

# Practicum on Family Planning Communication and Advocacy Responses in Africa

**Speke Resort and conference centre, Munyonyo**

**Kampala, Uganda, 19, November 2009**

The delicate balance and relationship between family planning (FP), HIV and AIDS and the environment in Africa is complex but critical. Sub-sahara Africa's population is growing at twice the rate of other regions. Fueled by the world's highest fertility rates, Africa's population will double by 2036 to a staggering 1.2 billion. According to health and demographic experts, continued high fertility rates and rapid population growth could prove to be more disastrous than AIDS in most, although not all, African countries. Population growth threatens Africa's water supply, forests, food security, land tenure, social services, economic development, and the health of its women and children.

Reducing Africa's high fertility rates is an imperative that requires a strong and strategic communication and advocacy response. Advocating for smaller families and the use of family planning, coupled with improved access to family planning services was a key factor in the rapid reduction in fertility and population growth rates in Asia and Latin America. It will take a similar combined effort in Africa, where cultural, religious and societal beliefs favor large families, and where family planning methods are often regarded with suspicion and fear.

## **AfriComNet Practicum**

In recognition of the need for well-designed and implemented family planning advocacy and communication programs, AfriComNet, a network of more than 900 strategic communication practitioners from 45 countries, will organize a one-day practicum in Kampala, Uganda. The Practicum will immediately follow the International Family Planning Conference, organized by the Gates Institute. It will provide a venue for sharing successful communication and advocacy approaches, research, and tools for family planning, with a particular focus on integration with HIV/AIDS and environmental education. AfriComNet plans to bring together 80 -100 participants including policy makers, donor representatives, strategic communication and advocacy practitioners, and family planning program managers for this practicum.

### **The purposes of the practicum are to:**

1. **Share lessons learned, tools, and promising practices in population and FP communication and advocacy in Africa.**
2. **Explore the integration of family planning, population, environmental protection, and HIV/AIDS communication and advocacy.**
3. **Explore communication approaches for tackling normative and cultural change required to influence family size decisions, healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, and family planning choices.**

For more information, or to register, please contact Charles Kakaire at [info@africomnet.org](mailto:info@africomnet.org) or AfriComNet at +256 414 237222; [www.africomnet.org](http://www.africomnet.org)