

**XIX INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONERENCE HUB
ABUJA NIGERIA**



**Bringing the momentum, expertise, and materials from the
XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) home.**

**OROL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE
REPORT
ON
XIX INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE
HUB**

THEME: Putting an End to HIV and AIDS

**IN CONJUNCTION WITH AIDS 2012
HELD IN ABUJA,
ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2012
AT BOLTON WHITE HOTEL**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The conference hub team remains thankful to the AIDS2012 organizer, International AIDS Society-IAS, for their support towards the Conference hub. We are also grateful to; Federal Ministry of Health, and National Agency for the Control of AIDS-NACA Management Sciences for Health –MSH, pact Nigeria, Society for family Health –SFH, Nigerian Export and Import Bank-NEXIM, USAID, AIDS Health Care Foundation-AHF, AIESEC, Challenge future Nigeria, Catholic relief Services-CRS, Association For Reproductive and Family Health-ARFH, Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS-GYCA, Noble Mission for Initiative Change-NMI, fhi360, UNFPA- Condomize Campaign, gede foundation and Centrifuge for their financial and technical support towards the AIDS 2012 Conference hub held in Abuja Nigeria.

Also acknowledged is the great work done by our team members, Nwamaka Ifionu, Oyedeji Folayan, Opeyemi Agbaje, Adedeji Adegboyega, Charles Onwuka, Ogwuche Boniface, Oluwagbohun Oluwakemi, Agubata Obiageri and others

We commend the support from National Youth Service Corps, Corps Members and all our dedicated volunteers.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 22-27, 2012 brought with it what will be another international exposure for OROL youth empowerment initiative. Following the submission of an abstract, 2 OROL members were awarded full scholarships to attend the renowned International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC. Grateful for the opportunity to showcase OROL to the world, Opeyemi Agbaje, and Nwamaka Ifionu set out for Washington DC, USA, clad in their attention stealing OROL T-shirts.

The conference Global Village was the happening spot for all things 'edutainment', and all things OROL. Perhaps the highlight of AIDS 2012 for us was our very own OROL presentation. OROL showcased a theme relevant drama at the conference, and needless to say, we were deemed the budding 'Nollywood stars'. The plot of our drama told the story of a young lady who had lost her parents at a tender age, thus losing her financial support and relegated to street hawking, vulnerability, and ultimately the HIV status. The drama aimed at stimulating thought processes amongst its audience, and sparking new conversations on the other faces of the HIV epidemic. In true Nigerian fashion, our presentation was well attended and talked about afterwards and we made the Conference daily bulletin.

The XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) presented new scientific knowledge on the major issues facing the global response to HIV. OROL was approved to host an AIDS 2012 conference hub to strengthen the local HIV and AIDS response in Nigeria, to create new opportunities for partnership, and to disseminate the latest research to our communities. At our hub we screened clips from the international conference, followed by moderated presentations and discussion sessions led by local experts in the field.

Our expectations were simply that sharing the science, knowledge and evidence from AIDS 2012 with our community and constituents would empower us to "Turn the Tide Together". The conference hub was organized in Abuja, after the main conference in Washington DC, and our primary target were young people in and out schools, and development workers who were not able to attend the international conference. It created an avenue for young people and leaders to learn new ways of addressing the issues of HIV and AIDS in Nigeria. The organizers and audience shared mutual understanding and experiences of different points of view in addressing the issues of HIV and AIDS affecting young people.

Our conference hub was a unique opportunity to build professional capacities among our local stakeholders and help strengthen the local HIV response, potentially leading to the development of a comprehensive plan for future action at local or regional levels. For all things fun, educative and **free...HUB VILLE** was a place to be where CBOs/NGOs/ INGOs such as SFH,

gede foundation, ARFH, OROL, NASCP, pact Nigeria, NMI and OROL exhibited and showcased their programming areas, and the work they do in Nigeria. FREE onsite HIV Counseling and Testing was made available at HUB VILLE by AIDS Health Care Foundation. The HUB VILLE was officially opened by the Managing Director of Society for Family Health, Sir Bright Ekweremadu.

