

REPORT ON THE 2020 Y+ BEAUTY PAGEANT CAMPAIGN

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2020



ABOUT UNYPA



The Uganda Network of young people living with HIV & AIDS (UNYPA) is a youth-led and youth serving NGO established to provide leadership and coordinate the greater and meaningful involvement and participation of Young People Living with HIV (YPLHIV) in Uganda in the national, regional and global HIV and AIDS response. UNYPA is driven by the needs of young people living with HIV to implement evidence informed national programs and advocacy to create a supportive and friendly environment for YPLHIV to lead healthy and productive lives. The elements of UNYPA's national advocacy program include promoting universal access to information and services on HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support; fighting stigma and discrimination against young people living with HIV; as well as, strengthening the component of youth leadership in the national HIV response by building capacity of young people to advocate for the rights of YPLHIV.



BACKGROUND TO THE Y+ BEAUTY PAGEANT CAMPAIGN

In a country where 1.4 million people are living with HIV with an estimated 23,000 Ugandans dying of AIDS-related illnesses annually; girls and young women in particular are disproportionately affected as there are many political and cultural barriers which have hindered effective HIV prevention programming in Uganda. As a result, new HIV infections are continuing to rise in the country. While there have been increased efforts to scale up treatment initiatives in Uganda there are still many people living with HIV who do not have access to the medicines they need. Punitive laws and stigmatizing attitudes towards young people, key populations, adolescents and young people, sex workers, and people who inject drugs has meant that these groups most vulnerable to infection are far less likely to engage with HIV services. HIV related stigma has been associated with emotional distress, decreased adherence to anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and reduced likelihood of HIV status disclosure. One argument for increasing access to ART has been that; doing so would reduce stigma through improvements in physical health and HIV-related symptom burden leading to economic rehabilitation and social reintegration.



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. As soon as the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Uganda on 19th 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 presented 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. 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, a gravest concern has been the real possibility of substantial ART interruption. In Uganda, the effects were multifactorial: supply chain issues as borders were closed, the inability of people to leave their homes to obtain essential medications, and people relocating to villages away from their HIV clinics.

Currently operational in 54 districts in Uganda, the organization has re-organized itself to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic especially for young people living with HIV/AIDS, we have reached out to the most marginalized and hard to reach communities in Uganda including in the proposed campaign areas in Kampala, Kwanja, Kamuli and Kabale

Additionally, the dire situation of poverty and hunger faced by many individuals especially PLHIV, where mere survival rather than maintaining HIV care became the priority. This disruption in ART access had very real consequences on those who were previously adherent to ART and virologically suppressed. Significant lapses in HIV virological suppression resulted in increased community transmission of HIV in the most at risk and other comparable settings, which presented a catastrophic downstream effect of COVID-19



INTRODUCTION TO THE Y+ BEAUTY PAGEANT CAMPAIGN

The Y+ Beauty pageant is a novel concept developed to celebrate beauty with zero stigma and discrimination among young people living with HIV (YPLHIV), encourages disclosure, adherence to treatment for zero new infections and social mobilization for a supportive environment for the productivity and safety of YPLHIV. Since its inception in 2014, the beauty pageant has over the years served as a platform to young people living with HIV aged 15-16 years to challenge the negative norms around HIV by becoming the voices to the voiceless, pillars of boldness and strength to those afraid of testing as well disclosing their status to their family circles and the public at large while challenging policy makers to implement policies and frameworks for the realization of the rights of YPLHIV in Uganda.



