

READY

RESILIENT & EMPOWERED
ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

#WeAreREADY



READY to Innovate!

Young advocates at the READY+ consortium meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa © Yr-Global/2022



Cyprian, Tanzania

Welcome to the latest edition of the READY newsletter! This issue focuses on our commitment to learning, sharing and innovation, which builds our capacity as young people to share what we know, learn together and find effective, creative solutions. Read about PATA's linking and learning hub, Frontline AIDS' innovation hub and how young people are pioneering counselling and testing in Mozambique.

READY supports young people to gain knowledge and skills, try out new ideas and approaches, and share best practice. Most of us can now participate fully in various advocacy spaces and bring about change to overcome the challenges we face. READY has helped us identify our changing healthcare needs and devise tailor-made ways to meet those needs. It's a reminder that it is critical to invest in developing young people's knowledge and supporting us to share our experiences.

This year, I took part in several platforms, including the 24th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2022) and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum 2022, where I heard about best practice in other countries for ensuring the meaningful engagement of young people. My understanding has grown of how gender inequality, gender-based violence and criminalisation hinder the HIV response, and I'm passing on this awareness to other young people so that together we can take a bold step in informing the decisions that affect our lives. We call on other partners to promote learning, sharing and innovation because it's vital that we have a stake in shaping the HIV response.



Cyprian Narzis Komba
READY FOCAL PERSON, TANZANIA

Young people lead HIV testing in Mozambique



Young people are supported by healthcare providers in their new role as HIV testers © Kevin/Asscodecha 2022

BY CARLA MATSIMBE, PROJECT OFFICER, REGIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT INITIATIVE (REPSSI)

To meet the demand for HIV testing and sexual and reproductive health services in Maputo and Matola, READY for an AIDS Free Future (R4AFF) initially relied on conventional testing and healthcare providers. But the long queues at health facilities led to marginalised adolescents and young people dropping out of care. So with the support of the Ministry of Health, REPSSI trained 25 people – including peer educators, community adolescent treatment supporters (CATS) and eight healthcare providers – in counselling and testing.

They are currently providing pre- and post-test counselling and testing in the community and health facilities.

The counsellors were selected from a wide range of backgrounds to support their peers, who face ongoing stigma and discrimination.

“Clients always say to me, ‘I’m glad you’re young, I can talk to you.’ (counsellor)

Carrying out door-to-door testing, identifying index cases, empowering young people to use self-testing as well as testing and providing sexual and reproductive healthcare through mobile clinics all make R4AFF a truly innovative, youth-centred programme. Self-testing enables adolescents and young people who have concerns about confidentiality and those who can't easily be reached by conventional testing to find out their HIV status at a convenient time and place. And young people feel supported.

Hotspots like bars also provide entry points to reach marginalised adolescents and young people, particularly men who have sex with men, female sex workers and people who use drugs, via mobile clinics at night.

“If a young person can't reach you, reach them. (healthcare provider)

Peer educators, counsellors and CATS are central to the programme's success: they are role models in their communities. Young people are now actively making informed decisions about their sexuality and health in general. And the good news is that the peer supporters may be employed by the Ministry of Health in the future.

PATA linking and learning hub



BY LUANN HATANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAEDIATRIC - ADOLESCENT TREATMENT AFRICA (PATA)

PATA's linking and learning hub was established in 2020 in response to COVID-19 so that our valuable work with frontline health providers to improve HIV and sexual and reproductive health services for children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa would not be disrupted. The hub provides a dynamic platform for collaboration, capacity building and peer-to-peer learning. Membership has grown from 580 to 3,323 currently.

Watch PATA's video on the linking and learning hub: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMWGEI6VksU>



Our online 'link and learn' approach was enhanced by adopting a hybrid strategy to hosting the PATA Summit. The annual summit is held via the hub, offering a centralised virtual programme, connected to more than 25 regional in-country satellites across Africa. This blended approach crosses digital and geographic divides and allows more people to engage. Health providers, community partners, adolescents and young people come together in one physical meeting space where they can create their own summit. They then join colleagues from the region in a virtual programme, broadcast and attended in real time across three African time zones.

Time, interaction and discussion within the virtual programme at a satellite are always challenging. Connectivity remains a barrier as the broadcast relies on stable internet. Managing a virtual hub, satellite technology and keeping the lights on can be stressful!

Much preparation and support are needed to deliver a successful, cohesive summit. Joint development of the programme ensures momentum and build-up, all coming together with a similar look, feel and energy, while strengthening local ownership and connection across the region. The benefits for participants are clear. A provider from Zambia said, "I learnt a lot on how as health providers we can deliver most health services to adolescents and children in my health facility – I learnt to be creative, knowledgeable, and build a friendly platform for all my clients."

Sharing and learning at the SVRI Forum

BY GRACE NGULUBE, FOUNDER, YOUTH-HEALTHCONNECT360 AND HER VOICE AMBASSADOR FOR MALAWI



As a young woman from Malawi representing young people living with and affected by HIV, I was excited and grateful to READY+ for the opportunity to participate in the SVRI Forum in Cancún, Mexico in September 2022. I attended with other young people from Tanzania and Cameroon. The forum provided a chance to learn about innovative approaches in preventing and responding to gender-based violence in low and middle-income countries. It was also a platform to meet researchers and experts in the field of violence against women and children. As a young person, it was the first time I'd attended a forum specifically on this important subject.

