doc](http://www.crowdoutaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/CrowdOutAIDS_ReportingTemplate_v1.0.doc)

for completing and submitting your reports.

The template for reporting is quite general and we must make sure that our priorities are reflected in UNAIDS final strategy – and this could be one of the few ways of achieving this.

Send your completed templates to [njl@unaids.org](mailto:njl@unaids.org)

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Garner [agarner@gnpplus.net](mailto:agarner@gnpplus.net) or Daniel Townsend [townsend.daniel@gmail.com](mailto:townsend.daniel@gmail.com)