Yo! Lead
Youth on the Lead - A Leadership Program for Youth-initiated Reproductive Health Advocacy and Services in the Philippines
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Only through and with them in partnership with the Visayas
Primary Health Care Services (VPHCS) was the Yo! Lead project able to reach out to nearly 20,000 young people in the three
provinces from July 2006 to the present. We are sincerely hopeful that the gains and lessons of the project will last in the coming
years in terms of increased awareness and practice of healthy
sexual and reproductive health (SRH) behaviors and reproductive
rights among the youth, and increased access to and utilization of
services for them.
The project “Yo! Lead or Youth on the Lead” is a leadership program for youth-initiated adolescent reproductive health advocacy and services in the provinces of Cebu, Bohol and Negros Occidental, Philippines that aims to promote increased practice of healthy reproductive and sexual health (RSH) behaviors among the youth.

Funded by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA-International), the project was born in 2006 to address the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) problems and concerns of the youth by providing youth-initiated adolescent reproductive health advocacy and services.

The project is also called as the Karapatan: Rights-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Information and Services for Filipinos (KRIS-VPHCS).

The project worked in partnership with 22 community-based youth organizations and seven school-based youth organizations in selected schools and communities in the three provinces. Harnessing their leadership and initiatives, the Yo! Lead project provided funds and mentored the organizations to design and implement projects that increased the awareness and practice of healthy SRH behaviors and reproductive rights and increased access to, and utilization of rights-based SRH services among the youth in their localities. The project also provided static clinic and mobile health services and contraceptive commodities.

After four years, the project has more than a hundred trained youth leaders and peer educators from schools and communities in the three provinces who are knowledgeable on SRH issues, effective communication, project management, and leadership development. The project has reached out to more than 17,000 youth members through various worthwhile activities and experiences including needs assessments, focused group discussions, trainings on leadership and reproductive health, youth camps, peer educators’ trainings and other educational gatherings. All youth organizations have tremendously enhanced the awareness and practice of safe sexual and reproductive health behaviors, promoted reproductive rights, and increased access to and utilization of rights-based SRH services among their youth populace.

On December 1, 2008, the Youth for Rights Network (Y4R) was launched as a network of the youth organizations. It engaged in advocacy activities, particularly innovative and creative activities and projects to address particular concerns and needs of the youth especially in reproductive health.

In its last year, a unique aspect of the project was instituted, the Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) Short Message Service (SMS) hotline that reached a much greater number of youth. Trained peer educators of the Y4R network answered confidential queries on SRH of interested youth through SMS or text messages, making the transfer of accurate SRH information and peer counseling to peers more accessible and youth-friendly.

The project has proven that the youth themselves must be empowered to recognize and act upon their needs in order to sustain successful youth SRH programs. The project has also proven that such programs can work much better when the youth leaders receive inputs on technical concerns and leadership and are supported by a network of services and support from other stakeholders in the communities that meet their needs.

The Yo! Lead is truly a project developed and owned by the Visayan youth that responds to their very own issues and concerns.
With the existing network of student organizations and people's organizations (POs) of the Visayas Primary Health Care Services, Inc. (VPHCS) in various communities in Cebu and Bohol, 19 project partners were selected in the early months of the project. The partners were all youth organizations that committed to work with the project.

Project launching

The project was separately launched in Cebu on August 25 and in Bohol on Sept. 2. In both occasions, the partner organizations rendered songs, poetry-reading, shadow plays, and dances depicting the issues affecting the youth today as they signified support for the project.

Held in the University of the Philippines – Visayas College Cebu, Little Gallery where art exhibits with RH flavor made by the students were displayed, the Cebu launching was graced by Population Commission-Region 7 Information Officer Josephine dela Cerna and Youth Coordinator Leonido Fernandez and Department of Health (DOH)-Region 7 Adolescent and Youth Health Development Program Coordinator Joseph Harvey Cadungog who expressed their support to the project and offered their departments’ services and resources for the project.

In Bohol, the launching was also graced by various cultural presentations rendered by the school-based and community-based organizations.

Youth camps

Two youth camps marked the first year. The first “Dilaab 2006: Being Young and Taking Charge: A Youth Camp on Choice and Responsibility” was held on October 21 – 25 for 31 representatives of nine school-based youth organizations in Cebu and Bohol. The second youth camp was on November 16-20, 2007 attended by 38 youth representatives from 10 community-based organizations in Cebu and Bohol. Both events were held in the Tubod Flowing Waters Resort in the municipality of Minglanilla noted for its swimming pools and spacious grounds appropriate for the camp that unleashed the energies and lively spirits of the youth while teaching them about adolescent reproductive health.

Through varied methodologies, the camp provided the youth leaders with knowledge and skills on healthy and responsible sexual health behaviors, leadership, organizational management and advocacy techniques that would help them develop and implement youth health programs. Training modules were developed by the project staff after a training needs assessment.
was done. These modules are available in the VPHCS library.

Various resource persons were invited to handle the lectures and workshops which included the following, namely: the national health situation, understanding sex and gender issues, adolescence and its vulnerabilities, human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and prevention, risks and prevention of early and unwanted pregnancy, and life skills for adolescents and youth development. Leadership skills included problem-based analysis, problem-based planning and result-based management. Workshops on visual arts including poster making and photography, basic theater performing arts, jingle music making, and creative writing and media work were also conducted.

**Youth-designed projects**

Armed with SRH and leadership knowledge and skills and given additional technical support by the VPHCS, the ten community youth organizations and nine school-based groups designed and developed a total of 17 projects which were subsequently funded.

With the grants, the partners implemented various activities that employed creative strategies that bore reproductive health messages to make RH issues and concerns more relevant and acceptable to their target population. Most of the school-based partners implemented different multi-media productions in advocating reproductive health issues such as putting up of booths where they distributed IEC materials and displayed RH related information materials, film viewings, concerts, one-act plays, cultural shows, and arts and photo exhibits on RH issues and messages. Reproductive health discussions in small groups and in forums were also held.

The community-based organizations tapped the athletic skills and interests of the youth through sports and games-related events such as basketball and volleyball leagues that made reproductive health messages reach a wider populace, thereby drawing out more support and interest among the community members. Arts and cultural activities, employing skills in community theater, dance and local literary forms also became main events. Some partners also had
activities addressing specific community concerns in terms of reproductive and general health services through medical missions.

IEC materials and library

Printed resource materials were compiled for easy access by youth partners. They covered gender issues, sexuality, adolescent reproductive health programs and services and various issues on reproductive health. Books, pamphlets and other publications on reproductive health were also secured. Some materials were accumulated from past reproductive health projects and gathered from the internet. They are available in the VPHCS library.

Clinic services

Medical and reproductive health services were made available to the youth in the clinic in the Yo! Lead office. Basic laboratory services such as smears, urinalysis, stool exam, blood typing and pregnancy test were also rendered. Family planning commodities were also dispensed to youth clients. A total of 164 youth members aged 10 – 24 were served in the first year.

Four mobile clinics were also conducted to reach out to the youth in the communities. A total of 170 young people 10 – 24 years old benefitted from the mobile services conducted by VPHCS physicians, medical personnel and volunteers.

Commodity-distribution system

Contraceptive commodities including pills and condoms were distributed by youth leaders to the youth. However, in many areas, there was much hesitancy and embarrassment to avail of the commodities as it would connote that the users were engaging in premarital sex. Nevertheless, this was deemed to be expected in the first year as the project staff tried to find ways to make the distribution of the commodities consider the sensitivities of the youth.

Baseline survey

A baseline study was conducted on July – October 2006 to assess the level of knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs regarding RH and their sexual and RH problems. A total of 380 respondents who were members of 19 partner organizations in the project in Cebu and Bohol were administered two sets of questionnaires; one was self-administered and the
other facilitated by an interview.

The study gathered data on the demographic and socio-economic profile of the respondents and information on the following, namely: (1) practice of social activities, (2) knowledge on human sexuality and sexual health, (3) sources of information on sex, sexual and reproductive health, (4) knowledge and attitudes on sexual behaviors, sexual intercourse, use of contraception, forced sex, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, teenage pregnancy, unwanted pregnancy, and induced abortion, (5) practices on use of drugs, smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages, (6) services on reproductive health available for the youth, and (7) views on homosexuality, masturbation, virginity, and societal problems like early marriages, teenage pregnancies, drug addiction, STDs, rape, youth criminality and abortion.

Generally, the study showed that there was a lack of correct information among the students and community youth regarding the menstrual cycle and the natural method of planning, methods of contraception, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Access to information, RH counseling, contraceptives and services and life skills trainings were also lacking.

The baseline study recommendations included the following, namely: (1) teachers, community leaders, policy makers and other gatekeepers in the academe and communities as well as parents must provide a safe and supportive environment to adolescents and offer life skills enhancement activities, whether formal or informal, in the classrooms or places where the youth gather, (2) the support and participation of health service providers need to be promoted as well since the youth do not generally seek medical intervention for treatment for STDs even as efforts to promote safe sexual behavior and provide the youth access both to information and services on STD protection and prevention are made, and (3) such awareness programs should be strengthened through partnership among government agencies, non-government organizations, media, schools, families and since majority of the respondents are Catholics, the Church.

**Enhancing factors in the first year**

The need for information and services on reproductive health among the youth and in the project areas greatly contributed to the enthusiasm of the partner organizations to join the project. Their initiatives in the project were drawn primarily from the autonomy that they had in crafting by themselves the type of project that they deemed would concretely respond to their felt needs. The project staff left them to their own initiatives and ingenuity to design their own organizational projects, at the same time, providing them with technical assistance. The provision of financial support likewise boosted and complemented their initiatives very well.
By the end of the first year, the youth partners had already gained momentum in the implementation of their programs and activities and they also needed less assistance and mentoring from the project staff. The youth partners also maintained their enthusiasm and determination in the implementation of their projects thereby producing an over-all harmony among those involved. The youth partners had also started to establish linkages and relationships among themselves which is an important step for the project in the second year.

