PRESS RELEASE

Youth LEAD: NewGen Continues to Rollout Across Asia Pacific

Bangkok, August 2014 - With the success of the NewGen Leadership training, rollouts across the Asia Pacific region continue to highlight the importance of working with young leaders from key populations and integrating them into the HIV discussion and response. Since the beginning of August, NewGen rollouts have occurred in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and in Bangkok, Thailand, where young people from key populations have gathered and worked together to successfully complete the five day NewGen Leadership training. While this was the first NewGen rollout in Cambodia and Thailand, participants have expressed a high degree of interest in bringing NewGen back to their communities and sharing this training with other young leaders. NewGen rollouts have now reach nine countries and rollouts are scheduled for Nepal and China in the coming months.
In both countries, Youth LEAD National Focal Points, who had earlier received training at the TOT in December of 2013, successfully mobilized resources to support NewGen rollouts and facilitated an engaging and interactive training. Throughout the five days, facilitators actively encouraged participants to engage and partake in lively activities and discussions, which aimed to discuss sensitive issues and break down cultural and social barriers that make certain subjects taboo. In both Cambodia and Thailand, participants were committed and extremely grateful to partake in the training, where new friendships were formed, confidence was built, networks were established and creative and critical thinking was encouraged. “Bringing together young people from key populations is the first step to building a stronger YKP movement, where opinions can be exchanged and ideas can be fostered. Building these networks together strengthens commitment to raising awareness of the needs and concerns of YKP, while also supporting the national HIV response.” - Thaw Zin Aye, Youth LEAD Regional Coordinator

According to stakeholders, NewGen Cambodia was a unique training experience since it brought together young people from different backgrounds to work together and assess the current issues on one platform. Stakeholders praised the interactive and youth friendly training, noting the importance of youth facilitators in accurately defining the problem and facilitating positive discussion. Moving forward, participants from Cambodia are motivated and encouraged to strengthen the pool of young leaders and to develop a new consolidated work plan for YKP Cambodia. Thank you to the National AIDS Authority, Youth Technical Force, UNESCO, Youth LEAD National Focal points and other civil society partners, for the support and financial assistance throughout the training and during the preparation.

With the help of UNICEF Thailand and UNESCO, NewGen Thailand was a success. Young people who participated in NewGen Thailand exhibited a systemic shift towards improved leadership skills and heightened confidence while public speaking and discussing sensitive issues with stakeholders. Participants praised the curriculums innovative and youth-led approach, particularly emphasizing their appreciation for the sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) component of the training. According to the participants, the SRHR module was highly educational and discussed topics and terms that are not commonly addressed in academic settings.

With a bottom-up approach and capacity building response, the NewGen leadership and communication short-course addresses the lack of opportunity and capacity for young people from key populations to effectively participate in the response to HIV. NewGen emphasizes the importance of collaboration and works towards fostering a positive environment, where young people can work together and exchange ideas. Next steps include both monitoring and evaluations to ensure that followup activities and commitments remain strong and active in different communities across Cambodia and Thailand.
To learn more about Youth LEAD and its current programs and initiatives, visit their website at http://www.youth-lead.org/ or contact us at, info@youth-lead.org.

Youth LEAD is a regional network of and for young key populations most affected by HIV. By emphasizing leadership, education, advocacy, and personal and community development, Youth LEAD strives to accelerate and advance HIV prevention, promote equal sexual and reproductive health rights, and to advocate for positive change in access to comprehensive health and social services. Youth LEAD’s members are drawn from young cohorts of men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, and people who inject drugs, as well as young people living with HIV and young women. Youth LEAD aims to cultivate leadership among key affected populations to improve youth involvement in community, national and regional policy and programming processes.

Website: www.youth-lead.org; Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Youth-LEAD/389035624446055