



THE 5TH ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE REPORT

KUSA in partnership with YAWE Foundation and Perspektive für Kinder successfully organized the 5TH Annual Youth Residential Conference from 28th November to 2nd December 2017 at St. Paul's Secondary School, Rwengoma. This conference provides a platform for people living with HIV to address their psychosocial challenges to improve their quality of life and contribute to the reduction of new HIV infection and HIV related death.

Annually, YAWE Foundation in conjunction with KUSA organizes a residential Youth conference of young people living with HIV from Kabarole and nearby districts especially Kyenjojo and Ntotoko. The target was 300 youth who are living with HIV between 12 to 24 years. Participants are selected from different Health facilities around the region by health unit counselors.

The purpose of this conference was to strengthen the network of young people living with HIV from different areas to share knowledge and experience to address their challenges and devise strategies on how they can live positively and contribute to the reduction of HIV new infection and related death.

The theme for this year's conference was: **“ADHERENCE IS THE KEY TO OUR LIVES”!** In relation to the theme we had different topics and facilitators both internal and external who shared different ideas, experiences with the youth. Among the topics of the conference included stigma and discrimination, entrepreneurship skills and income generating activities, relationship between God and human beings, disclosure, the road to meet the life goal, violence and protection, tuberculosis and malaria, adherence, nutrition and health life style.

Objectives:

- To promote adherence among young people living with HIV/AIDS
- To fight stigma among the positive youth
- To address stigma and discrimination concerns among young people living with HIV
- To encourage the youth to disclose and live positively
- To promote socio- economic being of young people living with HIV



Activities for Day 1

On 28/11/2017, it was arrival day as youth came from their respective homes and gathered at different stations such as Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital (BUHINGA), Kabarole Hospital, Virika Hospital, Karambi Health centre III, YOLIDA and YAWE Center where they were collected to the venue. Besides arrival there was registration of all participants, evening tea, orientation of the place and supper. Then the KUSA president Mr. Kasaija Yasin, YAWE Director Mr. Akora George and KUSA executive members gave warm welcoming remarks to all participants and appreciated them for fulfilling the request of coming again in the 5th annual Youth conference. This was followed by self introduction of the participants and facilitators, lastly there was sharing of conference expectations whereby all participants were given a chance to share what they expect to get out of the conference. Among the expectations were:

- 1. Getting more knowledge on how they can live a positive life,**
- 2. Making strong relationships**
- 3. Knowing how to reduce stigma and discrimination**
- 4. Reducing stress among others**

After the management committee explained the main objective of this conference which was *promoting positive mind and positive living for HIV care, treatment and prevention.*

Activities for Day 2

On 29/11/2015, the program began as early as 5:30am with morning movements so as to refresh the minds of the youth, later general cleanliness. The sessions began at 8:30am with Emily and Laura presenting stigma and discrimination topic, this was an interesting topic and it was participatory whereby the youth had to share the challenges and ways on fighting stigma and discrimination since it affects their health in respect to their status. Some of the effect of stigma and discrimination were highlighted as follows;

- Social isolation
- Limited social support
- Limited rights
- Reduced access to services
- Poor drug adherence
- Lowers self-esteem
- Limited disclosure



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Other topics included:- entrepreneurship skills, income generating activities, relationship between God and human beings, disclosure.

The youth said that disclosing was very difficult cause it had really affected their relationships and it had caused violence among the youth but the facilitator encouraged the youth to usually disclose at the first time of relationship so as to reduce some challenges that youth have encountered when they disclose after making relationship. On the other hand youth were also advised to adhere to medication if they are to have better health and live longer.



One of the facilitator (Ronald - UNYPA) during the session

Activities for Day 3

On 30th/11/2016, we had different facilitators who discussed different topics which included tuberculosis and malaria which was presented by Yassin. During this session the youth really enjoyed and they were given preventive measures about TB and malaria, and for symptoms arising one should seek medical attention. The youth were also advised to abstain as the safest option. Other topics included; violence and protection, nutrition and healthy life style and adherence.



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The youth promised to share what was discussed during session to their fellow youth who missed the conference and the community at large so that the prevalence of HIV can reduce by 2020. Besides that youth were also advised on how they can develop a positive mind in thinking so as to be successful in life.



One of the Participants (Thomas) giving a life testimony

Activities for Day 4

On 01/12/2017 it was World AIDS day. All youths looked smart in their blue and green t-shirts. All participants went to the World AIDS day ceremony which took place in two districts of Kabarole and Bunyangabu. Participants were divided according to colors of t-shirts, green commemorated the day with Kabarole District in Kijura-Kyaitamba Sub County and blue participants went to Kibiito town council in Bunyangabu District. The presence of the youth at both venues was highly recognized and felt by the public.



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In Bunyangabu District, the Chairman Mr. Mugarama James expressed his deep appreciation for the great work YAWE and KUSA is doing to cause positive change in the lives of young people living with HIV. YAWE drama group led the anthems for Uganda, East Africa and Tooro Kingdom when the Guest of Honor arrived. YAWE drama group gave a welcoming cultural dance that made the ceremony colorful.

While in Kabarole district Dr. Mugahi Richard who is the DHO of Kabarole also praised the good work YAWE and KUSA does to reach out communities for HIV Counseling and Testing, Cancer Screening. Furthermore other speakers also expressed the need for more efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS and promised to work with the district health implementing partners like YAWE in extending services further more in the hard to reach areas.



Our Brass band in Kyaitamba-Kabarole District



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The Yawe drama group in Bunyangabu district



Youth commemorating the world AIDS Day in Bunyangabu District



Activities for Day 5

On 02/12/2015 was our last day of the conference. A number of guests officiated the closing ceremony of the conference,

- 1. Chairperson of Kabarole Association Network of Adult people living with HIV**
- 2. The district Health Educator**
- 3. Adolescents Focal Person from Fort portal Regional Referral Hospital**
- 4. Political Assistant of Hon. Alex Ruhunda.**

The Political Assistant of Hon. Alex Ruhunda thanked the bakery team for their great efforts and further encouraged the youth to always work hard and acquire hands-on skills. The Honorable promised to always keep in touch with YAWE and KUSA to plan how the youth development projects can be further supported. The president of KUSA Mr. Kasaija Yassin and the Director YAWE Foundation Mr. Akora George thanked the Honorable and other guests for honoring our invitation and also for their unconditional love for the youth to always come despite of their busy schedule. Enid Grace the political assistant of honorable Alex Ruhunda sliced the cake which was shared among all the participants.



Group photo of participants at the venue



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Conclusion

We appreciate our partners who have supported this conference in different ways especially financially and materially.

Special thanks go to KUSA and YAWE Foundation and individuals who offered their precious time and resources to make this conference a success.

Let us continue with supporting the young people living with HIV by educating, inspiring and entertaining them as we struggle to have a free HIV generation.

Hoping for the same and more support in the coming 6th Annual Conference 2018.

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