

READY

RESILIENT & EMPOWERED
ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

#ActOnHIV



Join the movement!

#WEARE
READY

Welcome to the first issue of the READY newsletter! Exciting times – we are at a precipice within the AIDS movement. We now have lifesaving medication that not only has the ability to prolong the lives of people living with HIV, but can also prevent HIV infection. HIV has become a chronic illness but many fail to speak of the new reality – that for many, particularly adolescents and young people, HIV remains a silent, chronic killer.

Scientific gains will only take us so far if we fail to address the human aspect of HIV, particularly the humanity of adolescents and young people. That is why we are building a movement! A movement that recognises adolescents and young people as autonomous beings, who have a right to be included in the decision-making of issues that affect our bodies and lives. Addressing our humanity, as young people, means seeing us as an integral part of society and society's growth. Creating laws, policies and spaces that allow us to take ownership of matters that affect us – particularly around our health and bodies and including our sexual health and wellbeing – is vital as we develop and mature.

The Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+) is at the forefront of this movement! We want you to join our movement too. I hope the stats, stories, resources and opportunities we share in this newsletter gets you excited to #ActOnHIV with us. #WeAreREADY Join us!

Lorraine Anyango

**LORRAINE ANYANGO, GUEST EDITOR,
CO-CHAIR, Y+ STEERING GROUP**

“Young people need a different kind of psychosocial support, given their often turbulent transition from childhood to adulthood. This is a period in which they are establishing their own identity, related to but separate from their families. Their psychosocial wellbeing and happiness is strongly influenced by their ability to form positive relationships with others and having fulfilling experiences from everyone around them.”

**LYNETTE MUDEKUNYE, ADVISOR,
REGIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT
INITIATIVE (REPSSI)**

What is READY?

READY will go beyond the boundaries of programming to create a level of dynamism, energy and a determination to show solidarity for the specific needs of adolescents and young people. READY is a **movement** of youth-led and youth-serving organisations, which aims to promote **Resilient, empowered adolescents and young people**.

Why READY?

Adolescents and young people face complex challenges related to relationships, mental health, HIV treatment, contraceptive choices and stigma. Young people remain vulnerable to HIV for a number of reasons, including poor access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services, harmful gender norms, and exclusion from society.

So, why READY again? Young people become **ready** to make informed decisions about our health and rights; parents and caregivers are **ready** to support young people to talk about sexuality; service providers are **ready** to provide youth-friendly services; and decision-makers are **ready** to champion access to information, services and commodities for adolescents and young people living with HIV.

Our vision and values

- **Building youth leadership**, to bring young people's voices to the table and ensure that solutions respond to our realities and priorities.
- **Recognising the balance between protection and autonomy**, to promote individual agency as well as ensuring the safety of adolescents, acknowledging that adolescents' capacity is evolving.
- **Championing human rights**, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the freedom to love and be loved regardless of our sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Seeking gender-transformative approaches**, in order to challenge harmful beliefs and practices about what girls, boys, men and women should be and do.
- **Promoting a person-centred approach**, that recognises and celebrates diversity among adolescents and young people, and responds to our holistic needs.

HARD FACTS

- 2 million adolescents are living with HIV worldwide.
- 64% of new infections among young people in western and central Africa were among young women.
- Two-thirds of new HIV infections among young people aged 15–24 years in eastern and southern Africa occurred among girls and women.
- 21 million girls aged 15–19 years in developing regions become pregnant every year. 49% are unintended.
- 38 million girls aged 15–19 years are at risk of pregnancy, but only 40% are using a modern method of contraception.
- 41% of unsafe abortions in developing regions are among young women aged 15–24 years.

World Health Organization



“If we are to meet the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, the health and emotional wellbeing needs of young people living with and most affected by HIV must be meaningfully addressed and acted upon.”

www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html



Gcebile, Swaziland

“Working with young people and adolescents matters because we need guidance as we grow and transit into different life stages, and we are the future leaders of tomorrow.”

GCEBILE DLAMINI, Y+ & READY+ FOCAL POINT, SWAZILAND NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (SNYP+)



Nadya, Tanzania

“There is no question that young people and adolescents need to be at the centre of the work of the Alliance. It is a tragedy that in 2017 young people remain so heavily affected by HIV. Young people continue to die because they do not have access to treatment and quality integrated SRHR services – including a full range of modern contraceptive choices – or simply do not know their HIV status. If we cannot make a difference here, we will never end AIDS and we will be responsible for a whole generation unable to contribute to the world, in all their diversity and with all their creativity, because we have failed to address their SRHR needs, including HIV.”

CHRISTINE STEGLING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL HIV/AIDS ALLIANCE

“Movements challenge and disrupt. They are restless and determined. They often make society, elites and institutions deeply uncomfortable as they challenge accepted values, priorities and procedures.”

NESTA (2016) HEALTH AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT: THE POWER OF PEOPLE IN MOVEMENTS



My top tips in community mobilisation

BY MOSES BWIRE

I'm a team leader with Peer To Peer Uganda. Through READY Teens, we mobilise young people and the communities around them – parents, teachers, religious leaders, local political leaders – to care for the health and support the wellbeing of adolescents living with and most affected by HIV. How do we do this?



The power of peer educators – peer educators know their communities

They know who is doing well and who is struggling in life. They are respected in their communities for their ability to identify people who need care, to provide them with information and to take them to health services to get the care they need.