I was a panellist on a session entitled 'What works for marginalised women?'. The session focused on meaningful youth participation: how youth organisations should take the lead in various programmes so that they can reach the most vulnerable adolescent girls and young women.

For me, lessons learnt from the SVRI Forum included:

- The need for research on gender-based violence to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. When sharing their experiences, people need to feel as safe as possible, given the sensitivity of these issues.
- The importance of developing respectful language around sexual violence, particularly towards survivors. We must reject language that reinforces the cycle of stigma.
- The need to create a safe space for participants who may feel traumatised or overwhelmed during the conference.
- The forum paid special attention to participants' wellbeing through caring, nurturing activities.

Globally, there's a lot of attention on sexual violence right now. I hope that the level of research and data available will show the way forward to end gender-based violence.

READY+ consortium meeting

BY TUMIE KOMANYANE, LEAD: PROGRAMMES (ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH), FRONTLINE AIDS



In September, READY+ partners finally managed to come together for the first in-person meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic. After two years of virtual meetings, countless emails and webinars, we brought everyone together for a week of reflection, learning and planning.

The READY+ consortium meeting is an important milestone that creates a platform for partners to share updates on progress, discuss challenges and work together to find solutions for improved programming. Four themes emerged from this year's meeting:

- 1 safeguarding adolescents and young people
- 2 strengthening the READY+ model
- 3 promoting the meaningful and ethical engagement of young people
- 4 integrating innovation across different project outputs towards a more sustainable, cost-effective programme design.

In response to these issues, we agreed specific action points. These include developing a READY safeguarding approach that will ensure a standardised model with robust reporting mechanisms for all partners to be held accountable to. Partners were encouraged to follow the guideline, **We Matter, Value Us**, developed by the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) to support organisations to work with young people in a more meaningful and ethical way. Partners also recommended costing the READY+ model for effective scale-up, reviewing other peer-led models to learn from their innovative approaches and leveraging funding opportunities to expand READY+.

Integral to the second phase of READY+ is a focus on designing and implementing gender-transformative approaches to strengthen sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and HIV interventions. Therefore, consortium members participated in fun, educational sessions to explore their understanding and beliefs around gender, sexual orientation and gender identities and learn from other SRHR programmes.

Innovation hub

BY DAVID CLARK, HEAD: PROGRAMMES, FRONTLINE AIDS



Since READY was formed in 2016, we've believed in bringing together the 'best in the business' to create models that put young people at the centre, take the most effective

approaches and grow them across districts, countries, the region and the world. We knew then that the combined power of Zvandiri's peer-led model, PATA's healthcare provider support, REPSSI's mental health expertise and the driving force of Y+ Global's youth-led advocacy would be something special.

In 2022, it's exciting to see that demand for this approach goes far beyond the original four countries of Eswatini, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Angola, Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and even India are all seeking to pick up the READY model and adapt it to their context.

To promote this kind of pioneering approach, Frontline AIDS has just launched an **innovation hub**, an online resource showcasing some of the most creative work in the partnership. Examples include the integration of female genital schistosomiasis with HIV care, an app for people living with HIV fleeing the conflict in Ukraine so they can access their medication wherever they are, Lebanese partners reaching LGBT+ people with mental health support, and READY+ mentor mothers who support other young mothers living with HIV. It's a resource for organisations wanting to work in a new field or donors keen to invest in promising practices.

The hub is available in many languages, and we are always looking for more innovations to expand the register.

All these initiatives, which echo the ground-breaking spirit of READY, aim to enhance the lives of more people. It's our ambition to scale up this model in seven countries by 2025, innovating and adapting every step of the way!

READY Academy

Our first ever READY Academy kicks off in Johannesburg, South Africa in mid-December. Y+ Global and Frontline AIDS are hosting a residential programme that brings together over 30 young people living with and affected by HIV from across Southern Africa to develop their advocacy skills and learning. Priority is given to young people from Angola, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

We know that young people must be at the centre of decisions that affect their lives. But too often advocacy initiatives have relied on a handful of youth advocates

who have the capacity to participate, while excluding others. The READY Academy aims to change that: investing not only in the tools young people need to design and lead effective advocacy programmes, but also in young advocates in all their diversity so that they are supported and mentored. Interactive sessions include using evidence for advocacy, building movements, using social media, and costing advocacy.

Participants have been selected from programmes led by Y+ Global, Frontline AIDS, UNDP, Aidsfonds, LEGABIBO and MenEngage – partners who are driving policy change. Follow the READY movement's **Twitter** for updates as the week unfolds!



2022-23 FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT! Dates for the diary

25 Nov - 10 Dec	16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (theme: UNITE!)
10 December	Human Rights Day
12-16 December	READY Academy
13-16 December	UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board
1 March	Zero Discrimination Day
2 March	SheDecides Day
8 March	International Women's Day
6-17 March	Commission on the Status of Women

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



using #WeAreREADY and also visit <https://frontlineaids.org/ready> and <https://www.yplusglobal.org/projects-ready-2.0> for news and updates.

Thank you!

Y+ Global and Frontline AIDS would like to say thanks to:

- All the young people at the forefront of this work.
- All the partners implementing READY projects: Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo (ADPP), Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO), Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), Paediatric - Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA), Young Africa and Zvandiri.
- All other organisations that are part of the READY movement.
- The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Elton John AIDS Foundation for their support.