READY

RESILIENT & EMPOWERED ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

#WeAreREADY

READY NEWSLETTER #14 | OCTOBER 2024

A youth advocate participates in the READY Academy. © Y+ Global 2024

Youth Advocacy and Action

Maximina, Zimbabwe

Welcome to the 14th edition of the READY newsletter! This issue focuses on youth advocacy and action.

Inequalities, structural barriers and intersectionality are well-known, but the main question is: why do we continue to experience high HIV prevalence among young people when we have the latest prevention tools, effective treatment and robust communities? As disparities unfold, the READY Academy proposes cutting-edge solutions. Held in Simunye, Eswatini on 20–25 May, the training programme helped build more resilient and empowered young emerging leaders who are taking back their voice and guiding interventions related to their health and rights.

A critical module focused on 'What is advocacy – ethical engagement of young people in the global sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and HIV field'. Young people learnt how to navigate the anti-rights landscape: being proactive rather than reactive. With the skills, knowledge and confidence gained, I know young leaders are READY to disrupt the status quo and reflect on the issues affecting our communities and the role young people can play in HIV and SRHR responses. At AIDS 2024, held in Munich, Germany on 22–26 July, again, young people stood up for their rights.

We must protect young people in all their diversity and empower them as leaders.

Maximina Jokonya

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GLOBAL NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (Y+ GLOBAL)

My time at the READY Academy

João Chongo © Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Maputo 2024

BY JOÃO CHONGO, POLICY OFFICER FOR THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON SRHR AND HIV/AIDS, EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS IN MAPUTO

It was an honour to attend the READY Academy and witness firsthand the unique movement it is building! I saw how it harnesses the energy, innovation and passion of Africa's youth towards a stronger network of future global leaders who can tackle critical challenges and inequalities with fresh perspectives and come up with dynamic solutions.

The session on 'Strengthening SRHR and HIV Response Across the African Region – The Dutch Global Health Strategy' that I led emphasised the importance of donors continuing to invest in youth leadership and advocacy to unlock a brighter future. Donors play a pivotal role in ensuring that young voices are equipped with the tools to advocate for their rights and spearhead innovative solutions.

Their contributions are essential in creating opportunities for young leaders to access the resources, training and platforms necessary to drive meaningful change. By supporting initiatives like the READY Academy, which build youth movements, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Maputo is fostering a generation of empowered leaders to tackle the pressing issues of SRHR and HIV in Southern Africa.

Congratulations to the organisers of the READY Academy for successfully creating such a powerful and impactful movement! And may we always bear in mind that together, we can build a future where everyone has access to the health services and rights they deserve.

Reflections on the READY Academy

Young people participate in the READY Academy © 2024 Y+ Global

BY TUMIE KOMANYANE, LEAD: PROGRAMMES, FRONTLINE AIDS

When we started the READY Academy in 2022, our goal was to ensure that young people would gain access to an immersive learning and linking experience that would strengthen SRHR and HIV/AIDS knowledge, build their capacity and follow through on our collective aspiration to ethically invest in youth-led solutions.

It was important to me that the READY portfolio evolves to more than just implementing activities, so it's been my ambition to create and strengthen linkages between emerging young leaders and industry experts in the global health movement. Since representation is key for young people, we curated sessions that would bring leading African experts into the academy, creating opportunities for young people to interact with people who look like them and come from their communities to foster a sense of belonging. These sessions also ensured that the academy remains culturally relevant and is grounded in real-life experiences.

What we achieved over the past two years is incredible. Along with our partners at UNDP, we delivered the academy twice, training 60 young people from across Africa and providing seed funds worth $20,000 for ten community-based projects on a range of activities, including promoting contraceptive use among adolescents and young people, strengthening the capacity of young people with disabilities, livelihood skills, support for young sex workers and access to health services for young people in their diversity.

Through READY Academy, we tackle complex themes including navigating a challenging anti-rights agenda in Africa. We incorporated mentorship and technical support to the seed fund winners and generated significant media coverage. What remains true about the academy is its framing and visibility as a youth-centred approach. Hearing the impact and change stories from our alumni is proof of the academy's influence on young leaders at the forefront of the HIV and SRHR response.

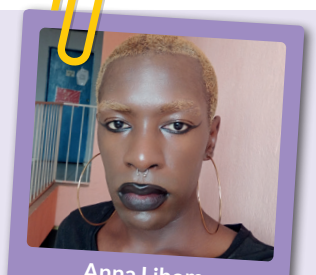
Young people at the READY Academy

Natasha Seketa (she/her), 25, Zambia

What is your role?
HER Voice Fund Ambassador for Zambia.

From everything you learnt at the READY Academy, what stood out the most?
READY Academy for me wasn't just a platform for building skills in advocacy and leadership but also a reminder that our stories and lived experiences empower us in unique ways and inspire us to advocate for and defend our rights as well as others'.

How will you apply this learning?
I will share knowledge with adolescents and young people during the mentorship sessions I facilitate at my local church in Kamanga, Lusaka.



Anna Liboma (she/her), 27, Angola

What is your role?
Activist, peer educator and youth leader.

From everything you learnt at the READY Academy, what stood out the most?
The safeguarding content entirely caught my attention!

How will you apply this learning?
As a trans woman leading an NGO that provides safe spaces for young people of non-cisgender identities and those living with or affected by HIV, I am committed to building the safeguarding capacity of our target group. This will enhance their understanding and serve as a tool they can use in any hostile environment.

Young people at the READY Academy

Purity Mufarowashe Nyatondo (he/him), 20, Zimbabwe

What is your role?
Community adolescent treatment supporter (CATS).