The regular visits by the project staff also aided in maintaining the flow of activities and eventually in achieving the objectives of the project. Noteworthy also was the support provided by the local government units (LGU) to the activities of community-based partners.

The materials, technical support, and guidance from the PPFA also greatly facilitated the success of the first year. Joint planning with the PPFA through Mr. Romeo Arca, PPFA – International Division, Asia Pacific Regional Office Senior Program Officer during the conceptualization phase of the project followed by constant communication all throughout the project also enhanced the delivery of project outputs.

Hindering factors in the first year

The project was affected in the first year by certain factors. The conservatism on sex especially in the schools run by the religious congregations and in the rural communities affected the openness of the youth. The limitations of the students due to their curricular activities and of the rural youth to earn a living also affected the project. In certain schools, support for initiatives of the youth from the administration and faculty was much to be desired. However, these were addressed as the project progressed.
Ten community-based youth organizations in four barangays in Bacolod City, two barangays in Bago City, one barangay in La Carlotta City and three municipalities in Negros Occidental joined the Yo! Lead project in the second year.

Forty-eight youth leaders of the organizations participated in a three-day youth camp on Nov. 22–25, 2007 in the Municipality of Don Salvador Benedicto. Revolving around the theme “Health towards Organizing the Youth,” topics included human sexuality, STDs, safe sex, responsible sexual health behavior, and organizing the youth using health strategies.

Peer education program

Peer educators’ trainings were conducted for 28 students on October 12-14, 2007 and 40 community youth members from Cebu and Bohol on October 26-28, 2007. Since young people would be more comfortable to talk about sex with people of their same age, the training aimed to develop peer educators and counselors among leaders of the youth organizations. They learned about the essential concepts of RH, RH rights, sex and gender, control and prevention of STDs, and life skills.

As a result, 121 peer educators from 29 partner organizations participated actively in IEC sessions and other information dissemination activities. Many of them also provided health services like commodity distribution and referrals to their peers and community.

New to their task, the peer educators were at first hesitant and unsure of themselves to apply what they had learned. However, working side by side they slowly gained confidence to share whatever they learned in the project.
Other trainings

The youth camp for two new community-based partners in Bohol, the Bukid Buhi-an Youth Organization of Barangay San Vicente, Municipality of Trinidad, and the Patag Padayon Youth Organization of Barangay Tuburan, Municipality of Ubay, was conducted in January 2008 with eight participants. The key topics discussed were gender sensitivity, human sexuality, contraception, STD prevention and recognition and leadership. The two community-based organizations replaced the three school-based schools in Tagbilaran City which had signified to withdraw from the project.

Two refresher trainings were conducted for school- and community-based partners in January 2008. Twenty-five youth leaders from the schools and 25 from the communities attended the trainings. Topics discussed concerned sex, safer sexual behaviors, and modern contraception.

IEC materials dissemination

A total of 1,830 bag tags with messages on sexual and reproductive rights were distributed by partner organizations during their IEC sessions. Translated into Cebuano, English and Hiligaynon dialects, the informative and creative bag tags became part of the personal effects of many youth.

IEC sessions

A total of 28 projects were implemented by the 29 partners, seven of which were school-based, two of which combined to do one project in their school, and 22 were community-based partners. The project activities were varied and colorful, speaking through the arts, literature and forums the multifaceted issues affecting the youth today, echoing their burning yet unspoken needs to be heard of, while reflecting their
youthful zeal and vigor that may pass away when they enter adulthood.

Among the students, 46 IEC sessions were conducted, twelve of which were informal sessions which included poetry reading, visual arts exhibit, film showing, theater play and concerts for reproductive health, drawing a total of 711 participants. Thirty-four were formal small group discussions and one was a forum on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) participated in by 368 individuals. The activities tapped and harnessed the creativity and ingenuity of the students to translate their understanding of reproductive health through the performing arts and literature, at the same time resounding their call to the student population to address reproductive health problems.

Among the community youth, 241 IEC sessions were conducted. Of these, 177 were formal sessions or small group discussions on SRH and participated in by 1,661 youth and adolescents. Sixty-four were informal sessions comprising of community theaters, sports events, advocacy contests and film showing and participated in by 543 youth and adolescents.

Indeed, through these activities, the energies of the youth were channeled productively while bearing the themes of SRH that used to be publicly unspoken of in their communities.

In all, 2,822 participants youth members joined the formal events and 1,391 participated in the informal events.

**Clinic services**

The VPHCS clinic catered to residents and students from and outside the project areas. Most students who availed of the services participated in project activities or knew of the clinic through brochures and IEC distributed or were referred by the partner organizations. A total of 132 patients had RH services in the clinic in the second year. SRH services such as general medical consultation, STD diagnosis and treatment, contraceptive counseling and certain laboratory services and referral services were provided in the VPHCS clinic. Among the youth patients, problems were related with STDs, menstrual cycle...
irregularities, respiratory tract and urinary tract infections and pregnancy.

Mobile clinic services were held in Aloguinsan, Cebu serving 250 patients, of whom 125 were 10-24 years old, and in San Pascual, Ubay, Bohol, serving 205 patients, of whom 97 were youth and adolescents. The missions provided general medical and SRH consultation, STD related services, prenatal, post partum and post natal services.

A total of 424 youth members 10 – 24 years availed of the VPHCS mobile services in the second year.

Social marketing of commodity distribution

Community-based distribution (CBD) of contraceptive services was started in October through the Pop Shop franchise with DKT International. Contraceptives, mainly pills and condoms were sold at affordable prices by community-based and school-based youth leaders and peer educators instead of being given away for free as in the first year of the project. Area distribution points and coordinators were also put in place.

The CBD program was formally launched in February 2008 in partnership with the Gay Empowerment of Minglanilla (GEM), and the D’Visioners Youth Organization, both community-based partners of the project. It was held in Sitio Back of Matimco, Subangdaku, Mandaue City, the residence of the latter organization.

Through their stage performances during the launching, members of the GEM used edutainment (education with entertainment) that highlighted the urban poor situation, population and poverty issues, modern contraception, sexual behaviors in the community and beliefs related to contraception and the services offered by the popshop. During the evaluation with GEM, VPHCS and community leaders, the activity was appreciated as a novel way of delivering information to the community.

Youth for Rights Network

The second year saw the formation of the Youth for Rights (Y4R) as an alliance of individuals coming from various schools and communities in Cebu, Bohol and Negros Occidental advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights. The organizational vision, mission, objectives, programs and draft activities were defined with the help of Mr. Romeo Arca, PPFA – International Division, Asia Pacific Regional Office.
Senior Program Officer. Its objectives included the following, namely: (1) To promote awareness of youth rights and social responsibility among young people, (2) To develop the leadership and life skills among the youth and harness their collective initiatives in responding to issues and problems affecting them, and (3) To promote programs supportive of youth participation in development. The network was launched in December 2008.

Yo! Lead Project presentation in international conference

A paper entitled “Addressing the paradox of sustainable youth programs: the case of Yo!Lead” was presented by Project Coordinator Dr. Mark Telesforo Molina during the 2nd International Conference on Reproductive Health Management (ICHRM) held on May 7, 2008 in Bali, Indonesia. The paper was authored by Mr. Romeo Arca and PPFA Asia-Pacific Regional Officer Regional Director Dr. Sona Sethi. It pointed out that sustainable reproductive health (RH) programs for vulnerable youth is somehow a paradox. Most youth are unable to pay for services or commodities and recovering operational costs from fees is impossible. The youth are highly mobile in search of better opportunities or better environment for their lifestyles and keeping them involved in the program presents real challenge. Lastly, being a youth is temporal and sooner or later, programs lose them and a new breed of youngsters comes.

The paper pointed out that to address this paradox and to sustain youth SRH programs, the Yo! Lead Project was designed to empower the youth themselves to recognize and act upon their needs through an innovative model of youth training and peer counseling, where youth leaders in the communities and schools were trained to design and implement initiatives that provided sexuality education and SRH services to vulnerable youth populations, emphasizing youth leadership and peer relationships.

Synthesis of the second year

The knowledge and leadership skills of the youth gained since the start of the project and their inherent inclination to sports and the arts greatly enhanced translating their initiatives to actions. The project was indeed worthwhile because reproductive health issues were being seen alongside their inherent concern on wider developmental issues such as access to education, economic opportunities and political participation. Mutual support and networking with one another also greatly contributed to the implementation of their projects.
Strengthening the Gains Garnered, the Birth of Youth for Rights Network

The third year witnessed the continued enthusiasm of youth partners in delivering sexual and reproductive health information through creative approaches, and translating clients’ awareness into the utilization of reproductive health services beyond numbers expected of them. This proved the leadership capacity of young people to manage an SRH program that significantly tapped their potentiality and affected their lives. The Youth for Rights (Y4R) youth network was formed as a promising legacy of this ability and vision to empower the youth in making responsible choices towards human and community development.

IEC materials

A total of 11,860 IEC materials in two types - bookmarks and postcards - with messages on youth sexual and reproductive rights translated in the Cebuano, English and Hiligaynon dialects were disseminated during various IEC sessions and Youth for Rights Network activities. The youth found these materials to be very informative and useful.

