



Dear Youth Outreach Mentor Trainer,

The idea for Youth Outreach Mentor originated after my trip to Kenya in the spring of 2007. I worked with four different schools facilitating Girls Empowerment workshops with adolescent girls. We gave all the girls a piece of paper to ask any anonymous questions they've ever wanted the answer to.

I was shocked to open each piece of paper and have over seventy-five percent of the girls asked the same question—"What is AIDS?" In a country with over **1,300,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, 62% of that being women\* and girls**, these young women had no idea of what the disease was, only that it was slowly but surely destroying their communities.

I returned to the states discouraged by the overwhelming status of the AIDS pandemic in Kenya and on the continent of Africa, feeling as though I had underserved those girls with the short explanations of HIV/AIDS. The deep passion for the knowledge of their own health and protection of their bodies inspired me to create a project that could help educate and empower people on HIV/AIDS prevention and living healthy, hopeful lives after being diagnosed HIV positive.

The goal of YOM is to deconstruct myths surrounding HIV/AIDS, enable youth to make educated choices about their health, and guide them in informing their communities in developing safe and knowledgeable lifestyle choices. YOM is doing this by sending international volunteers to organize and train groups of secondary school students in HIV/AIDS and health education, so that they may become Youth Outreach Mentors in their own communities, and pass this information forward. As a member of YOM you are there to **uphold a safe and protective environment, free of judgment for the people you are working with.**

I acknowledge that the discussion of HIV/AIDS is a controversial topic in many countries around the world. There are many cultural myths and taboos surrounding these diseases. However, this project is created out of respect for our fellow human beings. Every person, regardless of their gender, sexuality, race or age deserves the accurate information about HIV/AIDS. Knowledge is a crucial tool for the survival of millions of people around the world.

Thank you for your willingness to help,

Devon de Leña  
Founder of Youth Outreach Mentors  
Village Volunteers

## **Plan of Action for Volunteers:**

This plan of action is a guide for you to get the YOM project up and running in your chosen village.

You will receive the needed supplies for the project (manuals, certificates, and buttons).

### **Step One: Finding your participants:**

The Volunteer Coordinator of your village program can help you organize a group. Your group can come from many different outlets within the community.

Secondary school students are a great place to start looking for participants. Decide on a school within the village where you are volunteering and go to the school and introduce yourself to the principal and staff. Explain that you are a volunteer with \_\_\_\_\_ organization and that you would like to select 20-30 of their students to facilitate an HIV/AIDS training program with. Please explain the program in depth, including the time commitments needed from the students and what the students will be asked to do.

### **Important Questions to ask the Staff:**

- ◆ May we do this program during school hours or after?
- ◆ Do you have a classroom available for me? I have my own supplies for the project.
- ◆ Part of the curriculum will include education about prevention of HIV/AIDS, safe sex practices, and the teens will be doing outreach in the community with adults. Will the education and outreach be allowed?  
Is the appropriate/acceptable?

If the school agrees to the program, ask to see the students. If it is impossible to arrange a time to facilitate a YOM workshop with students, look for other youth groups. Groups can be formed through active youth in the community. Many times when word about this spreads, youth will volunteer to participate.

### **Step Two: Forming your Youth Outreach Mentor Group:**

For training purposes you should choose approx. **15-25 kids**. (Any more than 25 can be difficult for one volunteer to maintain control and the group activities are more effective with smaller groups). Please choose half girls and half boys, because gender equality is also an important goal of YOM. Many kids may want to participate in the program. Unfortunately they all may not be able to participate.

### **Before choosing a group, explain the responsibilities of this program in depth!**

- ◆ This is intensive training (times and schedule to be chosen later).
- ◆ They will be learning information on HIV/AIDS, prevention methods and healthy lifestyle practices.
- ◆ After they have graduated from the program they will be an official Youth Outreach Mentor—they will receive a certificate of completion, a HIV/AIDS Training Manual, and an “ASK ME ABOUT HIV/AIDS” button to wear.
- ◆ Make sure they understand the responsibilities of being an official Peer Health Educator:

**An official Youth Outreach Mentor acts as a representative in their community as a factual and knowledgeable resource on HIV/AIDS information for anyone who asks them advice or questions about the diseases. They are responsible (as a group) for planning and facilitating community outreach programs within other local schools, primary schools, for their peers, local barazas (village meetings) and any other community member that may have questions.**

### **Step Three-Choose your group!**

This may be a hard process for you. Please inform the youths that are not chosen that there will be more groups forming in the future.

Ideas for choosing your members:

- ◆ We are looking for youth who display outward enthusiasm for learning about HIV/AIDS and safe health practices and who will show **follow-through skills** after they have graduated the program.
- ◆ Choose students that have the permission of their parents to participate.
- ◆ Choose students that can commit to the training time and the responsibilities of being a Peer Health Educator.
- ◆ Have the kids write an essay on why they want to be a Peer Health Educator.

### **Once you have chosen your group:**

-Arrange a schedule for trainings.

-Arrange a place to meet.

-Tell them they will be supplied with notepads and pencils to take notes.

### **Things to Remember:**

- ◆ Time schedules will vary from one volunteer to the next: you may set up two hours a week for four weeks or one hour a day for eight days straight. It completely depends on your situation and how quickly you feel the training is progressing.
- ◆ Youth in rural villages typically have more responsibilities. If you are planning trainings outside of school hours please take into consideration that the students have many chores before and after school, and some may walk far distances to get home. Make it a group discussion- ask the youth when the best times would be for the group to meet; keeping the youth's safety at top priority.
- ◆ Language Barrier: The reason we chose to work with 12-18+ year olds is because they begin learning English in higher grades. Sometimes conversing, and understanding each other's accent is difficult. Remember to speak slowly, and write ALL important concepts and points on the board for the students to copy down in their notebooks to study later. Also check in periodically to make sure they comprehending the lecture and encourage the students to stop you if they don't understand.

## **Step Four-The Training:**

### **First Day:**

- ◆ Take class attendance.
- ◆ Reiterate the YOM program and explain the process of the training.
- ◆ Define your expectations.
- ◆ Define their responsibilities as students and as official Youth Outreach Mentor.
- ◆ Establish Ground Rules (Group Norms).
- ◆ Have the group pick a name for their Youth Outreach Mentor Group.
- ◆ Have the students take the YOM quiz to gain insight to their knowledge level on the subject of HIV/AIDS.

### **End of Training:**

#### **Final Exams:**

- ◆ Give the YOM Quiz again; if there are concepts the students do not understand review those.
- ◆ Towards the end of the training, have the students plan, schedule and execute an outreach program while you supervise.
- ◆ When the entire group passes the quiz and successfully executes a program they are ready to graduate!

### **Graduation Ceremony:**

- ◆ Fill out the certificates with the new Peer Health Educators names.
- ◆ Present them with their certificates, HIV/AIDS Training Manual, and official “ASK ME ABOUT HIV/AIDS” button.
- ◆ Take a picture for the YOM website!