

READY

RESILIENT & EMPOWERED
ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

#READY4UHC



Accountability

SAY IT
DO IT!

Welcome to this amazing edition on accountability.

Accountability is about being held responsible for something and doing what we say we will. As a READY activist, I hold myself to account first and foremost. When I represent my issues and the issues of other young women living with HIV, I must represent them truthfully and report back to my community. We must also hold others who have power to account, like policymakers, health workers and community leaders. But this isn't a blame game. It's about reminding decision-makers of their promises to improve our health and wellbeing. When they fail to act, it's about saying that's not good enough. We don't accept words. Actions are more important than words.



Gladys, Zimbabwe

One of the articles in this newsletter is about young women demanding access to dolutegravir (DTG). After a lot of advocacy, the government of Zimbabwe has committed to making it available. But will young women really be offered DTG? We will see and we will hold the government to account. Say it, do it!

Gumbo

GLADYS GUMBO, READY TO LEAD COORDINATOR, GUEST EDITOR, ZIMBABWE YOUNG POSITIVES (ZY+)



Youth advocates speaking at Y+ Summit organised by UNYPA, Kampala, Uganda

Doing it for ourselves

BY NICHOLAS NIWAGABA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UGANDA NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (UNYPA)

Over 400 people – mainly young people living with HIV – took part in the three-day Y+ Summit in March 2019. The aim was to hone our advocacy, financial literacy and life skills so we could become powerful advocates for our own health: independent and in control of our lives.

We invited decision-makers so they could hear our views and act on our needs and wishes. We had representatives from the Ministries of Health and Education, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UN agencies, MenEngage Alliance and banks. This is because they believe in the power of young people to bring about change and they stand with us.

What changes do we want to see? We want meaningful youth participation in the district AIDS committees and oversight committees of the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism. We also want comprehensive sexuality education in schools. And finally, the rollout of a national HIV trust fund, paid for by government, to advance universal health coverage in Uganda.

If we want to see change, as young people, we need to create advocacy spaces. We need to seize every opportunity to bring policymakers and decision-makers into these spaces so they can hear our messages, be inspired and act.

Universal health coverage

BY TINASHE RUFURWADZO, GLOBAL NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (Y+)

Universal health coverage (UHC) is a hot topic. It means everyone has access to the healthcare they need, no matter where they live, whether young or old, rich or poor, in a city or rural area. If you can't afford health services, you can still receive the care you need. That makes sense. But it feels far from reality – can everyone really get healthcare? Can our health systems cope? And can they continue to cater for those of us with specific HIV needs? These are the discussions taking place around UHC right now.

In March, Cédric Nininahazwe (from Y+) and I travelled to Kigali, Rwanda to take part in the Africa Health Agenda International Conference. Here's our [blog](#). And in April, READY youth advocates were at UHC civil society meetings in New York.

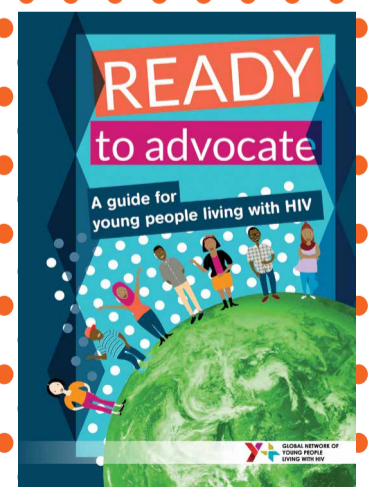
Education as a Vaccine (EVA) Nigeria are also working with young people to advocate for UHC. Olabukunola Williams, Executive Director, said, "UHC means adolescents and young people, including those who are marginalised and criminalised, can access the health services they need without fear of rights violations."

As young people living with HIV, we must make sure that we:

- Take part in discussions around UHC at the global level.
- Are trained so we can join in discussions at country level around [health financing](#) and UHC, and what this means for the services we need.
- Push for a strong community workforce to deliver UHC, including peer supporters like Community Adolescent Treatment Supporters (CATS), who every day are helping to make the dream of UHC a reality.