Peer education program

A peer educators’ training was conducted on November 5-7, 2008 among 16 participants from three partner organizations in Negros. Their reproductive health program was contextualized into their organizational directions. A review on adolescent health needs and prevention of early, unintended pregnancy and STDs was undertaken.

Separate trainings on community-based distribution of contraceptives were conducted for peer educators in Cebu on Feb. 6-7, in Bohol on Feb. 13-14, and in Negros on March 21-22. Topics discussed were on issues of population, poverty, review of the human reproductive system, and common methods of contraception. Furthermore, establishing a referral for youth clients needing reproductive health services, a record keeping system for monitoring of youth clients, and marketing strategies for distribution of contraceptives were also discussed.

All partner organizations (29) since the start of the project were ensured to have at least five peer educators each. Nearly half (43%) of the peer educators were capable of assisting in the delivery of sexual and reproductive health information and services in their respective communities and facilitation of referrals of clients.

Refresher courses on SRH advocacy

A refresher course was conducted for 24 leaders of two partner youth organizations in Bohol and four in Negros to upgrade their knowledge and skills in SRH advocacy. It was held on August 23 and August 30 in Baclayon, Bohol and Bago City, respectively.

Expansion of the commodity distribution to outlets other than the partner organizations

In order to broaden the use of contraceptives among the youth, the project explored alternative outlets.
Four outlets including a pharmacy and a convenience store in Bohol agreed to sell the commodities and individualized discussions for their personnel were conducted, covering RH orientation and safe sex. It was hoped that these trained personnel would talk about the proper use of the contraceptives in dealing with their youth clients.

**IEC sessions**

Fifteen small grants were given to partners in three schools, 11 communities and the Y4R Network. Among the students, a total of 58 IEC events were conducted by the four partner student organizations and the network. Of these, 44 were interpersonal IEC sessions which included small group discussions, fora, film showings, training workshops and concerts. Drawing a total of 3,899 adolescent/youth participants, the themes were related to safer sex, recognition and prevention of STDs, reproductive rights and access to reproductive health services. On the other hand, 14 mass media events utilizing the web, print and broadcast media disseminated information on reproductive health. These activities further enhanced the initiative and creativity of the students to translate their understanding of reproductive health through various approaches.

The Y4R, spearheaded by the school-based youth organization representatives, also initiated a discussion on the salient and significant points of the Reproductive Health Bill among the members of the network. These activities further harnessed the initiative of the students and community youth to advance their understanding of reproductive health and to address reproductive health issues in their campuses and communities.

On the other hand, the 11 community-based partners launched 101 interpersonal IEC events consisting of community education sessions on SRH issues, training workshops on leadership and reproductive health, cultural productions, organizational activities, advocacy contests and sports events participated in by 3,586 youth and adolescents. Theybannered themes similar to those of the school-based IEC activities.
There were 21 mass media events which distributed and/or posted SRH information materials in strategic places in their respective communities.

The IEC events well covered their target sessions and participants. The vigorous efforts of the Y4R and partner youth organizations more importantly translated into increased utilization of reproductive health services and commodities in both the communities and schools.

**Clinic services**

A total of 222 individuals availed of the clinic based services including general medical consultation, STD management, certain laboratory procedures, SRH counseling and referrals. Urinary tract infection, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, respiratory tract infections, migraine and sexually transmitted diseases were among the illnesses handled.

On the other hand, a total of 478 young people availed of the mobile services. A medical mission conducted in Manapla, Negros Occidental on October 18, 2008, served a total of 118 youth members and 58 adults through general medical consultations and SRH services including antenatal and postnatal care, counselling for domestic violence and pregnancy tests. Trained youth leaders of the Kansyaha Cultural Youth Organization facilitated the preparation and actual conduct of the activity.

Another medical mission conducted on February 28, 2009 in Talisay City, Cebu served a total of 351 patients, of whom 237 were 10-24 years old. The third mission was conducted in Back of Matimco, Barangay Subangdaku, Mandaue City on May 12, serving a total of 187 clients, of whom 123 were youth.

**Commodity distribution**

The distribution of commodities in and outside of the project areas in Cebu, Bohol and Negros through the Popshop was sustained by youth leaders, trained peer educators and community health workers. Commodities were promoted by the partners in their communities through house-to-house distribution of leaflets. The community health workers also visited contraceptive users and delivered the commodities in their doorsteps.

A total of nearly 400 youth clients benefited from the commodity-distribution system. However, the distribution of the contraceptives among the community-based distributors was still limited due to the embarrassment of certain young people of being known to be sexually active and who would rather get their supplies from other outlets for anonymity.

**Youth for Rights Network**

The Youth for Rights (Y4R) was formally launched on December 1, 2008 after a series of preparations
including an organizational development training, polishing of its project proposal, and recruitment of members. The launching concert was held in Outpost, a popular hangout of the youth in Cebu, attended by close to a hundred individuals. Around 10 school-based bands and some known local bands in Cebu performed. During their performances, band members promoted youth rights and expressed their opinions and sentiments on the issues affecting the youth of today. A power point presentation on youth reproductive rights was constantly displayed while the bands were playing. The launching was also advertised in two radio programs.

The network conducted an organizational development workshop on November 21-23, 2008. This was attended by 38 youth members from the school and community partners in Cebu, Bohol and Negros. An additional number of 29 youth joined the network.

After the launching, the youth network continued to implement unique, innovative and creative activities to address youth reproductive health concerns and needs. Short films on youth and reproductive rights were produced. A festival of short plays harnessed the literary potentials and artistic talents of community and school-based member youth organizations. VPHCS also linked the network with other youth networks and organizations such as the Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) for resource mobilization. An additional number of 25 youth joined the network, bringing the present total membership to 219.

**Synthesis of the third year**

Indeed, by the end of the third year, the youth partners led by the Y4R had confidently proven their leadership capacity to manage their SRH programs. Empowered and full of vibrant energy and burning enthusiasm, they successfully worked hard so that their members and the general young population in their schools and localities were able to translate their knowledge on SRH into healthy RH behaviors and to utilize RH services.
With the project going to be terminated on June 2010, the fourth year was geared towards ensuring that the various SRH programs laid in place and continuing over the past years are sustained even without financial support. Already, sufficient grounds were established since the start of the project in July 2006 to build the capacity of both the VPHCS and its partner youth organizations in managing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) projects for the youth. The Youth for Rights (Y4R) network with trained leaders had unified and consolidated the efforts of the various youth organizations in the three catchment areas of Cebu, Bohol and Negros Occidental.

The capability of the VPHCS as an institution had also been strengthened over the past three years through training and development programs for the staff on SRH issues and managing SRH programs.

The VPHCS has also several income-generating projects that were provided by the PPFA project that are potential sources of funds for its programs. They included the following, namely: a sound system for rent, the Pop Shop contraceptives franchise, a photocopier machine, and the static clinic. The social marketing program of the community-and static clinic-based distribution of commodities was also strengthened and expanded to include new outlets such as convenience stores and pharmacies.

Policy advocacy

An outstanding feature of the fourth year was lobbying of the youth leaders with key stakeholders in their schools and communities, such as local government units—barangay level at the minimum, administrators of schools, and civic organizations—to formulate policies that will allocate funds, logistics or other resources for the provision of commodities and other services for the youth. The Samahang Kabataan (SK) or the legislative arm of the youth in the barangays or municipal levels in selected project areas was tapped for implementation of SRH projects with the partner youth organizations.
Towards this end, 23 youth leaders representing the partner organizations in Cebu, Bohol and Negros and the officers of the Y4R were trained on SRH policy advocacy on November 28 - 29, 2009 in Cebu City. This was facilitated by Ms. Gladys Malayang, consultant for the PPFA KRIS program. The training output was a SRH advocacy campaign plan that called for an enabling environment for the delivery of SRH information and services to the young people in their respective communities. The advocacy activities included information dissemination and dialogues with key officials to come up with policies that would allocate funds, logistics or other resources for the provision of SRH services and implementation of SRH programs for the youth in their localities and schools. Such programs were expected to sustain the various IEC sessions and activities conducted in the past years of the project.

School and community-based organizations who were part of the project were mentored and mobilized by the Y4R network to implement a localized campaign in their respective communities and lobby with their respective local government units and school administrations to have policies that would provide resources for youth RH programs, make school clinics provide RH services, and create a favorable atmosphere for youth RH programs in their localities and schools.

As a result of the efforts, such policies have been put in place in several communities and schools covered in the project. They would sustain the reproductive health project even after its termination and ensure that services for the youth shall continue to be provided to them.

**SMS hotline**

A new feature in the fourth year was the SRH Short Message Service (SMS) hotline started in October 2009. Twelve trained peer educators in Cebu, Bohol and Negros each provided with a cellphone answered confidential queries on SRH of interested youth through SMS or text message, making the transfer of accurate SRH information and peer counseling to peers more accessible and youth-friendly. A booklet of frequently asked questions and concise and accurate answers served as a reference. The SMS hotline numbers were advertised through the web and posters in schools and communities. A concert was held on Feb. 23, 2010 in Cebu City to launch the project.

Hundreds of questions were received in the hotline, relating with such issues as contraception, getting pregnant and signs of pregnancy, what to do if pregnant, sexual pleasures and feelings, virginity, first time sexual experience, abortion and STDs.

**IEC sessions**

With a grant provided by the project, the Y4R network launched several activities in line with the policy advocacy campaign. Together with the other partner organizations, the network continued to conduct school and community-based IEC activities that included small group discussions on SRH issues, house-to-house commodity distribution and organizational activities that promoted SRH. They tapped the local resources in their schools and communities since there was no project funding anymore.

A total of 261 IEC activities involving more than 2,318 youth participants were held in the fourth year.

**IEC Sessions conducted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>IEC Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No. of IEC Participants reached**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>IEC Youth Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>2,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>4,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>8,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>2,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clinic services

The VPHCS clinic continued to render SRH services for youth clients. A total of 338 youth clients were served. They were provided contraceptives, general medical consultation, STD diagnosis and treatment, SRH counseling, laboratory tests and referrals for other services.

Dissemination forum

To formally conclude the project, a dissemination forum was held on July 9, 2010 at the Cebu Midtown Hotel function room. The forum was participated in by representatives of the youth organizations in the three provinces who shared their achievements, experiences and lessons in the project. Representatives of officials of the covered communities and schools, Department of Health and Cebu City Health Department also joined the forum.

Project coordinator Ms. Cheryl Padilla Molina presented a summary of the project. An open forum followed. Dr. Erlinda Posadas and Dr. Mark Telesforo Molina both members of the management committee of the VPHCS gave the opening and closing remarks, respectively.

The project lives on

Indeed, the project has reaped tremendous and immeasurable gains for the youth in the three provinces of Cebu, Bohol and Negros Occidental. Over the past four years, the relentless zeal, enthusiasm, and vigor of the youth have kept the project burning, blazing through their homes, communities and their very lives.

Indeed, it has been proven that when the youth are empowered to recognize and act upon their needs, they have the full capacity to design, develop and sustain successful youth SRH programs that respond to their interests. The project has also proven that such programs become more successful when the youth leaders are also supported by a network of services and support from other stakeholders in the communities.

The project lives on.
The Youth for Rights (Y4R) was formed by youth partners in Cebu, Negros Occidental and Bohol in the second year of the project. The Y4R is a network of youth leaders, individuals and organizations which envisions youth who are empowered to make responsible choices as leaders and key players towards human and community development. The Y4R believes that society has the incumbent role to propagate a constructive culture and opportunities for holistic human development for young people.

The youth leaders formed the organization to advocate for youth rights and social responsibility among young people. The Y4R also aims to develop the leadership and life skills among the youth and harness their collective initiatives in responding to issues affecting the youth and to promote programs supportive of youth participation in development.

The Y4R provided opportunities for the youth to be aware of their rights and issues affecting their communities and actively involve themselves in human and community development process.

 Launching

The Y4R was formally launched in a concert dubbed as “Red Signal! A Night for your Rights” in December 2008 at the Outpost, a bar in Cebu City. Attended by more than 100 young people, the concert presented performances by different bands which advocated for youth rights and different issues affecting the youth today.

Organizational development and network gatherings

Organizational development workshops, network meetings and gatherings were conducted and participated in by different youth organizations to consolidate and unite the member organizations. Pressing SRH issues and updates on their respective youth SRH programs were also discussed during these gatherings.

Theater play and cultural presentations

Cultural theater presentations were conducted to showcase the creativity of the youth and the productivity and success of the network in its advocacy work. Artistic presentations in performing arts and literature were showcased.

Youth SRH advocacy and governance program

In the fourth year of the project, in order to sustain its SRH advocacy, the Y4R lobbied and worked with school administrations and local government units including the Sangguniang Kabataan, the youth legislative arm in the barangay and municipal levels, for the enactment of SRH policies that would provide an enabling environment in the delivery of SRH information and services to young people. Policies are now in place in some schools and barangays that would promote the use of funds, logistics or other resources for the provision of SRH services for the sexual and reproductive well-being of the youth in their localities and schools.

Indeed, with the enacted policies, the support of the key stakeholders in the communities and the leadership of the various youth organizations and the Y4R in the three provinces, the project shall live on in the years to come.
A n end line survey was conducted in February to May 2010 as a follow-up of the baseline study at the start of the project in July 2006 – October 2006 after four years of project implementation. It was conducted among the members of 15 organizations which participated in the baseline survey. Although some of the respondents were different from those who participated in the baseline survey, the programs of the organizations in the project spread from year to year among their old and new members. All respondents came from Cebu and Bohol since the Negros organizations were not partners yet until the second year in 2007.

A total of 478 respondents were included in the study. Of these, 192 (40%) were students and 286 (60%) were community youth. Age ranged from 15 to 24 years old, with a mean age of 18. There were more women (56%) than male respondents (44%). Majority of the respondents were single (96%) and Catholics (89%).

Significant information gathered in the end line survey included the following, namely:

- There was a significant increase in the number of youth who went on dates compared with the baseline survey.
- Nearly all of the respondents knew about contraception to prevent pregnancy, compared to only 60% in the baseline survey.
- Majority of the respondents had accurate information on STDs including HIV/AIDS.
- One-fourth of the respondents said they had sexual intercourse, the same percentage as in the baseline survey. A contraceptive was used in 85% of respondents, a noticeable increase from that in the baseline survey of only 32%. Condoms were used by 83%.
- However, health risk behaviours such as smoking, alcohol drinking, and drug use were not significantly higher or lower compared with the baseline survey.

Profile of the Respondents

All of the school-based respondents were in college and 170 (89%) of them were full time students. A total of 149 (52%) youths in the community were in school; of these, 97 (33%) were full-time and 38 (18%) were working. Fifty-three (19%) were in college and 96 (34%) were in high school. A total of 137 (48%) of the community respondents were out-of-school youths.

Generally, compared with the baseline survey, there was a significant improvement in the knowledge and attitudes on sexual behaviors, sexual intercourse, use of contraception, forced sex, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/STDs, premarital sex, teenage pregnancy, unwanted pregnancy, and induced abortion.
Karapatan
Rights-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health Information and Services for Filipinos

The Karapatan: Rights-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Information and Services for Filipinos (KRIS) is the country program of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) in the Philippines. Karapatan is the Filipino word for right. The KRIS program aims to improve the health and well-being of underprivileged Filipino youth, women, and men, and institutionalize health services that promote and protect their reproductive rights.

KRIS is predicated on the rights of Filipinos, regardless of their sex, age, marital status, religion, and ethnicity, to obtain sexual and reproductive health information and services on contraception, prevention of STDs (including HIV/AIDS) and abortion complications in ways that respect their individual dignity and ability to make decisions.

Aside from the Visayas Primary Health Care Services (VPHCS), other partners of the PPFA in its KRIS program include the American Chamber Foundation (AmCham), Linangan ng Kababaihan (Likhaan), and Sociology and Anthropology Research Group (SOAR) of the University of San Carlos.

The Yo! Lead or Youth on the Lead” is the project of the VPHCS which is thus also called Karapatan:

Rights-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Information and Services for Filipinos (KRIS)-VPHCS.

The desired program outcome of KRIS program is the increased utilization of quality, client-centered reproductive and sexual health (RSH) services by women, youth and men in selected areas of the Philippines.

The desired program outputs include the following, namely:

1. Increased awareness on safe reproductive and sexual health behavior among target women, men, and youth.
2. Increased access to user-friendly reproductive and sexual health services.
3. Increased access to quality Prevention and Management of Abortion Complication (PMAC) services.
4. Networks of youth organizations established to advocate for youth RSH programs.
5. Increased capacity of youth organizations/partners to develop and implement youth RSH programs.

Taken from the First Annual Dissemination Forum of KRIS, April 25, 2008, Manila, Philippines.
### Participating Youth Organizations

The table shows the partner youth organizations in the project and their main objectives.

#### Cebu School-based Youth Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Main Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vital Signs</td>
<td>• To impart important information to the students of Velez College&lt;br&gt;• To be the voice of the students on issues inside and outside the school&lt;br&gt;• To promote students’ welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Velez College, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nagkahiugusang Kusog sa Estudyanente (United Strength of the Students)</td>
<td>• To develop nationalist and critical minded students&lt;br&gt;• To promote and defend the rights and welfare of the students&lt;br&gt;• To foster unity with the basic sectors of the society in their pursuit of economic, political and socio-cultural emancipation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of the Philippines, College Cebu, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Liberation for Gays Advocates (LIGAYA)</td>
<td>• To raise students’ awareness on the rights and issues of homosexuals in school&lt;br&gt;• To lobby for the promulgation and enforcement of policies that help promote the empowerment of the homosexuals community&lt;br&gt;• To provide services that address problems of homosexuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of the Philippines, College Cebu, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alley to Beacon</td>
<td>• To promote social responsibility among the youth&lt;br&gt;• To arouse social awareness, including gender and reproductive health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of the Visayas, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Andres</td>
<td>• To portray life realities of the Filipino people through art&lt;br&gt;• To organize art workshops in schools and communities&lt;br&gt;• To develop a deep sense of community awareness on issues that affect the Filipino people&lt;br&gt;• To establish alliances on social advocacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of San Carlos, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leaders for Solidarity</td>
<td>• To educate and organize students and develop social awareness on issues affecting the youth&lt;br&gt;• To develop youth leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of San Carlos, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sining ng Kababaihan para sa Bayan (Women’s Arts for the People)</td>
<td>• To raise the level of social awareness of student artists&lt;br&gt;• To portray social realities in art&lt;br&gt;• To nurture and empower the Theresian women artists&lt;br&gt;• To promote nationalism and life-nurturing values and principles based on truth, justice, freedom, love and peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Theresa’s College, Cebu City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Bohol School-based Youth Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Main Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Varsitarian</td>
<td>• School publication&lt;br&gt;• To enhance campus journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Bohol (UB), Tagbilaran City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(Withdraw from the project in the second year)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mass Communicators Guild</td>
<td>• Organization of Mass Communication students&lt;br&gt;• To develop growth in leadership skills&lt;br&gt;• To enhance knowledge and understanding of the media industry&lt;br&gt;• To promote friendship among members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(Withdraw from the project in the second year)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Porters</td>
<td>• To educate students on issues affecting the youth&lt;br&gt;• To develop youth leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Bohol&lt;br&gt;Tagbilaran City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(Withdraw from the project in the second year)</em></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Participating Youth Organizations

#### Cebu Community-based Youth Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization Name (Abbreviation)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bonbon Youth Association (BOYA)</td>
<td>Barangay Bonbon, Municipality of Aloguinsan</td>
<td>• To organize the youth as support to the community’s campaign for their right to own the land they till</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12  | Lihok sa mga Kabatan-onan sa Bang-bang (LIKABA) | Barangay Bangbang, Municipality of Cordova | • To arouse, organize and mobilize the youth for their right to development  
• To divert the youth from vices |
| 13  | Sudtonggan Youth Organization (SYO) | Sitio Sudtonggan, Barangay Basak, Lapu-lapu City | • To draw the youth away from drugs  
• To provide diversional activities to the youth |
| 14  | New Youth Railway Organization (NYRO) | Barangay Hipodromo, Cebu City | • To mold the youth’s moral and religious values  
• To develop the youth’s social involvement in issues affecting the community |
| 15  | D’ Visioners Youth Organization (DVYO) | Sitio Back of Matimico, Barangay Subangdaku, Mandaue City | • To enhance the youth’s involvement in community development  
• To involve the youth in basic ecclesial communities |
| 16  | Kabataang Nagkahiussa alang sa Maayong Ugma (KANAMU) | Barangay Lawaan II, Talisay City | • To enhance the youth’s social development and divert them from vices |
| 17  | Gay Empowerment of Minglanilla (GEM) | Municipality of Minglanilla | • To promote the rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)  
• To advocate for a just, progressive and humane environment  
• To address LGBT issues in concert with other marginalized sectors in advocating for societal changes and reforms |

#### Bohol Community-based Youth Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization Name (Abbreviation)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 18  | Nagkahiussang Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerte (NKM) | Barangay Montesuerte, Municipality of Carmen | • To be a youth support organization of the farmers’ organization in the community  
• To organize the youth in the different communities for community development  
• To equip the youth with skills for community education and raising social awareness |
| 19  | Duljo and Desamparados Youth Associations | Barangay Tangnan, Municipality of Panglao | • To actively involve the youth in the community and church activities  
• To foster cooperation, unity, friendship and development among the youth |
| 20  | Sangguniaang Kabataan Federation | Barangay Ubujan, Municipality of Loon | • To enhance the youth’s health, moral orientation and social skills  
• To have a youth representation in the local legislation and governance  
• To empower the youth population |
| 21  | Bukid Buhi-an Youth Organization | Barangay San Vicente, Municipality of Trinidad | (Started in the second year of the project) | • To unite the youth against vices  
• To provide the youth with skills that can augment income  
• To harness the voice of the youth on social issues that affect them |
**Participating Youth Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Youth Organization</th>
<th>Barangay/Tuburan, Municipality</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 22  | Patag Padayon Youth Organization                       | Tuburan, Ubay                   | • To foster cooperation between the youth and the farmers for economic, social and cultural development  
• To be united and organized in standing up for our rights as youth  
• To promote advocacy among the youth on issues affecting them |
| 23  | Abada Youth Organization                               | Escay, Bacolod City             | • To foster camaraderie among young people  
• To develop social responsibility among young people |
| 24  | Banago Christian Youth Organization                    | Banago, Bacolod City            | • To develop social responsibility among young people  
• To strengthen the faith of young people |
| 25  | Bata Youth Organization                                | Bata, Bacolod City              | • To develop social awareness among the youth  
• To provide diversional activities for young people |
| 26  | Naghiliusa nga Kabataan sa Villa Esperanza             | Tangub, Bacolod City            | • To forge camaraderie, fellowship, friendship among youth  
• To draw away the youth from criminality and drug addiction  
• The youth to be aware of the urban poor situation to uplift their social awareness |
| 27  | Busay Active Youth for Advancement                     | Busay, Bago City                | • To better understand the issues affecting young people  
• To enhance the potential of the youth |
| 28  | Youth of Iglesia Filipina Independiente (YIFI)         | Iglesia Filipina Independiente Parish of Caridad, Bago City | • To develop social responsibility among young people |
| 29  | Tubo Cultural Youth Organization                       | Batwan, La Carlota City         | • To protect and advance the interests of the youth in the community  
• To raise the level of social consciousness of members  
• To harness youth’s artistic potentials towards development  
• To build organizational capability towards serving the community |
| 30  | Kabataan para sa Tunay na Kaunlaran                    | San Jose, Municipality of E.B. Magalonga | • To foster unity among the youth towards progress  
• To protect and advance youth interests and welfare  
• To develop youth skills and talents towards helping others |
| 31  | Kansyaha Cultural Youth Organization                   | Purisima, Manapla               | • To create and portray various art forms reflective of and in the service of youth and people’s issues  
• To foster a scientific and nationalist culture |
| 32  | Salvacion Youth Organization                           | Salvacion, Municipality of Murcia | • To develop social responsibility among young people  
• To provide diversional activities for young people |
Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives

With their leadership skills and knowledge on reproductive health garnered in the project, the partner youth organizations initiated, designed, developed and implemented various projects.

School-based Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Organization and School</th>
<th>Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives</th>
<th>Project Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Vital Signs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Velez College, Cebu City</td>
<td>• Group discussions and forums on youth SRH&lt;br&gt;• Advocacy concerts on RH&lt;br&gt;• Photo exhibitions on sexually transmitted infections&lt;br&gt;• Valentine booths with freebies and flyers with RH messages&lt;br&gt;• Film showings on gender and sexuality issues&lt;br&gt;• Peer counseling and facilitators’ trainings&lt;br&gt;• IEC distribution&lt;br&gt;• Commodity distribution</td>
<td>Year 1: SABWAG (to throw, to spread out or scatter; propagate and affect a greater number or greater area) &lt;br&gt;Year 2: SABWAG II &lt;br&gt;Year 3: SABWAG III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Nagkahiusang Kusog sa Estudyante (NKE)</strong> and the <strong>Liberation for Gays Advocates (LIGAYA)</strong>&lt;br&gt;University of the Philippines – College Cebu, Cebu City</td>
<td>• Educational discussions on RH&lt;br&gt;• Cultural nights&lt;br&gt;• Skills trainings on RH Advocacy&lt;br&gt;• Commodity distribution&lt;br&gt;• Tie-up activity during Human Rights Week&lt;br&gt;• Tie-up activity during International Women’s Month&lt;br&gt;• Concerts and plays on SRH advocacy&lt;br&gt;• Film showings on gender, sexuality and SRH&lt;br&gt;• Video production and Basic Web Design training workshops</td>
<td>Year 1: OPLAN CHUVA &lt;br&gt;Year 2: OPLAN CHUVA II &lt;br&gt;Year 3: OPLAN CHUVA Goes Techie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Alley to Beacon</strong>&lt;br&gt;University of the Visayas, Cebu City</td>
<td>• Communication workshops on SRH&lt;br&gt;• Group discussions on youth SRH&lt;br&gt;• Forums on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRH), gender-sensitivity, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) awareness&lt;br&gt;• IEC distribution&lt;br&gt;• Commodity distribution</td>
<td>Year 1: SEX 101: Gender Equality and Reproductive Health &lt;br&gt;Year 2: SEX 102: Gender Equality and Reproductive Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>ANDRES</strong>&lt;br&gt;University of San Carlos, Cebu City</td>
<td>• SRH Arts camps&lt;br&gt;• Cultural events for SRH advocacy&lt;br&gt;• Visual arts for RH&lt;br&gt;• Group discussions on youth SRH&lt;br&gt;• Concerts and performances for RH&lt;br&gt;• Commodity distribution</td>
<td>Year 1: USC RH initiatives &lt;br&gt;Year 2: USC RH initiatives Season 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Leaders for Solidarity</strong>&lt;br&gt;University of San Carlos, Cebu City</td>
<td>• Arts workshops for RH education&lt;br&gt;• Popularization and promotion of RH and RH-related issues through forums, IEC distributions and small group discussions&lt;br&gt;• RH advocacy performances&lt;br&gt;• Group discussions and forums on youth SRH</td>
<td>Year 1: USC RH initiatives (joint project with ANDRES) &lt;br&gt;Year 2: Positive Sexuality for Young People &lt;br&gt;Year 3: RH 101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives</th>
<th>Project Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6   | Sining ng Kababaihan para sa Bayan (SIKABAY) | • Poems, songs, essays, posters for RH advocacy  
• Youth circles – discussions on gender and SRH issues  
• Film showings on SRH  
• Shadow play workshops  
• Distribution of contraceptive commodities and IEC materials outside the school  
• Forums on gender, SRHR and women’s rights with dance-drama performances of their members  
• Workshops and competition on song writing and poster making | Year 1: Girl Meets World: Empowering Women of the 21st Century through Art and Reproductive Health Education  
Year 2: Girl Meets World: Empowering Women of the 21st Century through Art and Reproductive Health Education II |
| 7   | Mass Communicators Guild | • Group discussions on youth SRH  
• Forums on SRH  
• RH clinics (medical consultation and counseling)  
• Advocacy Event  
• Poster Making and Literary Writing Contest | Year 1: Kabataang Henal A Documentary Film on the issues confronting Holy Name University Tertiary Level students |
| 8   | The Varsitarian | • RH photo exhibits during a school fair  
• Literary night featuring RH literary pieces  
• Film showings on SRH  
• Group discussions on SRH  
• For ums on youth SRH  
• “Panagsadya – an advocacy concert on being young and responsible”  
• Distribution of SRH IEC materials  
• Visual arts exhibits on reproductive health featuring the work of student artists | Year 1: Duga: Unleashing Students Creative Juices Towards Healthy and Responsible UBians |