The overall aim of the conference hub was to expand the reach of the AIDS2012 Washington, DC conference through presentations, workshops, discussions and film screenings culled from AIDS2012 yet replicated in line with Nigeria's response to "Turning the Tide" on HIV/AIDS. The hub featured an eclectic mix of sessions, from the academics to 'edutainment'. The 1st season of the MTV 'Staying Alive Foundation' series **SHUGA!** was screened at the end of the sessions and workshop.

CONDOMIZE STAND (Condom promotion and distribution) was another exciting spot at the exhibition hall (HUB VILLE) where a group of young people (OROL Members) held poses with condoms, dancing, making art work such as condom badges and hair clips, creating a "want to know phenomenon" amongst passersby, while promoting the appropriate use of condoms as a prevention tool.

The Conference Hub recorded a high influx of attending participants totaling 206, out of the 273 prospective participants that registered online.

INTRODUCTION

OROL is a youth led empowerment initiative that advocates for the sexual and reproductive health of Nigeria's youth. In OROL we strive to empower young people to lead change and our activities cut across education, social activities and advocacy for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. OROL's thematic focus includes; capacity development, youth leadership, human rights advocacy, gender equity and youth empowerment. OROL is an affiliate member of some international organizations such as Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA), Global Youth Action Network, Taking it Global, and International Youth Rise. In addition, OROL established in 2009 is also nationally registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission and Civil Society for HIV/AIDS in *Nigeria (CiSHAN)*.

In July 2012, OROL was given the opportunity to attend the XIX International AIDS Conference



held in Washington DC. Following the submission of a performance based abstract, the stage was set at the AIDS2012 Global Village, to host OROL youth empowerment initiative, in a drama titled "HIV Is Just A Status". Our drama was very well received, and as we had expected, it launched an immediate discussion with the audience, on

their take on the plot, as well as alternatives for PLWHA. More exciting than our performance for us was that we made the conference daily bulletin, the day following our presentation. With its rich array of academic sessions, exhibitions, film screenings, workshops, and more offered at AIDS2012, OROL made a mental note to replicate the same, if even on a minute scale, for the benefit of those who did not have the opportunity we had been given thus the birth of the Abuja AIDS2012 Conference Hub.

BACKGROUND

OROL Youth Empowerment Initiative brought the momentum, expertise, and materials from the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) home. The OROL Youth Empowerment Initiative organized the Abuja International AIDS Conference to strengthen the local HIV and AIDS response in our area, to create new opportunities for partnership, and to disseminate the latest discussions to our community. The Conference focused on “Awareness and Zero tolerance on AIDS”. The theme of the Conference hub was **Putting an End to HIV and AIDS**.

On hand to grace the conference were representatives from:

- Pact Nigeria
- NACA
- Society for Family Health (SFH)
- Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
- Federal Ministry of Health
- Fhi360 through gede Foundation
- Catholic Relief Service(CRS)
- AIDS Health CARE Foundation
- Noble Mission of Change Initiative (NMI)
- Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH)
- NEXIM BANK
- Global Youth Coalition (GYCA)

As scheduled, the programme commenced at exactly 8: 00 am with the registration of participant and



volunteers. In total, there were 206 registered participants in attendance, 183 who pre-registered online, and 23 who registered on-site. Following registrations, the ceremony commenced with an opening prayer led by Timothy Zakka of Pact Nigeria. Thereafter, Amaka Ifionu of OROL took centre stage assuming the role of the moderator.

