

TAKE TWO TO MEXICO!
***Information on how to sponsor a young leader to attend the
XVII International AIDS Conference
Mexico City, August 3-8, 2008***

As the first International AIDS Conference ever held in Latin America, AIDS 2008 will bring together 25,000 researchers, decision-makers, and advocates from around the world to collaborate and share in an effort to strengthen our global responses to HIV and AIDS.

The Take Two to Mexico Campaign seeks to engage organizations participating in AIDS 2008 by encouraging them to sponsor young people in addition to their representative. Non-participating organizations can also take part in this campaign by funding youth who are actively engaged in the fight against HIV in their communities. This letter contains information about how much it costs and how to sponsor young people. It may be useful for organizations seeking to support youth leadership at the conference, or for youth leaders themselves who are fundraising for scholarships. A version of this letter for AIDS2006 in Toronto was successful in obtaining 117 youth scholarships from 31 organizations.

Young people – especially young women - are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS. Young people under 25 represent almost half of new HIV infections occurring annually. However, we are often excluded and marginalized in the global response; despite international commitments such as the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS which explicitly state young people's right to participate.

It is crucial that young people, leaders of today and the future, have opportunities to participate meaningfully in international processes not only as attendees, but as legitimate actors who provide value-added information and experience to the dialogue. The conference provides an invaluable experience for young people to learn, network, advocate directly to decision makers, and share innovative approaches. Yet it is very difficult for young leaders, especially in low-income countries, to raise enough funds to participate.

Through our partnership with the International AIDS Society, the Mexico YouthForce has another opportunity to empower young people to advocate for the critical issues that affect us. The official AIDS2008 Youth Coordinator and the YouthForce are working to ensure that young people are an integral part of the Conference. The Mexico YouthForce, a continuation of previous YouthForces at the International AIDS Conference in Barcelona (2002), Bangkok (2004), and Toronto (2006) is a coalition of organizations and individuals that collaborate with young participants before, during, and after the conference.

The Mexico YouthForce is planning a number of initiatives in collaboration with both Mexican and international stakeholders, including a youth media workshop and a three-day capacity-building Youth Pre-Conference. Sessions will provide essential informational and skill-based trainings on the HIV virus, new preventive technologies, advocacy, media, and more. During the conference, the vibrant Youth Pavilion will host exhibits, youth sessions, a media station where youth can give interviews and blog about their experiences, and the Youth-Adults Commitments desk where delegates make concrete commitments to youth issues and involvement. There will also be a Youth Reception, several youth-focused major sessions, and an array of events and opportunities for learning and networking.

Cost to register a young person for the XVII International AIDS Conference:

Depending on the cost of flying to Mexico from the country of origin, it will cost between **1,200 and 5,000 Euros** to cover registration, travel, accommodation, visa fee and per diem for each young person to attend AIDS 2008. Young people age 18-25 can register for the Conference at

any time at <http://www.aids2008.org>, with the registration rate increasing as the Conference approaches.

Visa processing times can often be lengthier in Mexico than in other Latin American countries- please give at least two months to obtain a visa. Registration cost **in Euros** is as follows for youth 18-25 (please see this link for registration rates for other ages and additional information: <http://www.aids2008.org/subpage.aspx?pageId=304>):

Deadline to Register	Low/Middle Income Countries	High Income Countries
After Feb 19	140 (\$207.20)	210 (\$310.80)
After May 7	155 (\$229.40)	235 (\$347.80)

Using a conversion rate of \$1.48= 1 euro

Pre-Conference Registration and Costs:

There is no cost for AIDS 2008 youth delegates to register for the Pre-Conference training (July 31, August 1, and August 2). We estimate the cost to be approximately 236 euros (\$350) for meals and accommodations during the pre-conference (breakfast and lunch), including a suggested 20 euros/ day (\$30/day) per diem for local transport, dinners, etc. Youth wishing to attend must apply on the YouthForce website (<http://www.youthaids2008.org>, which will soon have interactive features and be linked to the main conference website following IAS approval) by June 1st (the Pre-Conference is limited to 250 young people).

Main Conference Registration:

If you have already registered a young person to attend AIDS 2008 (August 3-8), they will receive an email from AIDS 2008 to invite them to apply for the Pre-Conference. We ask that you arrange their flights and provide additional funding so that they can attend the Pre-Conference as well.

If you have *not* already registered a young person to attend AIDS 2008, please register him/her at www.aids2008.org. If you would like to be introduced to qualified young people in a particular region or country who need scholarships, please contact Joya Banerjee (joya@youthaidscoalition.org).

This year the YouthForce is fundraising for our own scholarship pool, which will be allocated after IAS scholarship decisions are made in May, to deserving young leaders unable to find scholarships. If you prefer to make a donation to this general pool instead of coordinating sponsorship, accommodations and travel on your own, please email joya@youthaidscoalition.org. The YouthForce will coordinate all logistics for its scholarship recipients.

Accommodations and Arrival Dates:

Please book accommodations directly through the conference website. Youth staying for the entire duration should arrive on July 30th and depart on August 9th (10 nights). Youth staying for only the main conference should arrive on August 2nd and depart on August 9th (7 nights).

If you have additional questions or wish to support the YouthForce further with funding, ideas, or in-kind donations, please do not hesitate to contact us! Thank you for demonstrating your commitment to youth leadership in the global response to HIV and AIDS.

Sincerely,

Mexico City Youth Force
<http://www.youthaids2008.org>
youth@aid2008.org