

# READY

RESILIENT & EMPOWERED  
ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

#WeAreREADY



## READY to Link and Learn

Young people mark the end of the READY Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. © Y+ Global/Hukastone Studio 2023



Pedro, Angola

Welcome to the 13th edition of the READY newsletter! This issue focuses on linking and learning.

READY offers solutions to the social challenges that affect adolescents and young people in all our diversity. People need to be inspired and emotionally involved in co-creating movements and strategies for social action. And every leader needs to learn the art of transformation to remain relevant in a world that keeps changing. So, in December 2023, we developed a new strategy, **READY to Evolve**, to boost youth engagement and link efforts to increase regional and local collaboration.

Taking part as a focal point in the READY Summit last December was the highlight of my year, as well as the victories young people have won since the movement began, in mobilising youth to defend their rights and fulfil their duties. READY stands up for information, training, listening to young people, building the capacity of young leaders and sharing effective strategies to achieve results.

For me, as a young person and leader in my community, 2023 was a year of constant learning. For the movement, values matter. Leadership isn't a title: it's a responsibility to advocate for those who can't speak for themselves, always seeking innovation as the best way to offer value and solve problems in the real world.

*Pedro Kakoka*

Pedro J. Almeida Kakoka  
READY FOCAL PERSON, ANGOLA

### Young people at ICASA 2023



Ibrahim Kalimbaga, 25,  
United Republic of  
Tanzania

**What was your role at ICASA?**

I represented my fellow community adolescent treatment supporters (CATS), as a member of the Network of Young People Living with HIV in Tanzania (NYP+).

**What did you learn?**

Attending ICASA 2023 was a unique experience, providing

valuable insights on how to improve access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services and global advocacy strategies.

**How will you apply this knowledge?**

The first step is to share this knowledge with colleagues to improve work and develop innovative ways for the future.



Sheryss Ercilia Benedito  
Saide, 21, Mozambique

**What was your role at ICASA?**

As focal point for Y+ Global, I represented young people. My role was to increase my knowledge and skills in advocacy and leadership to take back to my country.

**What did you learn?**

I learnt that to be a good leader we need to work together to

achieve great results. I also learnt how we can develop in a positive way because we still face stigma and discrimination.

**How will you apply this knowledge?**

Through the meetings we hold with young people in the health unit and in the community, and through webinars and podcasts.

## READY Summit unites young people at ICASA 2023 in addressing inequalities and ending AIDS



Young people pose at the READY Summit, Harare, Zimbabwe. © Y+ Global/Hukastone Studio 2023

BY TUMIE KOMANYANE, LEAD: PROGRAMMES (ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH), FRONTLINE AIDS AND TINASHE RUFURWADZO, COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, GLOBAL NETWORK OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (GNP+)

In a powerful display of global dedication to youth movement building and empowerment, the READY Summit stole the spotlight at the ICASA 2023 conference in Harare, Zimbabwe. We launched our strategy, **READY to Evolve**, showcasing our commitment to steering the course of youth leadership in HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in East and Southern Africa. Throughout the week, the READY Summit emerged as a catalyst for youth involvement and movement building.

Dr Margret Verwijk, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, said,

By including young people, by putting them in the lead on the issues that affect their lives, projects like this are able to achieve long-term visions through more targeted, context-appropriate approaches.

Dr Verwijk emphasised the creativity, energy and optimism that young people bring, highlighting the collaborative effort needed to end AIDS and advance sexual health and rights.

Extensive media coverage captured discussions at the READY Summit. Packed sessions, led by young people and Tumie Komanyane, covered strategic planning and thought-provoking dialogues, amplifying READY's influential voice in shaping the conference agenda. Key recommendations stressed the importance of involving young people in decision-making. Participants also emphasised the need for responsible funding for youth programmes. Mentorship emerged as a recurring theme, spurring commitment to support the next generation.

The READY movement's impact reached beyond the conference halls. By championing youth voices, the READY Summit shows that the path to an inclusive, effective response to HIV lies in the hands of young people in all their diversity.

Let's carry the torch of "nothing for us, without us", nurturing ethical engagement, responsible funding and mentorship to create a future where young people continue to lead.

## SPOTLIGHT ON REGIONAL PARTNERS



### Young Africa

BY CONCILIA MUTAMI, PROGRAMMES ASSISTANT, COMMUNICATIONS, YOUNG AFRICA

Over 500 young people, supported by READY+ in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, have enrolled for vocational training of their choice through the Skills2Live project. Lauri\*, aged 20, from Beira, Mozambique, is one of many students who were referred to Young Africa by READY+. She said, "In 2021, through Skills2Live, I won a scholarship to do a vocational course. I studied plumbing. I'm grateful to the READY movement and Skills2Live. I can now contribute financially at home. It would be good if Skills2Live continued to help other young people like me."