From everything you learnt at the READY Academy, what stood out the most?
What stood out the most for me was the emphasis on youth-led initiatives and the power of sharing our stories. The academy taught me the importance of resilience, empowerment and activism.

How will you apply this learning?
I plan to apply what I learned through mentoring and supporting other young people living with HIV in my community. I'll create a safe, non-judgmental space for them to share their experiences and feelings, and I'll provide guidance and encouragement as they navigate their mental health journeys.

Munich Youth Force, AIDS 2024

Priscilla Ama Addo joins the Munich Youth Force at the AIDS 2024 conference in Munich. © Priscilla Ama Addo 2024

BY PRISCILLA AMA ADDO, COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY GRADUATE TRAINEE, Y+ GLOBAL

I was pleased to have the opportunity to join the **Munich Youth Force** at AIDS 2024, the 25th International AIDS Conference. I had a lovely time working with other young people from different countries in the months leading up to the conference. For weeks, we met virtually to plan messaging and engagement around the event, building momentum and excitement. As the conference began, it wasn't easy – it was hard work, but it was fun. Leaders of the Munich Youth Force were really supportive and task-oriented. We worked together to ensure everything ran smoothly at the Youth Pavilion.

The entire area was crafted to engage young people, from fun games, video and radio recording booths to the wellness room and space for young people living with HIV, not forgetting the wonderful sessions that happened every day. My favourite part of the conference was hearing about the amazing work youth-led organisations are doing to boost progress towards ending AIDS. There are so many moving parts within the HIV response and you can sometimes feel they aren't doing enough, but it all matters, especially efforts by young people.

Another favourite moment of mine was the Youth March. It was awesome seeing youth come together to protest against visa denialism, a negative factor that prevented many young people from participating in the conference.

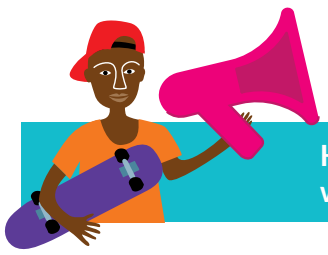
The Munich Youth Force did an incredible job promoting young people's strong voices. I had an amazing time and I know many others did too. I sincerely appreciate my time with the Munich Youth Force.

Listen to our AIDS 2024 podcast, live from Munich, and learn more about the READY movement **https://spoti.fi/4ehZdEE**

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

READYMovement @READY_Movement @readymovement

using #WeAreREADY. And visit frontlineaids.org/ready, readymovement.org and yplusglobal.org/projects-ready-2.0 for news and updates.



Have a look at the new READY movement website: www.readymovement.org

READY+ Successes in 2023

BY CATT DURANT, SUPPORT OFFICER: PROGRAMMES, FRONTLINE AIDS

2023 was another successful year for READY+. Our activities included training peer supporters (known as CATS), supporting young mothers, conducting community and school dialogues, training faith leaders and sensitising parents/caregivers. We also trained healthcare providers in HIV and SRHR integration and Advocacy in Action, held coordination meetings with the Ministry of Health and trained young people in advocacy.

Among our many achievements was the number of young people trained as youth leaders. By the end of 2023, a total of 996 young people in Eastern and Southern Africa had been trained as youth leaders, guided by the **READY to Advocate** toolkit.

Training covered topical issues such as interpreting laws and policies; identifying gaps in policies and processes; and how to monitor service delivery, using the **READY to Care** scorecard. We were delighted that the number of young people trained as youth leaders exceeded our target for 2023 by 158!

In Angola, 15 healthcare providers attended a three-day Advocacy in Action training session to become youth advocates and champions. Importantly, this training built their capacity to advocate for, and with, young people to address inequities in accessibility and quality of health services.

READY and AIDS 2024

© Cyprian Komba 2024

BY CYPRIAN NARZIS KOMBA, YOUTH ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS MANAGER, NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN TANZANIA (NYP+) AND READY FOCAL PERSON FOR TANZANIA

As a young person involved in the READY movement, I can personally attest to the transformative impact that READY+ has had on my life and the lives of many other young people in Tanzania. READY has empowered us, giving us the tools and confidence to not only advocate for ourselves but also uplift our peers. Through READY, we young people have gained the ability to influence decisions at various levels. Personally, I have developed a deeper understanding of global health perspectives and different global movements, and I'm committed to sharing this knowledge with my peers.

At AIDS 2024 in Munich, I participated in several sessions that left a lasting impression. A recurring theme among the youth participants was the urgent need to approach development differently, especially when it involves young people. The consensus was clear: to address the challenges we face as young people, we must be at the centre of our programmes. This means actively listening to our voices and responding to our specific needs. It is only by embracing this youth-centred approach that we can create impactful, sustainable solutions.

As READY+ phases out in Tanzania, we call on other key stakeholders in the country to learn from our experience and continue the good work. We must remain **ready** – ready to continue the fight, ready to lead and ready to ensure that our voices are heard. We don't need more capacity building. What we need now is an investment in the skills and leadership we already have. I urge all of us to take the lessons learned from READY+ and build upon them. Together, we can sustain the progress we've made and have a lasting impact.

FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT! Dates for the diary

6–10 October	HIV Research for Prevention Conference, Lima, Peru
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child
4–6 November	PATA Summit
25 Nov–10 Dec	16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence
1 December	World AIDS Day
10 December	Human Rights Day
10–12 December	UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Nairobi, Kenya
12 December	Universal Health Coverage Day

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), Malawi AIDS Counselling and Resource Organization (MACRO), Paediatric - Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA), Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), 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.