

Under the title 'Pan-African Youth Forum: AIDS, a matter of education' , young people from 43 African countries and the largest international youth organisations in Africa met in Dakar in March 2004 to discuss responses to HIV/AIDS. Some 300 young people and 40 experts analysed existing national HIV/AIDS action plans and prepared Alliance strategies to implement alongside national plans. Participants represented the 'Big 7': the 7 of the largest youth movements working in Africa: Scouts ; Girl Guides ; YMCA ; YWCA ; Red Cross ; International Award Association ; International Youth Foundation . Together, these groups reach 20 million young Africans, and another 200 million through families and peers, in all African countries.

One of the people attending the Youth Forum was Ousseina, who describes the Forum below (this case study is from Voices of Youth , the youth-led discussion and action forum):

'My name is Ousseina. I'm 14- years old and I live in Niamey, Niger. I'm a Girl Scout and I am trained as an HIV/AIDS peer educator. UNICEF Niger helped us in the peer education training we received. It lasted 5 days over the Easter holidays in 2001. I was trained along with 60 other young people from different regions in Niger. I was 12 years old at the time and was the youngest person trained! Now, I help teach other young people in small groups about HIV/AIDS awareness, transmission and prevention. Some of them are older than me ... up to 17-years old! But they listen to me. I lead them through discussions, guided by questions in the handbook we have. It was prepared by the National Programme on AIDS and UNICEF Niger.

Some young people think AIDS is just a way to discourage lovers, but after we talk, they find out that it's a very real problem in Niger and that young people are the most affected. The best way to fight AIDS is for us young people to talk with and teach each other. We know what we're talking about! During the Forum, we also learned about other ways to teach people, like teaching life skills and using rap songs to pass messages on HIV/AIDS.'

At the Youth Forum in April, hundreds of young people established national level HIV/AIDS action plans. Would you like to get involved with these organisations and find out more about their HIV/AIDS work together? To find out about their joint work in the fight against HIV/AIDS click [here](#). For more information on the the 'Big 7'; the alliance between the organisations click [here](#).

