

ATHENA MENTORSHIP STRATEGY

ATHENA's mentorship strategy has been has been evolving, expanding and developing over the last three years, combining leadership, advocacy, capacity building and different levels of mentorship including:

Mentorship and institutional support from ATHENA – including providing structure, program, facilitation, terms of reference, financial, logistical and technical support, networking and linkages to partners and allies to create as rich, meaningful, and sustainable experience as possible, as well as direct mentorship and capacity building provided by ATHENA team members

Peer mentorship among young women living with HIV, cutting across-language, country, region, and experience; in conference settings young women support one another to navigate and make the most of the conference experience; in community dialogues peer engagement, sharing, and exchange is a powerful tool for transformation

Inter-generational mentorship – utilizing our networks to link younger/newer young women advocates with older/more experienced women living with HIV specifically

Cross-movement mentorship – utilizing our networks to link young women living with HIV to women from related movements – the LGBTI movement, sex worker movement, and women's rights movement more broadly.

Recognizing the dearth of avenues open to young women to engage meaningfully in the HIV response, ATHENA has utilized a number of different approaches and partnerships and opportunities to:

- build the capacity of young women living with and affected by HIV to become stronger advocates for young women's rights in the context of HIV;
- raise the voice, visions and visibility of young women living with HIV and from key affected populations;
- create and expanding spaces for young women living with HIV and from key affected populations to meaningfully engage in decision making and actions which affect their lives; and
- develop adaptable and sustainable models of mentorship (peer, inter-generational, cross-movement).

**STRONG
PROUD &
BEAUTIFUL**

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Specific strategies and approaches which make up the Young Women's Leadership Initiative include:

- **Supporting young women to engage in national, regional, and international policy fora**, including conferences on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), family planning and related fields. Through pre-event mentoring, daily debriefings, attendance at conference plenary sessions, and participation in events organized by and for HIV-positive women, these endeavors have enabled young women to engage with global and regional research and policy agendas, and catalyze longer term working relationships
- **Engaging and supporting young women living with HIV and from key affected populations** as country focal points to shape, inform and implement in-country project work
- **Supporting young women living with HIV and from key affected populations to conduct and participate in community dialogues** both to inform national and international policy advocacy, and also to provide space for exchanging stories and sharing experiences, and developing advocacy priorities
- **Engaging young women on global reference groups alongside more experienced women living with HIV activists** to ensure young women's perspectives are heard and influence the project
- **Advocating for and supporting the participation of young women** living with HIV and from key affected populations in capacity building workshops
- **Utilizing the Women's Networking Zone and other ATHENA-led spaces** to platform young women's leadership, showcase their initiatives, and raise their visibility
- **Ensuring the supported and mentored participation of young women** living with and affected by HIV in panels and side-events.



ATHENA



HISTORY AND TIMELINE OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

2011

JUNE: IAS HIV Pathogenesis Conference, Rome. ATHENA, Salamander Trust and Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) support the participation of 20+ young women living with and affected by HIV from around the world, with a focus on Eastern Europe.

YWLI 2011 participant Helena Nangombe (Namibia) now sits on the UNAIDS Dialogue Platform for women living with HIV, writes a regular blog, and is a tireless advocate for the SRH of women living with HIV and a leading activist in the Namibia Women's Health Network's campaign to end coerced and forced sterilization of women living with HIV.

DECEMBER: ICASA, Addis Ababa.

ATHENA and the National Network of Positive Women Ethiopians with support from GCWA coordinate a YWLI for 10 young women living with HIV, 5 from Ethiopia, 5 from across Africa.

YWLI@ICASA 2011 co-coordinator Hereni Melesse is now an ATHENA team member supporting the Link Up partnership in Ethiopia and our focal points in Ethiopia, Uganda and Burundi, with language support, facilitation, mentorship, and advocacy.

JULY: International AIDS Conference, Washington DC. ATHENA and GCWA support the participation of 10 young women living with HIV, 5 from USA, 5 from across the world.

YWLI 2012 participants Ayu Oktariani (Indonesia) and L'Orangelis Thomas Negron (Puerto Rico) went on to speak at AIDS2014, Melbourne; Ayu in the opening session, and L'Orangelis in the Wednesday daily plenary. YWLI 2012 participant Cierra Foxx spoke at UNAIDS events during the UN General Assembly in 2011.

2012

MARCH TO PRESENT: ATHENA supports young women living with HIV to be focal points in the five countries of **Link Up**.

2013

APRIL TO JUNE: ATHENA focal points convene **Community Dialogues** among young women living with HIV in their communities to explore key issues, share experiences and learn from one another.

Findings from the Community Dialogues have gone on to inform Link Up policy advocacy strategies in all five countries, as well as global policy advocacy and national programming.

NOVEMBER: International Family Planning Conference (IFPC), Addis Ababa.

ATHENA supports the participation of 2 young women from Ethiopia, and 2 from Uganda in mentor-mentee relationships.

A Think Tank event piloted at Addis Ababa and coordinated and led by the YWLI participants on the eve of the IFPC has provided a model for youth engagement in strategy development in the Link Up countries.

DECEMBER: ICASA, Cape Town. ATHENA, AIDS Legal Network (ALN) and SAN! support the participation of 9 women from Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi and South Africa to participate in the Women's Networking Zone at ICASA.

YWLI participants from Uganda and Ethiopia were also supported to participate in a Women4GlobalFund gender workshop, and have subsequently co-convened and facilitated a youth pre-conference to develop a charter of priorities of issues affecting young people from key populations.

2014

OCTOBER: HIVR4P (HIV Research for Prevention) conference, Cape Town.

MARCH: Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), New York. Building on the YWLI@ICASA, ATHENA, ICW, ALN supported the participation of young women from South Africa and Uganda to participate in the CSW, with support from Sonke Gender Justice.

The ICASA2013-CSW2014-HIVR4P2014 forms a new thread of advocacy with a strong focus on the theme of "From Criminalization to Agency".

FEBRUARY: Africa Sexual Health and Rights Conference, Yaounde. Nadia Ndayekeza, ATHENA's focal point from Burundi, was supported to attend, with mentorship from Yaounde-based team member.

Nadia Ndayekeza (also a participant of YWLI @ ICASA 2013) has developed a youth-led and -driven pilot program to increase access to and utilization of female condoms by and for young women living with HIV in Burundi, on the basis of findings from the Community Dialogue she convened among young women living with HIV in 2013.

2015