The power of music, dance and drama – who doesn't want to have fun? Using music, dance and drama that is led by young people to attract other young people, always works when you keep it fresh and do it well. We explain why we have organised the fun, and we use it as an opportunity to talk about relationships and experiences that puts girls in our communities at risk of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. We share contacts for where people can go to get more information and access the services they need.

The power of local leaders – our parents and the other community leaders around us are very influential in our lives They tell us what we can and cannot do. While we don't always listen, they affect the way we feel about ourselves and can either encourage us to get information or access services or put us off. Community dialogues, jointly led by a community leader and a respected young person, provide a space for discussion among local leaders to talk through their fears and hopes for their children. The key thing is to make sure there are one or two strong champions in the community dialogues who speak up! You don't want the discussion to make things worse for young people as we try to stay healthy and live out our rights!

World Health Assembly

BY CONSOLATA OPIYO



There are many platforms that are available for us as adolescents and young people. We want to see how we can ensure that the young people representing us on these platforms are knowledgeable on the issues being discussed. We will be advocating against tokenism so that participation is meaningful.

Photo: Cedric Nininahazwe from Y+, Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, and Consolata Opiyo, Y+ at 2017 World Health Assembly in Geneva.

"Adolescents are not a homogeneous group, they are unique and their needs are different. I like the challenge I get to respond to their unique needs."

FELICITUS FARAI
NGUBO-CHIBVONGODZE,
REGIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING
LEAD, AFRICAID ZVANDIRI

"Young people, particularly adolescents living with HIV, remain under-served, and the only population group with increasing HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. This is totally avoidable and unacceptable – we must urgently address barriers that prevent adolescents and young people living with HIV from accessing services or staying in care."

LUANN HATANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PAEDIATRIC AIDS TREATMENT FOR AFRICA (PATA)

#WeAre READY



FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT! DATES FOR THE DIARY

Follow the READY movement on social media around these key events and dates. Find our tweets and posts via the hashtags #WeAreREADY and #ActOnHIV

- Intergenerational Youth Summit for Positive Leadership (Adolescent Treatment Coalition): 19–20 June, Cape Town, South Africa
- UNAIDS PCB: 27–29 June, Geneva, Switzerland
- Family Planning Summit: 11 July, London
- IAS Conference: 23–26 July, Paris, France
- International Youth Day: 12 August
- REPSSI Psychosocial Forum: 4–6 September, Arusha, Tanzania
- Congress on Adolescent Health: 27–29 October, Delhi, India
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence: 25 November
- World AIDS Day: 1 December
- ICASA: 4–9 December, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
- World Human Rights Day: 10 December



I am READY, are you?

BY JANET BHILA

Being an adolescent is not easy. Going through puberty and becoming a young adult is hard enough for everyone, but there are numerous things that we battle with when HIV is added to the list. Being involved in relationships is really hard with the burden of disclosing our status. I think this is especially hard for girls, mostly because of the stigma and discrimination. My body is changing ... I have pimples on my face ... I think that boy likes me ... Maybe that girl kept looking at me because she thinks I am hot ... I am HIV-positive. I also have to deal with seeing a nurse at the clinic that tells me I'm too young for family planning and has the attitude of thinking that I got HIV through sex, because that's what they believe.



Janet, Zimbabwe

As a young person representing adolescents, I am very confident that the coming years will contribute to the development of many global initiatives that focus on changing the lives of adolescents. We are READY to make a difference.

Janet Bhila is a member of Y+ in Zimbabwe. Read her full blog at: www.aidsalliance.org/blog/852-i-am-ready-are-you

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Why we need a movement

Evidence tells us we need to be addressing the specific needs of young people living with and most affected by HIV, and that the best way to do this is to harness the energy, creativity and knowledge of young people themselves. The following tools expand on the evidence and provide solutions to how we can practically improve the health and wellbeing of adolescents and young people.



Aiming High: 10 Strategies for meaningful youth engagement

www.aidsalliance.org/assets/000/002/565/aiming_high_10_strategies_for_meaningful_youth_engagement_english_original.pdf?1464863631

Lessons from Link Up! Link Up experiences of reaching adolescents living with HIV

<http://aidsalliance.org/resources/848-link-up-experiences-of-reaching-adolescents-living-with-hiv>

Young Positive Voices

Young Positive Voices is a dedicated advocacy platform from the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+). It intends to be a reliable source for clarifying the quantitative and qualitative status of adolescents and young people living with HIV worldwide, informing partners and stakeholders of the needs, challenges and possible solutions to improve the lives of adolescents and young people living with HIV, including our SRHR.



Jaime, Panama

JOIN THE MOVEMENT! WHAT ARE YOU READY TO DO?

Add your voice to the READY movement in four easy steps!

1. Visit www.aidsalliance.org/ready to download your #WeAreREADY speech bubble
2. Write and tell us what you are READY to do
3. Take a picture of you and your pledge
4. Post it to Twitter or Facebook. Don't forget to include #WeAreREADY #ActOnHIV

For information about the READY movement, visit: www.aidsalliance.org/ready

#ActOnHIV



Thank you!

Thank you to our current READY partners: Africaid, AIDS Legal Network (ALN), Aidsfonds, Alliance Burundaise contre le SIDA (ABS), Community Health Alliance Uganda (CHAU), Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO), Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), Global Youth Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+), M&C Saatchi World Services, Organisation for Social Services, Health and Development (OSSHD), Paediatric AIDS Treatment for Africa (PATA), Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), Stop AIDS Alliance, Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE).