



Conference Highlights



The Conference Community

- 551 of 665 registrants presented in Abuja
 - Age range from 10 to 75-plus
 - 200 < 25 years (36%)
 - 40% from outside Nigeria
- Representing 36 countries
 - Every major region (Latin America and Caribbean, Asia, Middle East, Africa, North America, Europe)
- 286 abstracts originally submitted: 108 oral and 48 poster presentations accepted
- 32 sessions, including 7 panels and 7 poster sessions
- Significant national and international partner support and participation
 - Students, researchers, educators, practitioners, and parliamentarians



Conference Dynamics

- Support from all quarters enabled a rich conference program
- Strong climate of activism
 - High energy levels in every session
 - Keen desire for policy action and community change
- Conference Call for Action
 - By leadership of all ages





Resonating Messages: Research

- Face of adolescent health and development research is diverse, expansive, and intense
- Globally much commonality in research interests with respect to
 - Stages (age periods) of development
 - Healthy transitions
 - Social and individual management of sexuality
 - Gender security



Resonating Messages: Research - 2

- Contextual factors and relationships that mentor positive growth
 - Parental, family, friends, school, FBOs, legal protections, social norms
 - Importance of embedding young person in a multiplicity of supportive networks and whole/secure environment
 - Parent-child communication on sex not easy



Resonating Messages: Research - 3

- **Schooling is everything**
 - “Education should be a promise, not a dream.”
 - Schools as gateways for exposure and absorption of life-protecting information and curricula
 - Debate over when sexuality education should be introduced
 - Linking educational programs to national youth development strategies



“I did not know before this meeting that I had something called a cervix.”

*Comment from a 12-year old girl
in a conference session*



Resonating Messages: Individual Development Factors

- Contrasting perspectives of youth populations as risk taking and problematic versus being a positive human resource
- Focusing on gender security and vulnerable youth
 - Prioritizing girls' social welfare
 - Addressing marginalized populations, e.g. displaced youth, street children, FSWs



Resonating Messages: Individual Development Factors - 2

- Sexual maturation markers (menstruation) – Inadequate preparation of girls
- Global increase in contraceptive use by adolescents (15-24)



Resonating Messages: Programs and Policies

- Innovative models shared
 - Reaching newlyweds
 - Knowledge and attitudes shaped by mass media and internet
 - Capturing potential efficiencies of intersectoral ministry involvement
 - Role of faith-based organizations and leadership as catalysts of ideational and behavioral change
 - Introducing information of reproductive cancer risks, obstetric risks of early pregnancy, HIV prevention



Resonating Messages: Programs and Policies - 2

- The Youth have spoken:
 - Their future is NOW.
 - They want their VOICE heard.
- They challenged parliamentarians, educators, practitioners and researchers
- They showed their agency.



If you think something small can't make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito.





What Now?

- Call for Action to increase investments and scale up efforts
- Blog for comments
<http://2008youthconference.blogspot.com>
www.devcomsmediadelivernow.blogspot.com
- Post of presentations, abstracts at
www.jhsph.edu/gatesinstitute
- Encourage building evidence base through publication of papers in journals
 - Seek additional research funding