

Young Global Leaders unite to tackle HIV in Africa

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The World Economic Forum's community of Young Global Leaders (YGL) is a unique, multistakeholder community of young leaders committed to shaping the global future, with a focus on collective action and tangible results.

Kate Roberts, a Young Global Leader since 2007, will lead roughly 30 of her contemporaries through one of the poorest townships in South Africa to meet with those most affected by the disease. Roberts is Vice-President of Corporate Marketing & Communications at PSI and is the Founder of one of PSI's global HIV education and prevention programmes, YouthAIDS.

“ One of the greatest achievements of the YGL community is its ability to bring creative, intelligent people from a wide variety of backgrounds to the same table and with the same focus – to build creative and lasting solutions to the greatest challenges facing our world, ” said Roberts. “ This learning journey is the first step towards collective action by these extraordinary people in the fight against HIV and AIDS. ”

The visit to the Khayelitsha Township – just 30 kilometres from central Cape Town where the World Economic Forum on Africa is being held – will take place in three parts.

The first stop will be to a local high school, where the YGLs will develop an intimate understanding of HIV prevention objectives across Africa and the challenges inherent in the grassroots implementation of those objectives. A short presentation will be followed by an interactive session with students from the high school. A YouthAIDS peer educator will lead a role-play session to highlight dangers, such as cross-generational sex or sexual encounters at a young age. Later, a young HIV-positive student is expected to disclose her status to the group and share her remarkable story.

The second part of the journey takes place at the local community and in partnership with another non-profit HIV prevention organization, also co-founded by a Young Global Leader, Dennis Karpes. Dance4life works throughout South Africa and in 20 other countries across the globe, inspiring, mobilizing and uniting young people, through the universal language of music and dance, to fight against HIV and AIDS for life.

This will give the YGLs a glimpse at the “ edutainment ” events that both dance4life and YouthAIDS use to reach the younger generations. The session will include condom demonstrations, role-play exercises and competitions that demonstrate the need for proper and consistent condom use, abstinence and HIV prevention, and stigma reduction. Dance4life will lead an interactive drumming and dancing session, while YouthAIDS sets up mobile HIV counselling and testing tents where community members and the YGLs can be tested.

The day will end with a panel discussion focused on creating tangible solutions and meaningful action to reduce the spread of HIV, specifically by harnessing the power of the private sector and through innovative models of success within the sector. Panellists and guests will be faced with the question of how to build and apply creative solutions and effective partnership to maintain sustainable progress in the fight against the disease. The outcomes will be the building blocks for more comprehensive collective action, based on a combined public and private sector approach.

“ This is our largest ever African gathering of Young Global Leaders. We are glad that this group will have the chance to meet with community leaders in Khayelitsha and exchange ideas about how to mobilize public and private resources to bear on big, global challenges in an effective way, ” explained David Aikman, Senior Director at the World Economic Forum and Head of the Forum of Young Global Leaders. “ The work of Kate and Dennis are further examples of the way in which Young Global Leaders are shaping a more positive future for the world. ”

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