ON SITE REGISTRATION



GOOD WILL MESSAGES

First in the series of Goodwill messages was Mr. John Onyeukwu - Deputy Chief of Party-ADVANCE, representing Dr. Audu Liman – Country Director for **Pact Nigeria**. He commended the host organization for the initiative taken in putting such an event together, and pledged on behalf of Pact Nigeria; that



they will continue to dutifully play their part in Nigeria's HIV/AIDS response. Next up was Mr. Isa Mohammed, the Coordinator – Association of Positive Youths Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (**APYIN**). He gave a brief description of his Association, admonished participants to 'get tested and know their status', and applauded the hub organizers for the gift of

an event such as the hub. He also encouraged participants to make the best of all the event had to offer. A brief interlude followed Mr. Isa's speech, during which Former President, Bill Clinton's address at AIDS2012 Washington DC was screened for the audience's viewing pleasure.

Still in opening the ceremony, the Coordinator of The National AIDs & STDs Control Programme (**NASCP**), Dr Mrs. E Ngige was ably represented by the Deputy Director of the same, Mr. Segilola Araoye In his presentation he spoke briefly on the role of the agency he represented, while emphasizing the need for pro-active measures by the Youths in tackling HIV/AIDs in Nigeria. He also reiterated the



continued support of his agency in the campaign against HIV/AIDs as well as the support of youth initiatives to do same.

NEXIM Bank's Managing Director, Mr. Roberts U Orya was also represented by the bank's Head of Planning and Strategy, Mr. Tayo Omidiji in a goodwill message. He urged the youth to key into the vision of OROL YEP. In his brief remark, gave a brief description

of the prevalence of HIV/AIDs in Africa with particular reference to Nigeria and stressed the need for the continued effort, whilst commending the activities of OROL towards the HIV response and the conference hub.



The Managing Director of the Society for Family Health (**SFH**)- Sir. Bright Ekweremadu also graced the ceremony with a brief remark. He touched on visionary leadership, and the power of the young mind. He closed out with the reiterated support of SFH towards promising youth based programmes.



To round off the opening ceremony, the Executive Director of **OROL Youth Empowerment Initiative** Mr. Opeyemi Agbaje took the listening audience on a mental journey back to the early days of the OROL we have come to know, its programming effort through the years, and the events that have culminated in the gathering of the day. He thanked

all present, and admonished them to make the best of the day's activities. Thus ended the opening ceremony, and without skipping a beat, the technical sessions commenced.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

(Session 1): “Decentralization of Treatment, Care and Support Services” was presented by Dr. Emeka Asadu, Head: Treatment, Care and Support Services, NASCP.

In this session, up-to-date strides in HIV treatment, care and support in Nigeria were highlighted; HCT, ART, PMTCT, and other diseases were discussed. He spoke extensively on the activities of the division and also the need to decentralize HIV treatment, care and support services. He concluded with the question “what should be the role of today's youth in the process of decentralization? Following Dr. Emeka Asadu's presentation, the hall came alive with the opening of the first part of the question and answer segment. In this segment, participants were allowed to ask their questions to the presenter, and responses were given accordingly.

(Session 2): “Combination HIV prevention intervention: Can they work?” was presented by Dr. Olufemi Fayewa of SFH.

This session addressed the combined behavioral/biomedical interventions and their corresponding effects in addressing HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

Dr Olufemi emphasized the need to combine biomedical, behavioral and structural interventions whilst tailoring the intervention method to suit the particular target group. She gave an overview of HIV/AIDS and the prevalence rate to stand at about 1.7 million (4.1) in Nigeria with Benue rating highest. During the presentation, She brought to limelight what prevention programmes should combine. These are:

- Biomedical
- Behavioral
- Structural interventions based on epidemiological and demographic data.

Biomedical intervention she said, includes: ART, PMTCT and injection safety programs, male circumcision, availability/access to male/females condoms and lubricants, HCT, blood safety/positive health dignity and prevention (PHDP), PrEP and PEP. On behavioral interventions she noted that these are activities to encourage most at risk populations to reduce risky behaviors and entrench protective

behaviors. Amongst these are social mobilization and individual behavioral changes through communication. Structural is all about creating an enabling environment through addressing key social, political and religious issues. The hall came alive again with the introduction of the comments and observation segment as participants were given the opportunity to make their own contribution, as well as seek clarification.