The annual event is aimed at fighting HIV related stigma and discrimination as well as challenging the structural drivers of gender based violence especially against young people living with HIV/AIDS (YPLHIV) with special focus on adolescent girls and young women through identifying young people as SRHR advocacy champions, creating the linkage to key influencers within their communities who design and guide policies that directly impact on their lives. The campaign breeds and contributes to a movement of YPLHIV advocates that is energetic, creative, empowered and productively working towards a stigma free Uganda through influencing policy, attitude and behavior change among young people and stakeholders

The Y+ beauty pageant stems from several indicators from the 2019 stigma index survey where external stigma prevalence was reported at 34% of PLHIV to have experienced discriminatory remarks and verbal harassment by family members, friends, partners which led to over 55% of PLHIV isolating themselves from social gatherings, families, relationships even jobs; over 1 in 4 PLHIV mentioned that their status was disclosed without their consent. 16% of PLHIV experienced black mail and 57.5% experienced physical harassment. However, the rates of internal stigma are even higher; 65% hid their HIV status from others, 45% felt guilty that they had HIV and 42% mentioned that they experienced feelings of worthlessness because of their HIV status.



These statistics argue for more effective approaches to tackle HIV related stigma; for YPLHIV specifically the adolescent girls and young women, stigma has an intensified impact to their wellbeing, and ability to adhere to their ART and live positively. The report also shows that more females struggle with mental health challenges; the inability to cope with stress, anxiety, lack of confidence negotiate for safe sex practices and demand other SRHR services apart from ART. These inevitably affect the uptake of SRHR-HIV- Mental health information and services, reduces ART adherence, increases the fear to disclose due to terror of rejections and perpetuated violence.

Failing to recognise the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the HIV care continuum in Uganda could result in a huge upsurge in HIV transmission and deaths in the months and years to come. Substantial action must be taken now by HIV service providers, policy makers and the government to create innovative, sustainable and effective solutions to prevent us “stepping back in time” in HIV care and minimize the collateral damage of COVID-19 on the HIV care continuum.



It is upon this background that UNYPA organizes the annual event; the campaign this year run under the theme; “Changing The Narrative” which sought to transform the way in which YPLHIV are perceived by the communities from which they come and serve; it looked at projecting YPLHIV as agents of change, champions and ambassadors of meaningful youth engagement and participation to ensure that young people and adolescents living with HIV enjoy inclusive youth friendly access to sexual reproductive health rights services, gender equality and women empowerment as a precursor to challenging the structural, socio- economic barriers that drive gender- based violence especially among adolescent girls and young women. The stigma index report calculated overall resilience was at 1.85%, above the zero. Meaning despite, HIV, the PLHIV have coped positively on average.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Y+ beauty pageant campaign was differently conducted in respect of the COVID- 19 prevention and response SOPs set by the Ministry of Health.

The 2020 campaign run was launched in September and for the month of October traversed the districts for the regional auditions and was concluded with a grand finale in November.



OBJECTIVES OF THE Y+ BEAUTY PAGEANT

- 01** To empower YPLHIV as youth champions and advocates to speak out for their rights
- 02** To create safe space for YPLHIV to express themselves freely, share stories of change and build coalitions to fight stigma within their own communities.
- 03** To mitigate the effects of HIV related stigma and discrimination for YPLHIV
- 04** To challenge myths, misconceptions and policies which inhibit YPLHIV from accessing SRHR-HIV information and services
- 05** To promote access and utilization of condoms by young people
- 06** To promote inclusive-ness of young people living with HIV including key populations in the design; implementation and monitoring of SRH-HIV related programs for PLHIV
- 07** To enhance a gender-transformative approach; working with men and boys to challenges SRHR violations against women and girls
- 08** To Improve peer to peer care and support within the health sector and home-based caregiving. This will be achieved through engagement of Y+ ambassadors who will continuously sensitize their host communities
- 09** To raise awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic, how it can be prevented and how PLHIV are affected by it as well as popularizing the guidelines



ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN THE Y+ BEAUTY CAMPAIGN

01 THE LAUNCH

The launch event is mainly a "press briefing" with media groups made to present and inform them about the campaign; the media are given an opportunity to ask questions, seek clarity about the pageant, its objectives and impact including how the campaign shall be conducted across the country and the essence of the Y+ Beauty Pageant in the HIV/AIDS response in Uganda.