Through the partnership between READY+ and Young Africa, Skills2Live has empowered young people affected by HIV with:

- Improved ability to draw on others' support. Young people are aware of support that understands their needs, risks and vulnerabilities and promotes access to comprehensive services.

- Increased knowledge, capacity, self-esteem and self-confidence to make changes in their lives. By gaining vocational skills, young people's chances of being employed or starting their own small businesses are enhanced. They also feel safe to discuss their health concerns and are supported to access sexual and reproductive healthcare in wellness centres.
- Increased decision-making power within their household, community and local economy, extending to areas that are traditionally regarded as a male domain. This includes young people making decisions about their SRHR.

This collaboration between READY+ and Skills2Live demonstrates the relationship between economic empowerment and sexual and reproductive health and HIV interventions. It's clear that young people need to be empowered to decide freely on matters relating to their SRHR.

\*Names have been changed.

Watch this space as we spotlight stories from READY+ regional partners supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Maputo.



# MenEngage Africa Symposium on SRHR



BY TAWANDA CHIBONORE, WEB AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER, GLOBAL NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (Y+ GLOBAL)

Recently, I attended the MenEngage Africa SRHR Symposium, which explored the theme SRHR for All: Building a Better Future for Africa's Youth. The theme resonated deeply with the objectives of the READY movement, as both initiatives share a vision of empowering young people to take control of their sexual and reproductive health, which ultimately shapes their futures.

One crucial aspect that emerged during the symposium was the need to involve men and boys in the conversation about SRHR. By engaging them, harmful gender norms can be challenged and barriers to comprehensive SRHR services dismantled.

The symposium emphasised intersectionality: how SRHR overlaps with other social justice movements, such as LGBTQ+ rights and gender equality. We discussed the need to recognise and address the unique barriers faced by marginalised communities. The READY movement shares this approach and strives to provide safe spaces for all young people, regardless of their backgrounds.

The importance of involving young people in decision-making was a recurring theme throughout the symposium. Likewise, READY focuses on nurturing youth leadership, amplifying their voices and integrating their perspectives into policies and programmes.

The symposium strengthened links with the READY movement. By acknowledging the importance of engaging men and boys, promoting intersectionality and empowering youth in the pursuit of comprehensive SRHR, the two initiatives can work together to bring about positive change and foster healthier societies. This collaboration will magnify impact and drive progress towards a world where every young person has the agency to thrive.

# Impact of the READY to Thrive social media campaign



Social media influencers © Miguel Osório 2023

BY MIGUEL OSÓRIO, PROGRAMME COORDINATOR MOZAMBIQUE: READY FOR AN AIDS FREE FUTURE

Under the READY for an AIDS Free Future (R4AFF) programme, we devised the Ready to Thrive campaign to reach young people through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. The campaign disseminated messages about sexual health, focusing on HIV prevention, testing, treatment and support for people living with HIV. A technical review team ensured positive language, monitored content and checked posts before publication.

Two well-known influencers – Fidamãe 2x and Salésio Do Pânico – helped create captivating, accurate content. Working closely with R4AFF's team of HIV technical experts, they developed short, dynamic educational videos addressing risky behaviours, dispelling myths and encouraging safer sex. This fusion of humour and health information proved highly effective in engaging young people.

Lessons learnt included ensuring context-specific messaging and language quality. Incorporating HIV testing and collaborating with healthcare professionals would also

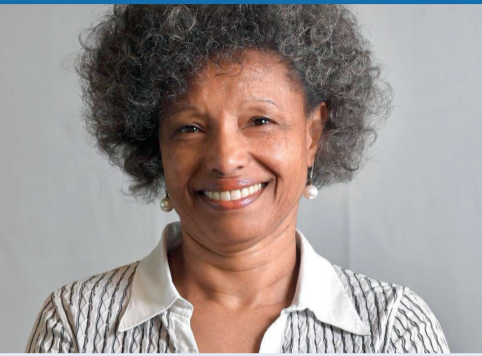
strengthen the impact of future campaigns. Ready to Thrive succeeded in educating young people, increasing awareness and demystifying HIV. Fidamãe 2x and Salésio Do Pânico extended the campaign's reach and effectiveness, with Salésio's two videos receiving nearly half a million views. One young person commented,

**“ I liked the theme. Actually, this can help a lot of people understand that having HIV isn't the end of the world. ”**

Using innovative strategies to engage young audiences, the campaign's success highlights the huge potential of social media to address critical health issues among youth. Ready to Thrive fostered a culture of increased awareness and responsibility, an impactful contribution to reducing the stigma surrounding HIV. The videos remain on the influencers' pages and will continue to educate young people.