#READY4UHC



Download the Y+ resource, [READY to advocate: a guide for young people living with HIV](#): <http://www.yplusnetwork.org/resource/ready-to-advocate/>

READY to Care scorecard

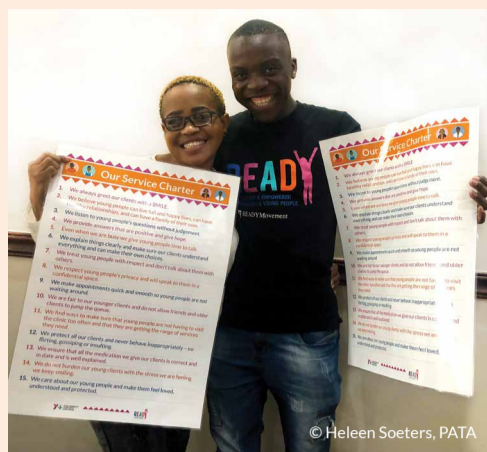
BY CÉDRIC NININHAZWE, REGIONAL PROGRAMMES MANAGER – AFRICA, Y+

SAY IT DO IT!

The READY to Care scorecard is an innovative accountability tool for young people and healthcare providers to monitor and improve services together.

How did we do in Mozambique? In November 2018, 98 adolescents and young people living with HIV (a third of whom are male and two-thirds female) completed the scorecard. Their average age was 19. The six READY+-supported health facilities received an overall score of 76%.

Most clients said that healthcare providers are friendly, inspire hope and give them positive answers. Providers explain things clearly and they respect their privacy and confidentiality. Clients also reported that health workers make them feel cared for, understood and protected, and they check the correct medication and information are provided. Just over half of the clients (51%) said that providers listen to them without judgement, treat them with respect and don't talk about them to others (55%). In addition, 56% of clients said providers always/mostly keep appointments brief and on time, and 62% said providers make time to talk even when they're busy.



A nurse and a CATS in a READY+ health facility

The scorecard also revealed important improvements that need to be made:



- Young people want providers to reduce the number of clinic visits and they want a range of services to be available (only 44% reported this always/mostly occurs).
- Young people don't want to take on providers' stress (45% said this always/mostly happens).
- Young people want providers to behave appropriately by not flirting, gossiping or insulting clients. Only 30% said this never occurs.

"People are willing to give all they have to keep someone they love healthy. Governments know this. People shouldn't have to choose between educating a child and curing an illness. Out-of-pocket expenditure for health needs to go down and governments need to step up their investment in health. Health is a right – no matter who you are, how old you are, what you do or where you come from."

Ruth Ayarza, Head: Community and Health Systems, Frontline AIDS

Using social media to hold decision-makers to account

BY YANA PANFILOVA, Y+ READY FELLOW (2017) AND TEENERGIZER

All of Teenergizer's external communications – the publications, interviews and video content – are created by adolescents and young people. This is linked to our mission: to build a world free from discrimination, where youth can realise their potential, a world where young people's rights are fully respected.

NGOs often accuse the government of injustice. But our approach is different, we share good news: achievements, decisions and partnerships, in the spirit of building bridges. For example, for the first time ever, the Ministry of Health in Ukraine collaborated with young people to create the youth working group in the ministry. We post on social media the decisions taken with the ministry on important topics. Now the Public Health Centre is promoting Teenergizer's online counselling service to help more teenagers solve their problems. It's all about changing mindsets.

Our fight for DTG

BY AUDREY NOSENGA, READY+ FOCAL POINT, ZIMBABWE YOUNG POSITIVES (ZY+)

We want dolutegravir (DTG) – a powerful antiretroviral drug – to be rolled out as a first-line treatment option, including for women of reproductive age who are using any form of contraception in Zimbabwe and globally. After a study in Botswana, WHO developed guidelines expressing concern about the use of DTG by women of childbearing age. The study showed a small (under 1%) but increased risk of birth defects compared to the risk in women who aren't using DTG or living with HIV. I feel strongly that these guidelines are being taken so seriously at country level. We want to make our own informed choices about whether to take DTG or not.

Civil society advocacy, including by ZY+, has led to updated Zimbabwe treatment guidelines, stating that DTG should be made available to adolescent girls and young women. DTG is meant to be rolled out in health facilities next month to everyone. This must include women of reproductive age. We are watching closely and we'll draw inspiration from Kenya and Uganda where the battle has been won.

"Young people have the right to be heard. They are the next generation of leaders. Involving young people in decision-making leads to better choices and stronger, more inclusive communities."