(Session 3) “Getting to Zero: Community Style” was anchored by Yemi Atibioke (Mr.) of the Association for Family and Reproductive Health-ARFH. This session involved a panel presentation which included two discussants in the persons of Barr. Ngozi Uzoegwu of Management Sciences for Health (MSH) and Dr. Banjo Adetayo of Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

The first panelist, Barr. Ngozi Uzoegwu made reference of the strategies MSH employs in its efforts towards getting to zero. The second panelist, Dr. Banjo Adetayo detailed a description of the activities of the CRS in Nigeria and its involvement in the “Getting to Zero” strategy. He concluded by telling the youths to get involved as part of their contribution towards “Getting to Zero”.

Following the panelists, Q&A ensued with the first question was asked by one of the participants named Tayo. He wanted to know how what measure(s) MSH has taken or is taking to ensure the confidentiality of PLWH in view of stigma and discrimination. The next question was asked by participant Remi from Akure, who wanted to know what measures the agencies were taking towards the empowerment of commercial sex workers in a bid to reduce the risk of spread through such means. The third respondent sought further stressing on the issue of confidentiality as it pertains to community initiated programs/intervention, thus concluding the third Q&A session.

(Session 4): “Young and restless youth leadership” was presented by Catherine Abbah, resource mobilization manager Noble Mission for change Initiative (NMI). This session centered on the youths/ young people who have gradually become more recognized and effective as forces for positive change in the epidemic, and the often forgotten dynamism and energies of youth leaders and networks.

In her presentation, she stressed that young people should be at the forefront of the fight against this epidemic, and that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as well as government agencies, should support youth led initiatives to harness their strengths for development. She gave a brief account of the

activities of NMI and concluded with the food for thought: “street children, whose responsibility?” A brief discussion followed, as ideas and responses were shared.

Following brief announcements, it was time to go on lunch break. Participants were asked to take an hour to eat, refresh, and stop by HubVille if they hadn’t already. Sessions reconvened exactly an hour later.

(Session 5): Workshop: “HIV & Stigma” was facilitated by Timothy Zakka of Pact Nigeria, and Opeyemi Agbaje of OROL.

As different from all sessions preceding it, this session was highly engaging for the participants as they got the chance to be both the presenters and the audience. In this session, participants were asked to creatively weave up a story line, with characters, that showcased stigma as it relates to HIV. Participant’s got excited once they got wind of what they were expected to do, as suggestions started pouring in, and a plot slowly took shape. Once the story had taken a decent form, participants were now asked to volunteer to role play their story, thus the drama began. Amidst the excitement of bringing their plots to life, discussions subjects were born, and participants shared ideas and experiences related to stigma, its effects, and ways to mitigate it. During this session two drama acts were initiated and acted on after which general comments, observations, questions, experience etc. were solicited from participants in line with the issues were raised, and clarifications were provided accordingly. A peer-educator advocated the need for faith based organizations whose activities are centered on HIV/AIDS to partner with the peer-educators from NYSC (PETs) in effectively carrying stigma reduction intervention approaches and programs to the remotest parts of the community.

(SESSION 6): “How gender inequality and lack of empowerment contributes to the spread of HIV and AIDS”, was presented by Aisha Zakari LDM.

She talked on facets of gender inequality, and how the lack of empowerment of females contributes to the spread of HIV and AIDS. She touched on issues such as: female infanticide; access to education; violence; sexual subjugation; human rights, amongst others. Ms Zakari stressed that “Addressing gender inequality through social protection programmes designed to increase equity would be an effective way of reducing gender inequality”. She gave suggestions of ways forward in the tackling of gender inequality, and therein, the HIV epidemic.

HUBVILLE:



The HubVille was officially opened by the Managing Director of Society for Family Health-SFH Sir. Bright Ekweremadu.

