The Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) global listserv links professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to effective youth development ideas, information and best practices to help:

*Design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and
*Better integrate youth participation in USAID development projects

In this Links: Youth Peer Education: Targeted peer education can be a useful tool to educate and empower young people on sensitive topics such as sexual and reproductive health and substance abuse. It can also be used to raise awareness and disseminate information among hard-to-reach or marginalized populations. It has been used effectively, for instance, to reach out to young sex workers, ethnic minorities, street youth, and other groups of young people who are not in the classroom. While young people often have considerable energy and enthusiasm for peer education, effective programs must have careful training, support, materials, monitoring and feedback mechanisms. This issue of YCoP Links features resources, events, and initiatives designed to help practitioners facilitate and sustain peer education programs.

Announcements:

Interagency Youth Working Group Hosts Forum on Youth Peer Education
http://www.iywg.org/youth/forums/peer_ed_guidelines
On January 10th, 2011 the Interagency Youth Working Group hosted an online forum on youth peer education. Moderated by experts around the globe from from Y-PEER, IntraHealth, and the Bulgaria National Center of Public Health, among others, the forum provided an opportunity to discuss youth peer education. The forum touched on the following topics: program planning, recruitment and retention of peer educators, training youth to be peer educators, leading peer education sessions, supervision and program management, monitoring and evaluation, and addressing gender in peer education. The event coincided with the release of the Evidence-Based Guidelines for Youth Peer Education, a USAID-funded publication that gives practical guidance on a range of issues important to developing and sustaining successful youth peer education programs. Download the Evidence-Based Guidelines for Youth Peer Education at http://www.iywg.org/sites/default/files/peer_ed_guidelines.pdf, or order a hard copy by writing to publications@fhi.org.

UNCDF: YouthStart Initiative
The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) together with the MasterCard Foundation has announced the program YouthStart, an initiative to increase access to financial services for 200,000 low-income youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. YouthStart was catalyzed by a four year, $12 million contribution from The MasterCard Foundation. With a specific emphasis on savings, YouthStart is a competition-based program that will identify and support up to 12 financial institutions to pilot and roll out sustainable financial services tailored to youth. As part of YouthStart, UNCDF will encourage collaboration among financial institutions and providers of non-financial services. It will also encourage the dissemination of lessons learned to spur innovation and influence policy decisions. YouthStart expands the capacity of UNCDF and microfinance institutions to enable youth to participate in inclusive financial sectors.

Call for Papers for Children and Youth in Crisis Conference
The World Bank is inviting submissions for the Children and Youth in Crisis Conference hosted by the World Bank and the Jacobs Foundation. The focus of the conference is on developing countries, and aims to encourage active participation and a stimulated exchange of ideas among participants. Selected papers will be considered for publication in a dedicated volume of an accredited policy journal. Papers must be unpublished at the time of submission in order to be considered for the journal publication. Researchers interested in participating should submit a paper or extended abstract (including results) by February 15, 2011.

Projects and Initiatives:

My Future is My Choice (MFMC) – Namibia’s Life Skills Program through Peer Education
http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_8798.html
To counter the growing threat of HIV to young people in Namibia, “My Future is My Choice” was designed to reach young people with sexual health information. The program is a cooperation program between the government of Namibia and UNICEF.
Young people between the ages of 14 and 21 receive a 20-hour training course providing information and life skills they need to make choices about their future. Using an interactive approach, the program focuses on life skills training specifically for teen pregnancy reduction, HIV/AIDS prevention, substance abuse, and rape. Each program graduate prepares a peer education “action plan” to reach at least 10 friends and/or become a member of an AIDS drama, role play, or debating club. Trained young people around the country are facilitating the 20-hour life skills education and, so far, have reached over 100,000 of their peers, both in- and out-of-school.

Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network)
http://38.121.140.176/web/guest/home
Y-PEER, the Youth Peer Education Network, is a youth-to-youth initiative pioneered by UNFPA, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health peer education. Y-PEER is a network of more than 500 nonprofit organizations and governmental institutions, with a diverse membership that includes thousands of young people from more than 36 countries. The network consists of youth from Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, North and East Africa, and was recently initiated in Brazil. Y-Peer builds partnerships between young people and adults by advocating for national youth development strategies; increased access to information, knowledge, and services on sexual and reproductive health; improved training resources for peer educators; and strengthening the knowledge base of peer educators and trainers of trainers. The Y-PEER website features news, information about upcoming events, FAQs about sexual and reproductive health, a peer education toolkit, and a virtual learning tool to certify participants as peer educators, among other features and activities.