Mark Vermeulen, Executive Director, Aidsfonds



Young women at HIV R4P with the Visible Panty Line

Listen to the podcast featuring an interview with Maxi and Audrey.

What young women want: choice!

BY MAXIMINA JOKONYA, PEER MENTOR, AFRICAID

At the last HIV Prevention for Research (R4P) conference, we heard a lot about young women but too little from young women. It's essential to include the faces behind the statistics and graphs.

So a group of us young women took over the Advocates' Corner at the conference to make our voices heard to researchers, policymakers and decision-makers. We hoisted ATHENA's Visible Panty Line: a symbol of the things we as women are told to hide, be quiet about and be ashamed of. The hotel hosting the conference made us take it down, calling it offensive. If young women's voices aren't heard, then who exactly are these great innovations, studies and HIV programmes for?

We want to shake things up. We want new HIV prevention choices that are tailor-made for us, as young women. Currently, the options are limited. We have female and male condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and treatment as prevention. These must be available and accessible to all of us, all the time.

In addition, we want more options that reflect our different lifestyles. We want research that takes into account young women's realities and priorities. Participating in the HIV R4P conference was important because researchers heard our voices and our calls for increased choice. Our governments need to hear that message too so that when new tools become available, they're ready to invest.

Ethical youth engagement

BY CÉDRIC NININHAZWE

Over the years, there has been a commitment to get more young people involved in shaping the global HIV response, especially for projects targeting adolescents and young people. But often young people feel exploited or like the token young person, and there's a lack of logistical and financial support for those travelling to conferences.

Last year, a group of youth activists came together in London, where they discussed ethical guidelines for the engagement of young people in activism and advocacy. As Bakita Kasadha, Chair, Y+ Board, said in her [blog](#), "Ethics underpins whether your voice is being used in a representative or tokenistic way." For the guidelines to be successful, they must be led by young people with the support and guidance of international HIV experts and organisations, to ensure they're youth-centred and that there's buy-in at all levels.

The Y+ Board agreed to draw up the guidelines, aimed at youth-led and HIV organisations, governments, donors, service providers and researchers that work with young people. The guidelines will cover the ethical engagement of young people at all levels of HIV service delivery, research, policy development and implementation, and at events, conferences and workshops. They'll outline evidence-based recommendations and offer practical advice on roles and responsibilities in relation to Y+'s key areas, including recruitment/induction; logistical, financial and emotional support; training; evaluation; consultation; and self-reflection. It's all about young people living with HIV feeling safe, respected and valued.

Thank you!

Y+ and Frontline AIDS would like to thank our READY partners: Africaid, Aidsfonds, Alliance Burundaise contre le SIDA (ABS), Community Health Alliance Uganda (CHAU), Community Organisation of Youth against HIV Uganda (COYAA), Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO), Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), Marie Stopes International Uganda, M&C Saatchi World Services, Network of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS in Tanzania (NYP+), Nakaseeta Initiative for Adult Education and Development (NIFAED), Organisation for Social Services, Health and Development (OSSHD), PATA, Peer to Peer Uganda (PEERU), Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSI), REJUSIDA Mozambique, Réseau des Jeunes vivant avec le VIH au Burundi (RNJ+), SPIDER, Stop AIDS Alliance, SNYP+, Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE), UNYPA, Youth LEAD, Youth RISE and ZY+.

We would like to thank the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Comic Relief, the MAC AIDS Fund and SPIDER for their support for READY.

Dates for the diary FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT!

3-6 June, Women Deliver conference, Vancouver, Canada

11 July, World Population Day

12 August, International Youth Day

27-29 August, REPSI psychosocial support forum, Windhoek, Namibia

23 September, UN High-Level Meeting on UHC

28 September, International Safe Abortion Day

2-4 October, Adolescent workshop

11 October, International Day of the Girl Child

16-18 October, Paediatric-Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA) READY+ SRHR Summit

1 December, World AIDS Day

2-7 December, ICASA, Kigali, Rwanda

10 December, Human Rights Day

12 December, Universal Health Coverage Day



Support the READY movement by following these events and posting to:

fb.me/READYMovement @READY_Movement @readymovement

using #WeAreREADY #READY4UHC. Also visit <https://frontlineaids.org/our-work-includes/ready/> and www.yplusnetwork.org/ready-movement/ for news and updates.