

# Newsletter

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## News

### Jamaica Approves New National Youth Policy

Jamaica recently approved a revised 2004 national youth policy. The policy articulates the importance of planning for the development of Jamaica’s human resources from birth onward; defines a common vision and framework for youth development; describes the roles and responsibilities of youth in their personal and national development; and serves as a tool for advocating for youth development issues. In the focal area of health, the policy places emphasis on the risk of early pregnancy, substance misuse, and HIV and other STIs. Objectives include promoting the provision of high-quality information to young persons on healthy lifestyles—including alternatives to risky behaviors such as drug use and multiple sexual partners—and

increasing access to and use of high-quality youth-friendly health services.

Source: *Youth Reproductive Health Policy Country Brief Series No. 1*, September 2004. View at [www.policyproject.com/abstract.cfm/2164](http://www.policyproject.com/abstract.cfm/2164).

Read the new policy at [www.youth-policy.com/Policies/Jamaica\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.cfm](http://www.youth-policy.com/Policies/Jamaica_National_Youth_Policy.cfm).

### Uganda Reviews Consent Policy on HIV Testing for Minors

The Ugandan government is reviewing its policy on voluntary HIV counseling and testing for children following recommendations by experts that disclosure of a child’s serostatus should only be done by a person with whom the child feels comfortable.



The *youth-policy.com* newsletter includes recent news, events, and current policymaking efforts within the rapidly changing field of youth reproductive health. The *youth-policy.com* website, launched in 2004, is an online resource for improving youth reproductive health and HIV policies worldwide and is used by youth, policymakers, NGOs, donors, and technical experts.



According to current policy, a child (age 18 and under) cannot be tested for HIV without the consent of a parent or guardian. However, officials say the reality is that many children who lack parental support begin sexual activity early or have been caught up in war situations and been infected. Experts also agree that there is a need to address the special counseling and testing needs of disabled children.

Uganda has won worldwide acclaim for its anti-AIDS campaign, which has reduced infection rates from 30 percent in the 1990s to about 6 percent presently. An estimated 1 million people are HIV positive, 10 percent of whom are children. One million Ugandans have died of the disease since it was first diagnosed 22 years ago.

Source: *PlusNews*, October 2004

Read more about VCT policies for youth at [www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=vct](http://www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=vct).

Read policies from Uganda at [www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=](http://www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=).

### **Educational Programs Can Significantly Reduce Support of Female Genital Cutting (FGC)**

An evaluation of village educational programs in Senegal and Burkina Faso revealed that women who participated have higher levels of knowledge and improved attitudes concerning gender-based violence, FGC, and reproductive health. Approval rates of FGC decreased significantly, but not all participants changed their attitudes about FGC. However, there was a significant and sizable decrease in reported cutting of young girls in Senegal.

Full Report: *The Tostan Program: Evaluation of a Community-based Education Program in Senegal*. View at [www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/frontiers/FR\\_FinalReports/Senegal\\_Tostan%20FGC.pdf](http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/frontiers/FR_FinalReports/Senegal_Tostan%20FGC.pdf).

Full Report: *Experience from a Community-based*

*Education Program in Burkina Faso: The Tostan Program*. View at [www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/frontiers/FR\\_FinalReports/BurkinaFaso\\_FGC.pdf](http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/frontiers/FR_FinalReports/BurkinaFaso_FGC.pdf).

Read more about FGC and youth policies at [www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=FemaleGenitalCutting](http://www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=FemaleGenitalCutting) and [www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=](http://www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=).

### **Mandatory Parental Involvement in Youth Contraceptive Decisions May Lead to an Increased Incidence of Teenage Pregnancy**

A new study suggests that in the face of laws requiring parental involvement in family planning decisionmaking, about 50 percent of teenagers would discontinue use of clinic services. However, few teenagers would be deterred from having sex, according to “Confidential Reproductive Health Services for Minors: The Potential Impact of Mandated Parental Involvement for Contraception,” by Rachel K. Jones and Heather Boonstra. The research shows that teenagers would reduce their use of the most effective contraceptive methods and use less effective ones, such as withdrawal, or no method at all.

Source: *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, Volume 36, Number 5, September/October 2004. View at [www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3618204.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3618204.html).

Read more about contraception and youth policies at [www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=Contraception](http://www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=Contraception) and [www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=](http://www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=).