GOLD Peer Education Development Agency
GOLD Peer Education Development Agency (GOLD) is a nonprofit organization operating in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. GOLD’s strategy is to mobilize young people to be positive role models and agents of change in their schools and communities. GOLD aims to reduce the number of HIV infections and risky behavior among youth; mitigate the negative impact of inadequate education and HIV and AIDS on youth, orphans and vulnerable children, families and communities; and build social capital for sustainable community development within Africa. GOLD works with community-based organizations, schools and other groups to implement peer education programs in their communities, and to effectively work with youth.

Resources for Practitioners

This publication from the Sub-Committee on Peer Education in the UN Interagency Group on Young People’s Health focuses on the training of trainers (ToT) of peer educators. The manual also features a sample curriculum is based in part on experiences gained in a series of sub-regional training workshops in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, organized by the Joint United Nations Interagency Group on Young People’s Health Development and Protection in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The manual is intended to be used by master trainers in peer education when training future trainers. However, many of the exercises included in the training curriculum could also be used for training peer educators aged 16 years and older. The training curriculum is focused on sexual and reproductive health, and special attention has been given to gender and cultural sensitivity. The overall training guidelines and suggested techniques can, however, be applied easily to peer education activities in any field.

Peer Education Toolkit (2006)
http://www.unfpa.org/public/global/pid/360
The Peer Education Toolkit is a group of resources designed to help program managers and master trainers of peer educators. Collectively, these tools should help develop and maintain more effective peer education programs. The five parts of the toolkit are based on research and evidence from the field as well as local examples and experiences. They are designed to be adapted locally as needed. The components are:

- The Training of Trainers Manual
- Standards for Peer Education Programs
- Theatre-Based Techniques for Youth Peer Education: A Training Manual
- Performance Improvement: A Tool for Youth Peer Education Projects and Managers
- Assessment Tool for Youth Peer Education Programs

The toolkit is the result of collaboration between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Family Health International. It was produced for the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER), a project coordinated by UNFPA.

Peer Educator Retention Strategies (2008)
http://www.iyfnet.org/sites/default/files/FieldNotes14RetainingPeerEducators.pdf
Finding ways to motivate and retain peer educators is a challenge shared by peer education programs everywhere. This issue of the International Youth Foundation’s FieldNotes publication highlights some of the innovative ways that IYF and its partner organizations around the world are using to not only recruit peer educators but also to keep them actively committed to their important work.

The key strategies identified for retaining peer educators are:

- Emphasizing close supervision.
- Harmonizing personal and organizational values and beliefs.
- Developing creative compensation approaches.
- Promoting full participation of peer educators in program implementation.
- Fostering career development opportunities.

The purpose of this supplemental reproductive health curriculum from the International Youth Foundation (IYF) is to provide life skills-based youth development organizations with a minimal set of reproductive health and family planning lessons for inclusion in their programs. The supplemental lessons are best suited for young people ages 14 and up and can be used with both in-school and out-of-school youth. The lessons, which can be presented by teachers, instructors, youth leaders or peer educators, address issues such as personal values, puberty, teenage pregnancy, and substance abuse, among others. The curriculum also includes annexes that include handouts, questionnaires, and a pre- and post-test.
Looking for YOUR input: We would like to hear from you! YCoP welcomes ideas, resources, and best practices on effective youth programs and youth participation. We would also like to encourage nominations of other youth practitioners or youth leaders to participate in the YCoP Links listserv. Hit “reply” to send information and feedback to YCoP Links.

To unsubscribe from the list, users should send an e-mail to listserv@info.usaid.gov with only “unsubscribe youthcop” in the body of the e-mail. (No signatures please).

Mission of YCoP: The Youth Community of Practice provides a forum for professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to gather, consolidate, archive, disseminate and exchange information, knowledge, ideas and best practices, particularly related to the incorporation of youth participation in USAID development projects. The Youth Community of Practice is an informal body of volunteer members, reached through a global list serve and Washington-based chapter. Both the list serve and DC chapter forums include USAID staff, youth practitioners outside of the Agency, and youth themselves. It is jointly sponsored by the office of education in the bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) at USAID and the Education Quality Improvement Program3 (EQUIP3), and implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC).

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in the materials provided through YCoP Links or posted by listserv participants is not official U.S. Government information and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Government or EQUIP3. For a copy of the guidelines and/or charter, put the request in the subject line of the email and send to youthcop@lists.info.usaid.gov. Participants should be aware that the list is public and not private communication. When participants voluntarily disclose personal information on a list serve, that information can be collected and used by others and may result in unsolicited messages from other people.