




Y+SUMMIT 2021

THEME
**OPENING
OPPORTUNITIES**

DATE: 20th, 21st, 22nd April 2021
VENUE: Hotel Africana



INTRODUCTION



THEME **OPENING OPPORTUNITIES**

Uganda Network of young people living with HIV & AIDS (UNYPA) is a youth led, youth serving organization which has existed since 2003 to provide leadership and coordinate the meaningful involvement and participation of YPLHIV in Uganda in the national, regional and global HIV and AIDS response. UNYPA advocates improving the quality of life of young people living with HIV in Uganda and as a network. UNYPA is driven by the needs of young people living with HIV and implements an evidence informed national programme and advocacy for YPLHIV to lead healthy and productive lives. The elements of UNYPA's national programme and advocacy include promoting universal access to HIV prevention, Provision of SRHR information, treatment, care, and support; fighting stigma and discrimination against all young people living with HIV; and, promoting the greater involvement of all young people living with HIV in the national HIV response.



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Uganda has a population of over 44 million people including 1.4 million people living with HIV (PLWHIV) with 1.2 million people on ART due to the excellent progress that has been made towards the UNAIDS “90-90-90” 2020 targets with 84% of the population aware of their HIV status and 87% of these on ART, of which 88% of people are virally suppressed. According to the Uganda Population based HIV Impact Assessment Survey (UPHIA) 2016-2017, overall prevalence of HIV infection is at 6.2% for adults with 7.6% for women and 4.7% for men while AIDS related deaths have reduced from 45,000 in 2011 to 28,000 in 2018. At its peak in the 1990's, Uganda's HIV prevalence was 18–30%, which was reduced to 5.7% in 2019, largely due to the roll out of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and extensive public health campaigns around the importance of HIV testing, initiating ART and counseling on drug adherence.

Unfortunately, the current COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse these accomplishments. As soon as the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Uganda, 21st March 2020, strict lockdown measures were enforced, including a ban on all public and private transport, night curfew, closure of schools, suspension of religious and social gatherings, and closure of non-essential shops and markets. Firstly, these measures present barriers to HIV testing, in particular initiatives for testing Uganda's most vulnerable groups, including workplace testing, mobile mass testing campaigns and self-testing amongst fishermen, sex-workers and male partners of women attending antenatal care.



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For those with a new diagnosis of HIV, closures of clinics and the practicalities of leaving the house during lockdown prohibit essential linkage to care. However, our gravest concern is the real possibility of substantial ART interruption. In Uganda, this is likely multifactorial: supply chain issues as borders are closed, the inability of people to leave their homes to obtain essential medications, and people relocating to villages away from their HIV clinics. Additionally, there is the dire situation of poverty and hunger faced by many individuals, where mere survival rather than maintaining HIV care has become the priority. This disruption in ART access has very real consequences on those who were previously adherent to ART and virologically suppressed. Significant lapses in HIV virological suppression may result into increased community transmission of HIV in Uganda and other comparable settings, which would represent a catastrophic downstream effect of COVID-19.

Despite the various interventions and commitments made by government, communities and international partners, HIV/AIDS remains a huge threat among young people in Uganda. There's an urgent need for a combination of HIV prevention interventions, supportive environment and strengthening community systems as well as targeted approaches to effectively address the unique needs of young people in their diversities. Today, the resilience that has taken us this far is being tested – this time, in new and different ways as the global health landscape is not what it once was. Now, we must come together and make common cause with other health issues while holding onto the key attributes that have made the HIV response so unique and so successful. We must ensure that we push forward integrated care and prevention approaches that will work for all people living with or at risk of HIV.

Our ability to navigate this next phase of the HIV response, with the necessary adaptations in the current setting, is key to help set the emerging new generation of leaders on the path to future success; this is why UNYPA committed to bring together youth leaders living with and affected by HIV/AIDS together with key stakeholders in an annual Y+ summit to share lessons and best practices for effectively addressing HIV/SRHR challenges faced by young people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in Uganda including; Gender inequalities, HIV related stigma and discrimination, COVID-19 and its impact on YPLHIV in their diversities the barriers for achieving the 4th 90 which looks at quality of life for PLWHIV.

Y+ SUMMIT 2021



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The 2021 Y+ summit shall be a 3 days' assembly for young people living with HIV, peer leaders, peer service providers, ambassadors, advocates and HIV/SRHR champions together with other stakeholders from government, members of parliament, UN agencies, country ambassadors in Uganda, CSOs and the private sectors to share best practices and lessons for effectively addressing HIV/SRHR and gender challenges faced by Young people living and affecting with HIV in Uganda especially in light of the new normal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since its inception in 2017, the Y+ summit has brought together over 2,253 YPLHIV with a number of activities that help them to gain skills, information and knowledge on how to overcome the barriers that limit them from developing due to the HIV epidemic together with partners from all Government ministries, private sectors, NGOs, Health workers towards finding solutions to improved HIV/SRHR services and information to all young people living with HIV in Uganda beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

PURPOSE OF THE Y+ SUMMIT



True, young people are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS, but we believe they are also the solution to ending the epidemic and challenging its far-reaching effects. As the response struggles to curb adolescent HIV infection rates, it is very crucial to support young people to champion the response – as leaders, partners and advocates.