## Community-based Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives</th>
<th>Project Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9   | Bonbon Youth Association (BOYA) | • Community educations on youth SRH  
• Theater arts workshops for SRH education  
• Community theaters  
• Basic Community Visual Arts Workshops  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Commodity distribution | Year 1: Information Campaign Kababihin sa Reproductive Health pinaagi sa Edukasyon ug Cultural Activity  
Year 2: Community Arts Workshop for ARH in Bonbon, Aloguinsan  
Year 3: Community Arts Workshop for Adolescent Reproductive Health Advocacy in Bonbon, Aloguinsan, Cebu |
| 10  | Lihok sa mga Kabatang-anonan sa Bangbang (LIKABA) | • Community educations on youth SRH  
• Theater arts workshops for SRH education  
• Community theaters  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Commodity distribution | Year 1: Cultural Activity ug Pagtuon Kabahin sa Reproductive Health  
Year 2: Reaching out and Spreading the Importance of Reproductive Health in Cordova  
Year 3: Reaching out and Spreading the Importance of Reproductive Health in Cordova |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11  | Sudtonggan Youth Organization (SYO) | Sitio Sudtonggan, Barangay Basak, Lapu-lapu City | • Community educations on youth SRH  
• Youth SRH forums  
• Exposure to other youth SRH programs  
• SRH advocacy activities and contest  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Cultural productions on SRH | A Project to Initiate Reproductive Health Awareness Advocacy among the Youth in Sudtonggan and Neighboring Communities | A Project to Initiate Reproductive Health Awareness Advocacy among the Youth in Sudtonggan and Neighboring Communities |
| 12  | New Youth Railway Organization (NYRO) | Barangay Hipodromo, Cebu City | • Gender sensitivity trainings  
• Symposium on SRHR  
• Organizational management trainings  
• Community education on SRHR  
• Basic health skills trainings  
• Community theaters  
• Leadership trainings  
• Patient referrals  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Commodity distribution | Reproductive Health Advocacy and Campaign | Padayon nga Edukasyon ug Ekspsansion sa Kabatan-onan pinaagi sa Reproductive Health Activities |
| 13  | D’Visioners Youth Organization (DVYO) | Sitio Back of Matimco, Barangay Subangdaku, Mandaue City | • Community educations on youth SRH and youth development  
• Basketball leagues for men and volleyball leagues for women  
• Community theaters  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Social marketing of commodities  
• RH services including pap smear among young women and mothers  
• Leadership trainings  
• Organizational management trainings | Education Campaign on Reproductive Health | Expanding and Sustaining the Adolescent Reproductive Health Campaign in Subangdaku, Mandaue City |
| 14  | Kabataang Nagkahiusa alang sa Maayong Ugma (KANAMU) | Barangay Lawaan II, Talisay City | (United Youth for a Better Future) | • Community educations on youth SRH  
• Youth SRH forums  
• Community theaters  
• Distribution of IEC materials | Youth Development towards Bright Future | Youth Development towards Brighter Future |
| 15  | Gay Empowerment of Minglanilla (GEM) | Municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu | • Community educations on SRH and LGBT rights  
• Film festivals  
• Leadership trainings  
• Referrals of suspected cases of STI  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Commodity distribution | Gays in Crisis | Gays In Crisis – sustaining activities |
| 16  | Nagkahiusang Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerete (NKM) | Barangay Montesuerete, Municipality of Carmen, Bohol | (United Youth of Montesuerete) | • Community educations on youth SRH  
• Gender sensitivity trainings  
• Valentine cultural production  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Commodity distribution  
• Sports events  
• Leadership trainings  
• SRH community clinics  
• Cultural and visual arts workshops | Pagpadayag: Katakus sa Kinabuhi Alang sa Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerete | Pagboksiya alang sa Panglawas sa Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerete |
| 17  | Duljo and Desamparados Youth Associations | Barangay Tangnan, Municipality of Panglao, Bohol | • Youth orientation  
• Community educations on youth SRH  
• Fun and games for RH  
• Theater arts workshops for RH education  
• Youth SRH Assemblies  
• Distribution of IEC materials | Lihok – Panagtigom sa mga Kabatanonan sa Duljo alang sa Kalambuaang Panglawas | Pagpalapad alang sa Pagliahug Pagduso sa Katungod sa Kabatan-onan sa Serbisyon Panglawas |
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## Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiatives

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| 27  | Kabataan para sa Tunay na Kaunlaran  
(Youth for Genuine Development)  
Barangay San Jose, Municipality of E.B. Magalona | • SRH workshops  
• SRH Advocacy workshops  
• Film showing  
• Community educations on youth SRH  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• SRH Campaign Management Seminar  
• Integrated Theater Arts Workshops on SRH  
• Community SRH Cultural Productions | Year 2: Reproductive Health Seminar and Public Speaking Skills Training for the Members of Kabataan para sa Tunay na Kaunlaran  
Year 3: Reproductive Health Information Drive and Skills Training for the Youth of Barangay Tinihanban and Barangay Madalag |
| 28  | Kansyaha Cultural Youth Organization  
Barangay Purisima, Municipality of Manapla | • SRH camp  
• Theater arts workshops for SRH education  
• SRH workshops  
• Community educations on youth SRH  
• Community theaters  
• Distribution of IEC materials  
• Referrals of RH patients  
• Peer facilitators’ trainings on key SRH issues | Year 2: Kampanya sa Reproductive Health sa mga Kabataan sa Manapla  
Year 3: Kampanya sa Reproductive Health sa mga Kabataan sa Barangay Purisima at Barangay Chambery |
| 29  | Salvacion Youth Organization  
Barangay Salvacion, Municipality of Murcia | • SRH workshops  
• Community theaters  
• Community educations on youth SRH  
• Distribution of IEC materials | Year 2: Grasping the Understanding of Reproductive Health to the Basic Youth |
| 30  | Naghiliusa nga Kabataan sa Villa Esperanza  
(United Youth of Villa Esperanza)  
Barangay Tangub, Bacolod City | • Theater arts workshops for SRH education  
• Community educations on youth SRH  
• Community theaters  
• Distribution of IEC materials | Year 2: Community Youth Seminar and Cultural Training Advocacy on Reproductive Health |
| 31  | Youth for Rights Network (Y4R) | • Group discussions and forums on youth SRH  
• Y4R launching concert  
• Video production  
• Festival of short plays  
• Distribution of SRH IEC materials  
• Policy advocacy training  
• Lobbying for SRH policy making and enactment  
• Theater play / cultural presentation  
• Project dissemination forum | Year 3: Empowering Youth in the Reproductive Health Advocacy  
Year 4: Youth Leadership for SRH Policy Advocacy |
Sitio Back of Matimco is named after the lumber company, Matimco, Inc. which is situated in front of the sitio, in Barangay Subangdaku, Mandaue City. One has to walk through a narrow path (just enough for a person to pass) in order to enter the sitio from the main highway of Mandaue City. In the sitio are 160 families living in small houses made of wood and cement, cardboard, tin sheets, bamboo, or spare construction materials, built close to each other, separated by narrow footpaths of stones and gravel on dirty flooded ground.

More than half of the residents are laborers such as carpenters, construction workers, factory workers, production workers, and welders. Nearly 30% are service workers such as drivers, helpers, janitors, sewers and sales clerks. A few are government employees. Thus, majority are hired workers, paid the minimum wage mandated by law or even less. Women are either housewives depending on their husbands for sustenance or make extra income as stall vendors and laundrywomen. Because of economic hardships, many of their children finish only public high school and have to work to augment their family income.

The local people's organization called Kaming mga Lumulupyo walay Sandigan (KALUWASAN) has strived to improve their living conditions. It is with the organization that the Visayas Primary Health Care Services, Inc. (VPHCS) has built a partnership to improve the health conditions of the families by training community health workers (CHWs) to render basic promotive, preventive and selective curative care.

The youth are members of an organization called the D’Visioners Youth Organization (DVYO), a partner in the Yo! Lead project.

The Yo! Lead project came at a time that the DVYO wanted to conduct more activities for the benefit of the community. Although the concepts of reproductive health were not familiar to the members, as the organization’s main activities were mostly related with fiestas and catechism, they undertook the project with zeal and enthusiasm to learn new things. Eventually, they came to understand the significance of the project in the context of the needs of their organization and the community as well as the importance of advocating for RH rights and concerns.

Composed of young people, the DVYO conducted a series of discussions and leadership trainings among the youth in Back of Matimco and neighboring sitios. The group discussions which were facilitated by trained peer educators included topics on human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, adolescent vulnerabilities, gender and other social issues. They also had workshops on performing arts where they showcased what they learned during a cultural show.

Sports events like basketball and volleyball leagues were sponsored by the group in order to reach out to more youth members in their community. SRH discussions and messages were interspersed during breaks. In their regular cleanliness drives and activities during the fiesta, they incorporated IEC and commodity distribution among the households.

In these series of activities, they did not only get the attention of the young people but also the adult community residents who showed support for their endeavor to maximize the potential of the youth in the area. They also established linkages with the local health unit, the barangay officials and other institutions in the community which strengthened the organization and provided a support mechanism for their activities.
The Vital Signs became a partner of the Yo! Lead project in 2006 and implemented a project, Sabwag (Cebuano term meaning, to throw, to distribute, to propagate).

Vital Signs coordinated with the Cebu Velez College student council to widen the target audience and network of support for Sabwag. The project provided venues for the students to have access to knowledge on relevant reproductive health knowledge which was otherwise not commonly discussed in the classrooms. The project employed creative strategies and various opportunities for the students to make informed, free and responsible choices regarding their reproductive health.

**Love booths**

Every Valentine’s day for three consecutive years, the project Sabwag put up a “Love booth” for one week in the school campus where students were given flyers and freebies like candies and chocolates with sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information written on them. Freedom boards were also displayed in the campus where the students expressed themselves on different SRH topics.

**Sabwag Concerts**

RH discussions were done in between band performances during three Sabwag concerts conducted by the publication every year. During the third concert, youth organizations from other schools also presented artistic presentations that included poetry reading, cultural dances and shadow plays. Pins with SRH messages and contraceptive commodities were sold during the concerts. The concerts served as unwinding activities for the students as they were conducted in the last week of the school semester.

**Small group discussions**

Weekly group discussions were also conducted. Information and education on sexual and reproductive health were provided to the students in a more personal way as it was done in small groups. The students were able to clarify essential points on SRH especially on STDs and contraceptive use.

**Peer counseling**

In order to have additional young people inclined to peer counseling, the Vital Signs conducted a peer counseling and facilitators' training for leaders of student organizations and fraternities in the school in the third year. This was facilitated by trained peer facilitators of the Yo! Lead project.

Through the Yo! Lead project, the Vital Signs members became more in touch with the students and made the publication’s presence and influence in the school. The students welcomed and appreciated the organization’s efforts to help them in their RH related issues which were not addressed in the classrooms.
Kabataan Para sa Tunay na Kaunlaran
(Youth for Genuine Development)
Barangay San Jose, Municipality of E.B. Magalona, Negros Occidental

Enrique B. Magalona, also known as E.B. Magalona is a third class municipality in the province of Negros Occidental with a population of 54,490 or 10,498 households. Situated 23.9 kilometers away from Bacolod City, the capital of Negros Occidental, the municipality can be reached by a 25 - 30 minute ride.

San Jose is one of the 23 barangays in E.B. Magalona. It is primarily an agricultural land studded with sugar cane plantations. Residents are mostly farmers and sugar cane workers.

The Kabataan sa Tunay na Kaunlaran (KTK) or Youth for Genuine Development is a youth organization in San Jose. It was formed to foster unity among the youths towards progress, protect and advance their interests and welfare and develop their skills and talents towards helping others. The activities conducted by the organization were community education gatherings on pressing social issues and participation in community affairs especially fiestas and activities of other youth organizations.

The partnership of the Yo! Lead project with KTK started on the second year of the project when it expanded to Negros Occidental. With the grants given by the project, the KTK implemented a project “Reproductive Health Seminar and Public Speaking Skills Training for the Members of Kabataan para sa Tunay na Kaunlaran,” followed by another project, “Reproductive Health Information Drive and Skills Training for the Youth of Barangay Tinihaban and Barangay Madalag” in the third year.

The organization launched training seminars on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), gender sensitivity, SRH campaign management, family planning and contraception and STDs, among others. It also conducted workshops on theater arts that integrated SRH advocacy; workshop outputs were later presented during the organization’s cultural programs and concerts. Using theater arts as an innovative vehicle in advocating SRH issues proved to be very youth-friendly greatly appreciated by various youth organizations in San Jose and neighboring barangays.

The activities launched by the project increased the capacity of the members of the organization in SRH program campaign and management, strengthened its partnership with barangay officials and leaders, gave an opportunity for the organization to raise funds through the social marketing of contraceptive commodities, and expanded its membership in the community and in neighboring barangays.

KTK also actively participated in the SRH advocacy campaign of the Y4R network in the fourth year of the Yo Lead project.

The novel experience of the KTK leaders and members in the project has honed them not only to become effective SRH advocates but also leaders in youth development in the community, an experience that they shall bear beyond the project life in the agricultural and sugar cane lands of E.B. Magalona in Negros Occidental.

Best Practices
Nestled in the beautiful and magnificent hills of the town of Carmen well-known for its marvelous “Chocolate Hills,” Barangay Montesuerte is primarily an agricultural land. In the barangay live farmers and their families who subsist on the fruits of their hard labor tilling the land and raising farm animals.

In the barangay thrives a youth organization, the Nagkahiusang Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerte (NKM) or the United Youth of Montesuerte. As sons and daughters of farmers, the members formed the organization in 2005 in order to support their parents’ own association that was established to advance the farmers’ struggle for genuine land reform. The NKM also took up the cudgels of uniting and promoting the interests of the youth sector in the barangay.

The NKM raised the awareness of the youth on social issues through educational discussions, helped their parents plant and harvest their crops in their fields and in communal farms, and joined bayanihan or mutual aid activities in the farms and during special events such as weddings, birthdays and wakes for the dead. As a cultural organization, they also rendered presentations inside and outside their community.

The NKM implemented three projects funded by the Yo! Lead project in the first until the third years, namely: “Pagpadayag: Katakus sa Kinabuhi Alang sa Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerte (Life Skill for the Youth in Montesuerte),” “Adbokasiya alang sa Panglawas sa Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerte (Advocacy for health of the youth in Montesuerte),” and “Continuing Reproductive Health Advocacy for Youth Development in Montesuerte.”

Various activities included sports events and educational discussions on gender sensitivity, sexual and reproductive health rights, and adolescent reproductive health. Trainings on leadership, community theater and visual arts were also conducted. Posters made by organization members and cultural dances that uniquely mirrored the youth situation and SRH issues were featured during the community gatherings. A medical and dental mission for the youth and the general population of Montesuerte was also sponsored by the NKM in coordination with the Visayas Primary Health Care Services in April 2007 during the first year of the project.

The Yo! Lead project cultivated and maximized the inherent enthusiasm of the youth for sports and cultural activities and turned these events into effective vehicles to promote and advance their SRH rights and welfare.

Indeed, the gains and lessons in the project shall forever be etched in their lives which they shall pass on to their young when they become fathers and mothers. The project lives on in the Chocolate Hills of Carmen, Bohol.
We were raised highly influenced by strong Catholic teachings just like a usual Filipino family. But what made us different is having two gay brothers.

I have lived with my brothers for quite some time now yet I never had an idea what made them what they are or if their being gay is a matter of want. All that was clear to me is that they are different. And that society only has the stereotyped space for them in fashion and cosmetology.

Like others, I considered them weak for showing their feminine side unmindful that I was likewise downgrading myself as a female. And for being such, they are bound to be society’s outcast.

One October morning, a dear friend asked me to a reproductive health camp for the youth. It wouldn’t harm to join the camp so I agreed to come. Just like any other camp, I thought I would just be meeting new people my age and get me refreshed of things I already know in college. But much more than that, the camp made me understand complex questions about my own values and brothers.

I have never heard of gender and sexuality in college. But for the first time I’ve learned that homosexuality is not an abnormality or a disorder and that multiple factors form our sexuality and orientation. I understood that it is never a sign of weakness to be gay. I have become more understanding and accepting of people. And I realized the challenges my brothers are hurdling each day for being discriminated…even by my own family and society.

I have begun a journey. It is a journey not only to find answers, but also to struggle for society to be more accepting of our diversities. I am struggling for my brothers and all gay people in the world. Their challenges have become mine. Further I realize that more than acceptance, we have to struggle for our rights, for equal access to health, social opportunities and development. Gender discrimination is only one facet or perhaps a manifestation of a deeper social discrimination.

I hope that people will join us in broadening perspectives in others and making our voices heard.
Since childhood, there were questions I wasn’t allowed to ask.

In our community too, I always believed that because my family is poor, there is nothing more for me to do than stay in the farm everyday.

Even with my participation in our organization, Nagkahiusang Kabatan-onan sa Montesuerte here in Carmen, Bohol, I still felt something inside me was hollow because I wanted to do many things that I cannot do because I did not even go to high school.

However, I know now though that everything changes and even my own personal me can change. It started in 2006 when our organization was chosen to be part of the Youth on the Lead project or Yo! Lead.

At first, like my friends in the organization, I was still ashamed to talk about Reproductive Health, sex and even just about the different part of my body. Of course, that was because of the fact that for the longest time, we were living without talking about these things in the midst of huge families around us, women getting pregnant every year, even of course, we are all living in poverty. We were brought up thinking that even ligation, even if legal, is a sin.

As we went on with educational discussions, trainings and different activities within the project, my mind was little by little opened, getting wider each time.

I know now how important information is for us adolescents who face many temptations and are with vulnerabilities around us. In Yo! Lead, I have learned that we deserve to be given education and opportunities. We ought to be taught about things such as when to enter into serious sexual relationships, how unplanned and unwanted pregnancies can lead to worse things, how to care for ourselves and most importantly, I have learned that we have sexual and reproductive health rights.

Yo! Lead is a great help indeed, in opening my eyes and mind in the realities of life and how equally important my contribution is. Yo! Lead has made me realize my significance through the knowledge and skills it has equipped me.

More than the education, skills, knowledge and the activities regarding reproductive health, Yo! Lead is an instrument for me to gain self-confidence and faith in myself as a youth. Now, I know that I am equal with every one in the society even though I did not reach the same level of education that they have, even though they have more food to eat each meal, even though they have more time for play and even though they are not as poor as I am.

Wherever I may be, I can now look straight to the eyes of every individual I walk across with and hold my head high because I know now that I play an important and significant role in the over-all development of our society, in my own little ways. That is true with the skills, knowledge and a new level of education I now carry, every single day of my life.

I am part of society’s development

Jun
Member, Nagkahiusang Kabatan-onan Sa Montesuerte, Carmen, Bohol
(Translated from Cebuano)
After the reproductive health training, we wasted no time in relaying what we learned to the other members of the Leaders for Solidarity. It was an eye opener to all of us because for one, no one has really talked to us about reproductive health in a way that made it seem important and not awkward.