## **In Their Own Words: Practitioners Talk About Policy Impact**

Uganda adopted a national adolescent reproductive health policy in 2004. Reverend Mwesigwa Simon, diocesan youth worker of the Anglican

Church of Uganda, commented on the policy's impact on the church's activities:

"As a result of the formulation of the Adolescent Sexual Health Policy, many dioceses in the Anglican Church of Uganda have committed themselves to ensuring an annual budgetary allocation for ASRH [adolescent sexual and reproductive health] activities. These dioceses include the Diocese of Kampala, Busoga Diocese, Sebei Diocese, South Rwenzori Diocese among others. In Sebei Diocese, for instance, youths have formed an advocacy music and drama group which communicates ASRH issues through drama and music to schools and parishes. They do this using the funds allocated to them in the Annual Diocesan Budget. As a result, many folks have changed their attitude towards female genital mutilation, a cultural practice that demeans the girls.

"One elder had this to say: 'We realized the danger this was causing our girls as they came up to express it in their plays. Most of us have abandoned the practice.'"

## Events

### **Repositioning of Family Planning Conference in Accra, Ghana** February 15–18, 2005

Participants from various African countries will be coming together to address the repositioning of family planning within their regional and cultural contexts. *Youth-policy.com* will also be featured at the conference as a tool for policymakers worldwide.

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## New on *youth-policy.com*

### **Streamlined Search Engine**

Based on user feedback, we have streamlined the basic and advanced search functions. Check it out!

[www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?search=b](http://www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?search=b)

We welcome user feedback on this recent change and encourage you to contact us through the website link with your impressions and suggestions.

[www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=ContactUs](http://www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=ContactUs)

### **A Resource Guide for Young Women on HIV/AIDS**

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) created a resource guide based on a February–March 2002 online discussion aimed at young women. Moderated on AWID's Young Women and Leadership listserv, this forum was designed as a means for sharing ideas and information, as well as for initiating debates on issues that affect young women in their particular contexts. The forum also provided a space for young women to articulate their visions and perspectives for the advancement of the women's rights and social justice agenda internationally.

Some of the topics covered include intersections among youth, gender, and HIV/AIDS; emerging challenges and successes in HIV/AIDS for young people (particularly young women); and ways in which young people can participate in addressing gender and youth issues in worldwide HIV/AIDS pro-

grams geared specifically toward young women who are leaders in their communities.

To download a copy of this booklet, visit [www.awid.org/publications/ActNow.pdf](http://www.awid.org/publications/ActNow.pdf) or contact Shamillah Wilson, AWID, at [Shamillah@awid.org](mailto:Shamillah@awid.org), or Sisonke Msimang, UNIFEM, at [sisonke.msimang@undp.org](mailto:sisonke.msimang@undp.org).

For details on how to access discussion archives, visit [www.hdnet.org](http://www.hdnet.org).

Source: SEA-AIDS eForum 2004: [sea-aids@forums.healthdev.org](mailto:sea-aids@forums.healthdev.org)

Read more about HIV and youth policies at [www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=](http://www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=).

## Female Genital Cutting

A new report funded by the USAID Interagency Working Group on FGC attempts to answer the following questions: What information exists on FGC and what information gaps are perceived by individuals and groups that work to eradicate this practice? PRB, FHI, PATH, FRONTIERS, and the Manoff Group gathered information from eight African countries (Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, and Uganda) where FGC is practiced.

Full Report: *Information on Female Genital Cutting: What Is Out There? What Is Needed? An Assessment*. View at [www.prb.org/pdf04/InfoOnFGC.pdf](http://www.prb.org/pdf04/InfoOnFGC.pdf).

Other publications on FGC can be found on the FRONTIERS website at [www.popcouncil.org/frontiers/pubs/pubs\\_fgc.html](http://www.popcouncil.org/frontiers/pubs/pubs_fgc.html).

Read more about FGC and youth policies at [www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=FemaleGenitalCutting](http://www.youth-policy.com/content.cfm?page=FemaleGenitalCutting) and [www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=](http://www.youth-policy.com/compendium.cfm?get=).

## Feedback and Evaluation

### Just in! The May–September Monitoring Report of [youth-policy.com](http://youth-policy.com) Usership Results

See full report details at [www.youth-policy.com/documents/yp\\_monitoring\\_may\\_nov\\_2004.pdf](http://www.youth-policy.com/documents/yp_monitoring_may_nov_2004.pdf).

Please send your comments, questions, requests, and ideas to [yrh@policyproject.com](mailto:yrh@policyproject.com).

Both [youth-policy.com](http://youth-policy.com) and the newsletter are brought to you by the Adolescent Working Group, POLICY Project in collaboration with YouthNet/Family Health International.

To subscribe to the [youth-policy.com](http://youth-policy.com) newsletter, or to contribute ideas or feedback or ask questions, please email [yrh@policyproject.com](mailto:yrh@policyproject.com). For copies of publications, please contact the organization referenced at the end of the article.

Inclusion of publications and resources in the [youth-policy.com](http://youth-policy.com) newsletter does not imply endorsement.

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