The 2020 scientific launch was held on Friday 25th September at the Kampala Serena Hotel with attendance of only 78 participants including media, like minded partners, CSOs, YPLHIV, policy makers, ADPs, government representatives and Y+ ambassadors

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as opposed to the usual cocktail evening, the launch was a media café lounge both physical and virtual was organized with journalists, donors, partners, the ambassadors, the partners and young people to create a safe space for a conversation on why it is important for innovations like the Y+ beauty pageant which challenge the stigma and discrimination that many YPLHIV face. Besides unveiling the campaign, audience was honored to listen to the experiences of Y+ ambassadors and how the campaign has positively transformed their lives into advocates, activists who are change makers in their communities hence lobbying public support for challenging HIV related stigma and discrimination.





KEY NOTE ADDRESS

ADEKEMI NDIELI

DEPUTY COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE, UN WOMEN

In her remarks, she recognized the importance of the work of UNYPA in designing interventions, proving platforms that harness young people's leadership and meaningful engagement in the HIV/AIDS response, focusing on women empowerment and service delivery. She mentioned that achieving the internationally agreed development goals hinges on advancing progress on gender equality, taking action to raise the status of women through education, literacy, access to basic health care, as well as economic empowerment.

The HIV pandemic exacerbates women's greater economic insecurity, greater burden of poverty, unsafe behaviors and practices, maternal mortality and decreases access to SRHR information



and services. Measures to address HIV stigma and discrimination, reduce poverty must then address gender equalities and the violations against AGYW. The COVID-19 has worsened the unprecedented and significant strain on the global economy and public health systems; it is also highlighting and magnifying inequalities and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls.

She highlighted that UN Women is fully committed to supporting initiatives and innovations aimed at empowering adolescent girls and young women to participate meaningfully in the HIV/AIDS response especially women living with HIV.

She stressed out that Adolescents Girls and Young women need to be at the forefront of fighting HIV since the burden of the epidemic lies amongst them.

"Protecting the rights of women and girls is a collective responsibility, UN Women is dedicated to gender equality, the empowerment of women and as thus supports all initiatives established to accelerate progress on meeting the needs of AGYW; the Y+ beauty pageant places women at the center of empowerment and it that is why we continue to fully support it."

**- Ms. Adekemi Ndieli,
Deputy Country rep, UN Women.**



PANEL 1; INNOVATIONS FOR CREATION OF A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YPLHIV;

The launch hosted two panels with one panel themed; Innovations for creation of a safe environment for YPLHIV. The conversation aimed at understanding the gaps and barriers in accessing SRHR-HIV information and services for young people, the impacts of COVID19 on the HIV/AIDS response in Uganda, the exacerbating gender injustices & violations as well as recommendations on how YPLHIV can cope during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The diverse panelists included; Mr.

Micheal Ssenyonga- Mr. Y+ 2019/2020, Miss Quin Abenakyo- Executive Director- Quin Abenakyo Foundation, Dr. Dan Byamukama- Uganda AIDS Commission, Ms. Esther Kabashambo- Miss Y+ 2019/2020 and Mrs. Mushabe Elizabeth- Gender and HIV Specialist, UN Women

Key recommendations included;

- There is need to continue empowering young people as advocates, activists and change makers for policy advocacy. The Y+ ambassadors played a key role during the COVID-19 of making door to door deliveries for ART, TB, condoms and other SRHR-HIV services including psycho social support for mental health challenges
- Partnerships and collaborations are important as they ensure a strengthened referral network for the YPLHIV to maximize service utilization
- Work with men allies and partners in promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment as a mechanism of reducing AGYWs vulnerability to HIV infections and violence.
- Strengthen Investment in addressing social cultural and gender injustices, inequalities that affect AGYWs empowerment and protec-

tion of their SRHR needs.