After we relayed the information on safe sex practices, sexually transmitted diseases and the mentioning of the fact that there are institutions and people whom we can approach to consult regarding these problems, we were approached by two of our members. These two members told us in private that they think they have STD. We then went to VPHCS and had our friends checked. True enough they had STD. It was an experience worth mentioning because had it not been for the Youth Camp, we would have still been blinded to the fact that there are young people out there who are sick and who need help yet there are no opportunities for them to seek consultation. There is also that fear of ridicule and being shunned upon.
What Yo! Lead means to me

Celina | June 30, 2008

It was something different, something new, that somehow made a difference in my life.

I come from a middle class family of Chinese origin, brought up in a highly patriarchal family where my father’s word was the law, where all my needs were provided for, and there was nothing to worry about except to maintain my honors in class. I studied in an exclusive school for girls run by a religious congregation from elementary to high school where I graduated as the valedictorian and reaped honors for my family. Except for movies and strolling in the mall with my classmates during weekends and occasional birthday parties, life for me revolved around my parents and my studies. I thought life was meant to be that way, to have a college degree after high school, find work and maintain the honor of the family.

My parents wanted me to be a nurse; I wanted it too, so I enrolled in the Velez College of Nursing in Cebu City. I wanted to hone my writing skills I developed in my high school so that I became a writer of the Vital Signs, the student publication.

In my second year in 2007, Yo! Lead came to my school, and my life. It was through group discussions that we started to talk about issues that were not ever discussed before, in my home, during my high school years, among my friends. My classmates in college shared to me their experiences with their boyfriends, how and what they did during their dates. A classmate told me she had six boyfriends, two at the same time. One told me she had sex with her boyfriend. I was shocked. My parents and the religious sisters in my high school had taught me about moral values. Maybe I was just naïve but with my cloistered childhood and upbringing and conservative atmosphere in my high school, I never got to hear about these things in my life before.

What my classmates were doing were morally wrong and I feared that they may land themselves into difficult situations later on which they cannot handle, like unprepared marriages or unwanted pregnancies. Well, I could one day even find myself in a relationship which I wouldn’t be able to handle myself.

I realized that I needed information and skills, such as, when and how to enter into a serious sexual relationship, how to handle a man who wants to court me or even makes advances on me, how to say no when I do not want.

During the group discussions we had, I also learned there was such thing as sexual and reproductive health rights of the youth. Slowly, through the activities we had, I learned to see myself, my needs, my strengths and weaknesses so that I can better handle myself when I am with people, especially with males.

I had the opportunity to be trained as a peer educator. I am very thankful to the Yo!Lead project because it really made a difference. Now I am more equipped to handle situations, to make decisions wisely, to advise my friends so that they too can make decisions wisely.

When I graduate from college and tread unfamiliar paths in the future, I know I can face the world with all its complexities and challenges, and remain strong in my principles.

“I’m Ken, 21 years male. Before I knew Yo! Lead, I really didn’t care of the consequences of my being curious. I started to have sex when I was fifteen; actually I’m active in it until now. The difference is that, I didn’t bother to use condom or any contraceptive methods before because I found it so uncomfortable. That’s why I became a father at the age of 17. But when I joined in one of Yo! Lead’s activities way back three years ago, my attitude towards life has eventually changed. I learned to value myself and to respect more my sexual partner especially in protecting each other against unsafe sex that may lead to pregnancy or STIs.”

Ken | Student

“I’m Maj, an out-of-school youth. I thank Yo! Lead for making me aware and realize the significance of our reproductive health and our rights. Though I have no experience of any sexual activity but the knowledge I got shall help me to protect myself and my fellow youth in the future against STIs or unwanted pregnancies.”

Maj | Out-of-school youth

Charm | Student
The Day Before...

Just_a_girl
St. Theresa’s College

It was the most perfect day for me! The sky was all too pleasant and the sun was shining so brightly. Tomorrow would be graduation day! Yes, I would be graduating by tomorrow with my diploma, awards and certificates! Tomorrow would be the day, March 23. But today was one of the most unforgettable days of my life. Because this day, I almost lost everything that I love.

Growing up in a family with the most number of boys have been a great help for me. It helped me understand what goes in and around their mind. And because of this I’ve learned to trust boys more than girls. Ever since I was a kid, most of my closest friends were boys. They’re easy to go with and they were more predictable than girls. But I was wrong.

On the day before my graduation, a friend of mine asked me to hang out with him just for a while. Since I had nothing to do at home, I decided to go with him. We decided to meet at the mall. We went from place to place. We went happily together. Then he led me into an alley, a very dark alley. My heart beat so fast that blood rushed all throughout my body. I was scared of what would happen there. I told him to go some place else and he just said he wanted to talk to me privately. I told him this was no place to talk to for it was all too dark and we won’t be able to see each other. He just told me that was the point!

He snatched me from behind and did the thing I feared the most. I was too shaky and frightened but I told myself I had to fight and struggle. He was so strong and I was too weak. He began touching all of me. Tears just kept falling down my cheeks, seeking help for somebody to save me from that misery. I needed to struggle and resist. When I finally gave up, I just realized he stopped. He asked an apology from me and fixed me up. It has been the biggest trauma for me. I thought I lost it but luckily, he didn’t get it.

I got home and pretended that nothing happened. I took a shower and felt disgusted at myself. I cried and cried. There was no one that I could turn to. I couldn’t let my family know what happened. They’d probably kill me for that. My boyfriend didn’t even care about it too. And the worst part of it? It was our friend who did it to me.

It’s been a year now since it happened. Nobody knows what happened until this very day I’ve decided to reveal it. I guess there are a lot of girls out there who also blamed themselves for the same misfortune I got. But it was not just a misfortune. It is how boys and society perceive girls or women. We are not sex objects. Nor are we less human than men to be viewed as objects of pleasure. We have rights. But many of us don’t know them. Nor many can assert them. Yet getting in touch with Youth on the Lead made me change how I look at myself. I have become more confident and comfortable of myself. I know now how to protect myself. I would like other girls to know what I know about sexual health and rights. And make relationships more liberating.
Gays who crossdress and those who have enlarged breasts are prohibited from entering our school. In order for them to do so, they must dress ‘appropriately’- loose shirt and pants, no make-up and definitely no enlarged breasts.

During the Yo! Lead youth camp, we had a talk on Gender and sexuality. It was a very healthy discussion because we were made aware of so many things that are not taught in school. One important lesson that I believe should be emphasized is that how we dress or how we look does not define our totality as a person. Not one study has been made to prove that our sexual orientation determines how well or how bad we perform in our academics.

Discrimination and stereotyping is a disease far worse than STD because it cannot be treated with any antibiotic or by any medication. It can only be stopped by widespread dissemination of understanding of facts and eradication of myths and taboos.
about last night

last night.
Last night will never be forgotten. It was the night of liberation. It was the evening of spirits of shattered sky, of clear clouds, of the peaceful air, silent wind of scattered stars of music and waves And the night kept silent.

All these were witnesses Of souls flying freely Playing their roles on the abyss

Last night was the night Of passionate love-making with the abyss And a celebration of a year-old stay In this reality, contradiction and struggle.

Quite certainly, Last night has created history

-April 2002
Tagbilaran City

Fragments

Like pieces of paper Torn, shredded
Divided, stripped Tossed by the Winds of time

And cares And will.

Like shards of glass And debris Pounded, crushed Powdered into sand By the sheer force Of love known and Lost, Of yearning Eating itself up.

Like pieces of paper Like shards of glass They tear, they break As memories. Torn Broken But never forgotten.

- amnerak
October 23, 06
Minglanilla

Stripped

On the shore
She stood still
Empty eyes
Stared the Vastness of Infinity…

She walked
As the gust of wind Gnawed her Skin
As tears falling down Rubbing off The pain of “that” memory

As roll of dirt Of her being Emerged…

The shore
The sand
And the waves
No hope for her To fly

As the sun Sank down
She screamed.

Shattered.

She.

-Joseph Reynaldo Lubiano
October 23, 2006
Since its founding in 1985, the Visayas Primary Health Care Services, Inc. has continued to pursue its mission to promote primary health care programs in Cebu and Bohol provinces. It works in partnership with people’s organizations in the poor sectors of society – peasants, workers, fisher folks, urban poor and women – in depressed and underserved communities in providing health services and setting up community-based health programs (CBHPs).

The VPHCS has reached out to more than 100 barangays in Metropolitan Cebu and Cebu province and in 12 towns in Bohol provinces, providing services and programs that included health skills trainings of more than 200 community health workers (CHWs), provision of free medical and dental services, launching of community health education classes and community health campaigns, and referrals of patients to tertiary hospitals and specialists.

The VPHCS has also tapped, organized and mobilized members of the health sector to provide services to depressed communities. Activities such as fora, community exposures and assistance in medical missions are conducted for medical, nursing and health student and health professionals in Cebu City and Tagbilaran City that enhance their social awareness and involvement in answering the needs of the poor.

Since 1989, it has implemented various projects with the support of its partner funding agencies and benefactors including the following, namely: Bread for the World, Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM), Ford Foundation, Planned Parenthood Federation of America – International, Asmae - Association Soeur Emmanuelle, Fi-Am Center for Community Health and Development (FACCHD), the Philippine government through the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), the Philippine Support Group of Minnesota and the Asian Community Trust.

The Yo! Lead Project is one of its projects.

The VPHCS also establishes linkages and relationships with various government agencies, non-government, church-based, religious organizations, charitable institutions, people’s organizations and other civic groups for joint health activities and provision of support for its beneficiaries.
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