- Fidamãe 2x @Fidamãe 2x
- Salésio Do Pânico
- @Salésio Do Pânico

# My memories of READY+



BY DR FÁTIMA ALY, POLICY OFFICER FOR SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AND HIV/AIDS, EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, MAPUTO

It's been a huge privilege to be part of the Southern Africa regional SRHR and HIV/AIDS programme, particularly READY+. Since joining the Embassy of the Netherlands in Maputo in 2014, I have only witnessed positive changes and good results, including those achieved by READY+.

READY+ reaches one of the most vulnerable groups in the region: young people affected by HIV. The project enables them to have a better quality of life, including SRHR and HIV outcomes, and a strong sense of agency and freedom to decide their future. I believe that READY+ is helping the region achieve the targets set by the UN by 2030, within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

On field visits in the various countries where READY+ is active, I could see the engagement and excellent work done with passion by all the staff. One young person said,

**“ Before READY+ I felt lonely, I didn't have any friends and didn't want to go to school because I felt discriminated against. Now that I have support from the CATS and auntie Leo, I feel confident. I have friends. My mother is happier and she and my stepfather are more adherent to treatment as well, just like me. ”**

I congratulate all Frontline AIDS staff for their commitment and amazing work. As this is my last month in this position, I wish you good luck in the years to come.

# PATA 2023 Summit

BY ANGELITA SILVA, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, AND HELEEN SOETERS, SENIOR PROGRAMMES MANAGER, PAEDIATRIC-ADOLESCENT TREATMENT AFRICA (PATA)

The PATA 2023 Summit, entitled The Face of Care: Health Providers and Communities at the Frontline of Paediatric and Adolescent HIV Service Delivery in Africa, used a linking and learning approach to promote regional collaboration, capacity building and peer-to-peer exchange across the PATA network and beyond. The hybrid event integrated virtual and in-person participation; engaged healthcare providers, peer supporters and more; and prioritised the voices of those on the frontline.

Three themes underpinned the summit:

- 1** Enhancing healthcare provider resilience and wellbeing: caring for those who care for us.
- 2** Offering opportunities for immersive workshops, in-country discussion and sharing experiences and homegrown solutions.
- 3** Fostering a stronger frontline to address challenges in HIV service delivery.



Across seven satellites in five READY+ countries, PATA supported over 220 participants, including 137

healthcare providers, to attend in-person sites. In addition, across 22 satellites in 13 countries, 150 peer supporters attended, highlighting the invaluable role of young voices in shaping the future of healthcare. Ntombikayise Ncube, peer educator, Zimbabwe Young Positives, said, "Healthcare givers should be more friendly, approachable and available for any help that peer supporters require. We should also continue mentoring young people to become agents of change."

As part of the global initiative to end AIDS in children and adolescents by 2030, the PATA 2023 Summit showcased collaborative efforts driving the HIV response. The summit elevated the discourse on paediatric and adolescent HIV treatment. It stands as a beacon for the future, where healthcare providers and young advocates unite in their commitment to create a world free from the impact of AIDS on the next generation.



## FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT! Dates for the diary

14 February	Valentine's Day
1 March	Zero Discrimination Day
2 March	SheDecides Day
8 March	International Women's Day
11-22 March	Commission on the Status of Women
11 April	International Day for Maternal Health and Rights
29 April-3 May	Commission on Population and Development, assessing 30 years of ICPD implementation
19-25 May	READY Academy, Eswatini

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

- READYMovement
- @READY\_Movement
- @readymovement

using #WeAreREADY. And 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), 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.

# Young people at ICASA 2023



Lusungu Harawa, 26, Malawi

**What was your role at ICASA?**

I was responsible for setting the objectives at the READY Summit, alongside Tumie from Frontline AIDS. And I was a panellist at the ICASA high-level youth special session.

**What did you learn?**

Community engagement is crucial to address HIV and STIs in Africa. Building youth

leadership and empowerment is also essential.

**How will you apply this knowledge?**

We need strong youth voices to collaborate with governments and NGOs in my country to end AIDS by leveraging resources and expertise to create a more coordinated response.