The HubVille was the official exhibition hall of the mini conference, where organizations got an opportunity to put on display their projects, programs, products and publications. Free HCT was also available at the HubVille. Participants enjoyed walking through the ville, asking questions, taking advantage of services provided, and picking up freebies ranging from condoms, to IEC materials. The OROL team made it fun by asking participants to write their HIV promise/slogan on a white erase board, and get photographed with it, in exchange for condoms (Male and Female) and lubricants provided by UNFPA.



CONDOMIZE STAND (Condom promotion and distribution) was another exciting part of HUBVILLE where OROL Members held poses with condoms, dancing and teaching participants to make art work such as condom badges and hair clips, while promoting the appropriate use of condoms as a prevention tool.

The final session and climax of the conference hub was the screening of the 3 episode series **SHUGA!** -A production of the MTV Staying Alive Foundation. Participants sat back and enjoyed the highs and lows of the film, while noting the key lessons therein. A brief discussion followed the screening, to reiterate the essence of the film, and the take home message.

With the end of the film/discussion, and a brief closing remark from the Executive Director, OROL (Opeyemi Agbaje), the Abuja AIDS2012 conference hub came to an official close.

APPENDIX

A:

Feed Back and Focus group discussions with participants of the conference

A focus group discussion with randomly selected and willing participants was held immediately after the conference. The objective of the focus group discussion was to present and discuss the results of the activities conducted as part of the conference. OROL members facilitated the session and conducted all the necessary interviews.

Outcomes

Referencing the results obtained, all the participants expressed their satisfaction in the achievement of the set conference hub objectives. Participants believed in the usefulness of this conference hub and the importance of expanding its impact. The recommendations made were accepted and are presented in the relevant part of this report.

During the focus group discussions and interviews, knowledge of participants in relation to HIV interventions and latest research was tested, and the discussions showed that the participants had in-part been empowered with the right knowledge about latest research work in our community , various interventions and materials from the main conference.

Challenges

The implementation of the conference encountered several challenges, primarily:

- Collating materials for the conference such as slides, videos and IEC materials proved tasking.
- Insufficient preparatory time: One month of publicity and preparation preceding the hub was a relatively short period of time to reach the maximum number of participants possible.
- Limited financial resources put a strain in the planning and effective execution of the conference hub.

Recommendations

- Extend the conference for a longer period of time
- Ensure sustained and consistent effort to follow up on the impact of the Conference hub

- Enlist involvement of other organizations to support OROL in the follow up because the effectiveness of the conference depends on sustainability. This means there is need to support the replication of the conference hub in other states.

Conclusion

OROL YEP expresses its sincere appreciation for the willing collaboration and support of the organizations named below, in putting together the Abuja AIDS2012 conference hub. We look forward to continued collaborative efforts.

- Pact Nigeria
- NEXIM Bank
- Management Sciences for Health (msh)
- Society for Family Health (SFH)
- AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- Federal Ministry of Health (NASCP Division)
- Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH)
- FHI360°
- Gede Foundation
- Noble Missions for Change Initiative (NMI)
- National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA)
- Youth Network on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NYNETHA)
- Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA)
- UNFPA

B: Pictures of the conference hub



On-Site Registration



Cross-section of participants



Goodwill Messages



Deputy Director Logistics and Programs (NASCP) Mr. John Onyeukwu representing Country Director of Pact



Managing Director SFH, Sir. Bright Ekweremadu Mr. Tayo Omidiji representing MD Nexim Bank

Presentations





HUBVILLE



CONDOMIZE! DON'T COMPROMIZE



Fixing Condom badge for MD-SFH



At gede foundation's stand



ARFH- Exhibition Stand



AHF Exhibition Stand (HCT)



Pact Nigeria Exhibition Stand



NMI Exhibition Stand



AIDS HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION STAND



Performance (Song) by NMI



OROL TEAM