- Strengthen mobilization of grassroots communities in the HIV/AIDS Response Advocacy
- Invest in innovations that bring services closer to the people such as the UNYPA mobile application where young people can access SRHR-HIV info and services without the usual bureaucracies in public health facilities
- Strengthen engagement of Parents and care takers in promoting the healthy welfare of Young people living with HIV.
- Prioritize approaches that guarantee young people to access HIV prevention and treatment services. (Young people to know their HIV status and those found HIV positive to be initiated on treatment immediately).
- The COVID19 response programming has a lot of key lessons to learn from the HIV/AIDS programming mostly hinged on positive behavioral change, COVID19 has exposed the interconnectedness between vulnerability and gender inequalities.
- There is need to support YPLHIV district movement building initiatives started by Y+ ambassadors as they create a basis for peer to peer support for AYPLHIV in the communities
- Invest in innovations such as the Y+ beauty pageant, which work with and for young people to build a movement of advocates challenging HIV stigma and discrimination
- Social structural Barriers (Gender inequalities, Violence on Girls and Women, Stigma and Discrimination continue to predispose many to HIV infections.).



“The Y+ Beauty pageant is a platform for nurturing selfless young leaders and community advocates who are eager to serve their communities and fellow young people. However, we can’t do it alone, we need continuous mentorship from peers, adults and people who believe in us to challenge the stigma that prohibits us from achieving our full potentials”

- Micheal Ssenyonga- Mr. Y+ 2019/20



“Uganda is a young country thus there is urgent need to invest in innovations and initiatives such as the Y+ beauty pageant that place young people at the center of the HIV/AIDS response; we need to empower girls to stand up for their rights and remain vigilant in protecting themselves from HIV and unintended teenage pregnancies”

- Quin Abenakyo, Quin Abenakyo Foundation



“We cannot address HIV stigma and discrimination without addressing Gender inequalities and social cultural constraints, violence against girls and young women that continue to make the group more vulnerable to HIV infections. We also have to look at men as allies because they play a key role in ensuring AGYW access and utilize SRHR-HIV information and services, enhancing women’s empowerment and Gender Equality.”

- Mrs. Mushabe Elizabeth - Gender and HIV Specialist, UN Women



PANEL 2; PROMOTION OF CORRECT AND CONSISTENT USE OF CONDOMS AS A LIFESTYLE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

The second panel was themed; Promotion of correct and consistent use of condoms as a lifestyle among sexually active young people, the panel was mainly intended to launch the mini Condom campaign supported by the United Nations Population Fund implemented in partnership with the AIDS Information Centre. The campaign is aimed at increasing access to and utilization of condoms by sexually active young people through mobilizing Young People, like minded partners, community leaders, opinion influencers and the general community in challenging myths and misconceptions that drive condom stigma and affect their correct and consistent use, The panel discussed the challenges young people face in accessing and utilizing condoms as well as ways in which to promote accessibility and effective utilization of Condom services relevant ways of popularizing condom media campaigns that enhance social behavioural change and strengthening alternative community delivery safe units that enable youths to access to condoms at all times and anywhere and most importantly strategy for intensified condom advocacy in the country.

The panelists included; Madam Kindyomunda Rosemary- UNFPA, Madam Vastha Kibirige- Ministry of Health, Leticia Akumu- UNYPA youth advocate and Chief Zibondo Kigulu- Chief, Busoga Kingdom.

Key recommendations included;

Condom stigma is still a major issue affecting proper condom use among young people; there is need to address the myths and misconceptions surrounding condom use

- Programs need to invest in behavioral change communication around condom use as a lifestyle

- There is need to popularize the use of female condoms

- There is need to work with cultural, political and religious leaders to achieve positive health seeking behaviours for young people

- There is need for positive prevention among YPLHIV as many fail to use condoms especially when other YPLHIV

- There is importance in working with grassroot structures and communities in the promotion of condom use

- There is need to work with young people when designing messages that promote condom use as a lifestyle among them

- Multi sectoral programming is important for condom programming as partners

“Young people don’t use condoms because they believe that couples are having unprotected is a sign of commitment to each other”,

