



**“WE have to be the change we want to see in the World.”**

- UNESCO General Conference Youth Forum 2005

## Who We Are

YAHAnet is a new global webtool designed to draw together and support youth organizations around the world that are using the arts and popular culture to address HIV and AIDS issues. YAHAnet was officially launched in conjunction with 2007 World AIDS Day events.



YAHAnet booth at Unite Against AIDS concert, Nov. 28, 2007

Funded in part through the Culture and HIV & AIDS Division of UNESCO,

YAHAnet was brought to life by a partnership of McGill University, the University of Toronto, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.



## The Importance of Youth Involvement

With half of all new HIV and AIDS infections worldwide hitting young people between the ages of 15 and 24, youth are directly impacted, and their initiatives can play an important part in the fight against HIV and AIDS.



YAHAnet provides an online meeting place where the voice of youth can be heard and provides resources and support to

encourage youth to take an active role in social change and public policy to deal with a global crisis that affects their lives and futures.



YAHAnet welcomes creativity in addressing HIV and AIDS issues through such diverse outlets as drama, drumming, chanting, forum theatre, hip hop, story telling, puppetry, collage, graffiti, photography, video documentary, writing, and new media.

Youth involvement is not just limited to the YAHAnet member base. The webtool is currently being maintained by a team of student interns at McGill University under the leadership of two youth project coordinators and a professor. A student web programmer created YAHAnet based on the input of all the members of the YAHAnet team.



Collage created by youth at YAHAnet workshop

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[www.yahanet.org](http://www.yahanet.org)

YAHANet's slogan is "Show. Share. Learn. Lead." Youth can *show* their artistic creations in YAHANet's video, audio, and image galleries. They can *share* ideas by participating in online forums and find support by joining workgroups related to their interests. They can *learn* from a variety of resources

On November 28, 2007, YAHANet had its official launch at the UNICEF *Unite Against AIDS* concert in Montreal. At the YAHANet booth, interns gave out condoms, buttons promoting the webtool, and information on using the arts in HIV and AIDS advocacy. There was also an exhibit of photos taken by South African youth on the theme of stigma and HIV and AIDS.



YAHANet booth at UNICEF concert

### Youth Workshop

YAHANet was selected to host a workshop at the Youth Pre-Conference of the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August 2008.



The workshop was entitled "Creating an Effective Message: Using Arts-Based Media for HIV & AIDS Advocacy in the IT Generation," and the theme of the workshop was *RISK*. Youth participants worked in

## Show. Share. Learn. Lead.

available on the webtool including information on various art forms and information on writing funding proposals and carrying out monitoring and evaluation for organizations working in the arts or those trying to get started. As well, there is valuable information on HIV and AIDS - from basic facts to discussion of gender and stigma.

Most importantly, youth can *lead* their own communities in the fight against HIV and AIDS by networking with groups, organizations, and individuals on YAHANet to form a virtual community of artists and activists that will facilitate the development of youth-oriented strategies and messages to deal more effectively with this global crisis.

## Launch of the Webtool



Blank T-shirts were distributed on which youth were encouraged to draw or write their own creative messages. The shirts were then sent to youth in South Africa in an effort to use artistic expression to open up dialogue among youth in different parts of the world.

In April 2008, a mini-launch that featured food, music, dance, and an interactive tour of YAHANet was held at McGill University.

## YAHANet's Global Impact

groups to create collages that gave an artistic response to a question about risk. An interactive discussion followed which included participant



commentary on arts-based HIV and AIDS messages created by youth and previously submitted through YAHANet. The workshop concluded with comments on the effectiveness of using arts-based tools in HIV and AIDS advocacy. All collages from the conference will be

featured on YAHANet and will continue to provoke further online discussion.

### Worldwide Contest

In conjunction with the conference workshop, YAHANet hosted its first contest. The contest challenged youth to create an artistic work that expressed their thoughts and feelings on the role *RISK* plays in daily life. Prizes were awarded to entries from Kenya and Mexico, and all submissions will be displayed on YAHANet.



"Passion wins" by Mariel Garcia Montes, Mexico, contest winner