The purpose of the Y+ Summit is to create a platform for learning and sharing best practices for effective HIV/SRHR programming for young people.

This is done by strengthening the abilities of young people in leadership and advocacy collaborative meeting that specifically seeks to give young people an authentic voice, technical capacity building, peer-to-peer exchange, create a dedicated space and opportunity for all young people living with HIV as leaders who are at the forefront of supporting and creating an enabling environment for young people living with HIV in Uganda on; HIV/SRHR, Economic Empowerment in order to create a pool of peers empowered to render peer support to AYPLHIV in the different aspects of life to support positive living.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES



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- * To provide a platform for youth ambassadors to engage with different key stakeholders on the different HIV/SRHR issues affecting them and how to address them.
- * To provide information on the gender equality and women empowerment and its role in the HIV response
- * To orient young people on the existence of the fourth 90 and how it aims to improve the quality of life for young people living with HIV.
- * To promote inclusiveness of young people living with HIV including key populations in the design: implementation and monitoring of such HIV related programming

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- * To share the latest HIV/SRHR data & information for evidence- based youth led policy advocacy
- * To strengthen youth adult partnerships in the HIV epidemic response programming in Uganda
- * To follow up on commitments made by stakeholders towards the HIV response in Uganda
- * To create a platform for young people to hold stakeholders accountable on HIV/SRH policy, formulation and implementation at all levels and financing.
- * To raise awareness on the COVID-19 virus prevention and management





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METHODOLOGY

Previously the Y+ summit has been run under 4 different themes **“everybody counts”** in 2017, **“Confronting HIV with Bold steps”** in 2018 and **“Peers making it Happen!!”** in 2019, Changing the narrative of young people living with HIV in 2020. This year, the summit will be held under the theme the **“OPENING OPPORTUNITIES”** for YPLHIV with sub themes of:

Innovations for increased access to services especially in the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on YPLHIV and SRHR- HIV programming and Advocacy.

Gender and Mental health integration for YPLHIV

Quality of life for young people living with HIV.

1. GENDER AND MENTAL HEALTH INTEGRATION FOR YPLHIV

The theme recognizes that HIV prevention and treatment efforts require not just a clinical approach but also the need to address gender inequalities for young people particularly adolescent girls and young women living with and affected by the burden of HIV/AIDS. The focus of this theme shall be on providing information on the effects of Gender inequalities including Gender stereotypes, Gender Based Violence, power imbalances which increase the risk of HIV infection and violence against adolescent girls and young women. It aims to address the socio-cultural and economic constraints that increase the vulnerability of the girl child and recognize the responsibility of boys and men as key stakeholders in promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The theme envisions young people becoming human rights watchdogs in their communities who are able to identify, report any forms of violence & support survivors & victims of the violence as well as Managing Mental Health Issues affecting Young People Living and affected with HIV.



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2. Innovations for increased access to services especially in the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on YPLHIV and SRHR- HIV programming

The COVID- 19 virus has worsened stigma towards people living with HIV/AIDS, the current pandemic threatens to reverse the accomplishments that have been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Uganda and the world over. The organization has re- organized itself to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic especially for young people living with HIV/AIDS, through innovations such as the UNYPA-SRHR Mobile App and Door to Door peer service deliver. We have reached out to 7,651,115 and the most marginalized and hard to reach communities in Uganda including fishermen, sex-workers, refugees. This theme envisions an open discussion on the effects of the COVID-19 virus to YPLHIV, how it has redefined the SRHR-HIV programming spectrum and the lessons learnt. It will also focus on building and strengthening abilities of young people as an advocacy movement to use media as a tool for HIV/SRHR advocacy to demand for their human rights, increase demand for HIV/SRHR service delivery as well as share experiences of young people living with HIV on various platforms. More so the media plays a key role in passing on key messages to the communities, therefore the young people will be orientated on how to present key issues affecting them.

3. Quality of life for young people living with HIV.

Since 2014, the world has been working towards the 90-90-90 targets established by UNAIDS. These targets envision 90% of people living with HIV will know their HIV status by 2020, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status will be on treatment, and 90% of people on treatment will have a suppressed viral load. However, there is a growing belief that 90-90-90 stops short of optimizing care for people living with HIV. Therefore, to meet the full needs of young people living with HIV, we have to orient the young people on the fourth 90, where all young people living with HIV have a good health related quality of life. (Opinion: How to Achieve the “Fourth 90” for HIV by Amy Flood, 19th September 2019)

The theme will focus on orienting young people on the existence of the fourth 90 and how it aims to improve the quality of life for young YPLHIV by promoting treatment literacy, adherence to ARVS, information on nutrition, creating good relationships with health workers, care takers guardians and parents. The discussions shall be centered on the relevance of self- care and mental health awareness for young people as well as strategies on how to overcome HIV related criminalization in the communities from which they live.

