



22 April, 2008

**UNFPA ABSTRACT ACCEPTED FOR PRESENTATION AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

The UNFPA Office for the English and Dutch Speaking Caribbean's Abstract submission to the International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2008) is among the few accepted for poster presentation at the conference to be held in Mexico City from 3-8 August, 2008.

The Abstract submitted under the cross-cutting subject theme: *Health Systems Strengthening & Integration* highlights a project jointly executed by UNFPA and its local partner, Youth Challenge Guyana, targeting 27 barber shops and beauty salons.

The project takes advantage of the popularity of barber shops and beauty salons among young people, who use them not only for their functional roles but also as meeting points to fraternize, discuss personal, cultural and sexuality issues. Accordingly, these institutions have been transformed into youth-friendly spaces where young people can access information from barbers and beauticians who have been trained as STIs/HIV/AIDS peer educators. Educational materials and condoms are also readily available, as part of the effort to provide increased access to information and services for youth.

“We must be creative in our approach to reaching youth with prevention messages. This means taking the services to them, instead of waiting for them to come to the traditional health centres,” said Harold Robinson, UNFPA Representative. “We have learnt a lot from this initiative and we are happy for the opportunity to share our experiences at this very important conference.”

The International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2008) is considered among the most important gathering for the release and discussion of scientific, programmatic and policy developments in the global response to HIV/AIDS. The conference brings together the key persons and organizations involved in responding to the epidemic to share lessons and together chart the course for the road ahead.

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