The young people will also be empowered with basic skills of starting up small Income generating Activities (IGA) for economic empowerment to reduce over dependency and ensure young people are able to afford basic health care.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES



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- Establish and strengthen already existing regional networks of Young living with HIV.
- Ministries of health, education, gender and finance to share updates on what it has done towards the HIV response in Uganda following the current situation of the COVID 19 Pandemic.
- Young people in position to report all forms of gender-based violence in the community
- Young people conduct dialogues with community on the dangers of HIV, stigma and discrimination in the community.
- Register and follow up on commitments made from stakeholders towards the HIV response in Uganda
- Develop a position paper with young people's needs on SRHR/HIV/GBV
- Build capacities of young people living and affected with HIV developed and improved on issues affecting them.



UNYPA
UGANDA NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV



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HOW THE SUMMIT WILL BE CONDUCTED

The Y+ Summit program shall be both virtual and physical in line with the Standard Operating procedures as shared by the Ministry of Health; the conversation will be built around sub themes that will guide all the activities of the day that is, “Gender and Mental Health Integration for YPLHIV” “Innovations for increased access to services especially in the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on YPLHIV and SRHR- HIV programming and Advocacy” and “Quality of life for young people living with HIV”

The interactive, educative and fun program is planned run as follows;

- (i) Plenary sessions** where young people will share their best practices and what they are doing to improve the communities they live in inform of abstracts on the three sub themes,
- (ii) Workshops** where experts will be invited to lecture the Young people on the different topics and this is aimed at improving the knowledge of the young people on the different topics around HIV and SRHR together with
- (iii) Breakaway sessions** where different workshops will be running concurrently and the young people will attend the sessions of their choice and
- (iv) Panel discussions** where young people will be availed the opportunity to interact with different stakeholders and hold them accountable for their duties.
- (v) Abstract presentation** where the young people will present best practices in their communities that are being implemented for the well-being and service of young people living with HIV
- (vi) Essay competition** where the young people who have participated in the previous Y+ summit will write about their summit experiences and how the participation in the Y+ summit has impacted their lives. The call will be made prior the Y+ summit and the winners will be selected

After all these sessions, having acquired information and knowledge about the different aspects in the SRH/HIV response, the young people will develop a position paper entailing the key asks of the all YPLHIV to the different stakeholders.

On the last day, the position paper will be read just before the inter-generational dialogue where the panelists will address some of the issues and asks pointed out in the position paper provoking them to commit on how they can create an enabling environment for all YPLHIV after which a follow up to ensure fulfillment of the commitments will be made.

OUR TARGET



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The Y+ Summit 2021 is planned to reach a total of 500 stakeholders both in person and virtually. 150 young people living with HIV including AYPLHIV peer leaders/supporters, Y+ Beauty pageant ambassadors as well as young key populations. The summit shall also extend to at least 50 young people from schools, universities and communities, 30 stakeholders from districts, Ministry of Health, Education, Gender and Finance, Members of parliament, Government legal, Law and Human Rights Commissions, NGOs that impact the lives of young people living with HIV in Uganda, the UN agencies in Uganda, embassies in Uganda and at least media stations in Uganda.

HOW WE PLAN TO REACH THE OTHER AUDIENCE

We know that many people are always interested in attending the summit but attendance in person will be closed to a limited number due to the COVID-19 guidelines. Therefore, we plan on reaching a bigger audience through hosting the Summit on zoom, streaming live on our social media channels such as Facebook (UNYPA), Twitter (@unypa1), live stream, Instagram (UNYPA-official) while also sharing messages and information on the different communication channels such as the official Zoom account and real time information on our website (<https://unypa.org>).

The official hash tag of the Summit shall be:
#YPlusSummit21 #OpeningOpportunities

CONCLUSION

The Y+ Summit shall shine a spotlight on the needs of populations sometimes left behind: to promote rights-based, evidence-informed, youth friendly SRHR-HIV service delivery that is tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable communities, including people living with HIV, displaced populations, women and girls, migrants, people in prisons and other closed settings, people who use drugs, sex workers, indigenous populations, transgender people, children and youth, migrants and refugees

The Y+ Summit shall have open dialogue to strengthen and underscore the commitment to a youth led HIV response: To examine the impact of stigma, social injustice and social determinants of health, including social, economic and gender inequalities, as well as food insecurity and unstable housing, on the HIV epidemic; and to advocate for improved access to healthcare services by YPLHIV in Uganda

Therefore, the Y+ summit will provide a collective platform and space for all varies groups of young people living with HIV to meet their different programming needs and expectations in the HIV response. The Y+ summit believes in the power of youth adult partnerships and intends to provide a platform for meaningful engagement of young people living with HIV, youth adult partnerships and capacity enhancement.