- Leticia Akumu, youth advocate

“Teaching condoms should be simplified for young people to understand; In my chieftdom, we describe condoms as “engabo” to mean a shield; when we teach the young ones, we tell them about the importance of the shield and relate it to war; this way they properly understand what we mean and act wisely”

- Chief Zibondo Kigulu- Busoga Kingdom

“Condom programming has to evolve, place young people at the centre, while investing heavily in innovations brought forth by young people to address the challenges their peers face, only then shall we ensure that interventions actually effectively respond to the issues at hand”

- Madam Kindyomunda Rosemary- UNFPA

“Adults need to normalize condom education to young people at a young age; beginning with abstinence and then openly discussing condom use, at the Ministry they call me Jajja Condom because I can easily discuss condom use with any young person, we need to create this rapport with young people if we are to encourage condom use as a lifestyle”

- Madam Vastha Kibirige- Ministry of Health



**CLOSING REMARKS,
GUEST OF HONOR, DR. KARUSA
KIRAGU, COUNTRY DIRECTOR, UNAIDS**

In her closing remarks, Dr. Karusa appreciated the YPLHIV network for the continued commitment in championing the end to HIV. She highlighted that UNYPA is not an organization that not only the identifies challenges in the HIV/AIDS programming but also innovates and comes up with youth led, youth responsive solutions to addressing those challenges.

She emphasized that young people living with HIV must be empowered to champion the fight to end HIV/AIDS through addressing its related stigma and discrimination; and remains a core stumbling block for accessibility to HIV prevention, care, and treatment services which is resulting to increased new HIV infections, AIDS-related deaths in Uganda and threatens to reverse the

accomplishments made in the fight against HIV/AIDS and ending it by 2030. She ended her remarks by sharing that UNAIDS is committed to supporting interventions that work for the realization of the 90-90-90 targets which are now progressing into the 95-95-95 targets

“Young Key populations living with HIV face immense challenges accessing SRHR- HIV services due to the restrictive laws in the country, interventions like the Y+ pageant are vital as they challenge the state to implement policies and frameworks that protect the rights of YPLHIV,”

- Dr. Karusa, Country Rep, UNAIDS,

The launch also unveiled the roadmap for the campaign including the online activations, regional auditions, Boot camp, and lastly the date and for the Grand finale.



02 REGIONAL AUDITIONS

The Regional Auditions are a series of activities that paved the way to the Grand Finale of the Y+ Beauty Pageant; the auditions pulled 225 contestants in total; **These audition pre- Activities included;**

01

Community dialogues with key stakeholders such as district leaders, school administrators, health workers, VHTs, client experts, parents, caretakers and young people on their role in addressing HIV related stigma and discrimination, challenging gender inequalities, gender based violence, addressing the structural barriers that affect provision of youth friendly SRHR- HIV services in public health facilities and strategic advocacy for implementation of policies which guarantee improved well-being of young people living with HIV.

02

Integrated HIV/SRH community service events; aimed at opening dialogue with the community members on myths and misconceptions on HIV, COVID-19 and mental health, the events were carried out in markets, boda boda stages, slum areas.

- During these events, Y+ ambassadors conducted door to door visits while delivering SRHR- HIV information, distributing and educating community members on condom use.
- Produced IEC materials such as posters, t-shirts, bags, fliers, banners, wrist bands to ease the dissemination of HIV/SRH messages.

03

Engaged in Radio talk shows to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, the effects of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, and Gender-Based Violence in line with the 16 days of activism and the international World AIDS day.

The purpose of the auditions was to identify the ambassadors from the different regions in the country hence hosted in the central, western, eastern and northern parts; : The eligibility for contesting as an ambassador was based on their willingness to open up about their HIV status, their knowledge on issues affecting YPLHIV, and their ability and willingness to represent YPLHIV , 2020 had a total of 171 contestants bringing the total to 1,015 ambassadors to date.



CENTRAL REGION AUDITIONS, KAMPALA DISTRICT, 9TH-10TH OCTOBER 2020

The regional auditions kicked off with a community dialogue hosted on 9th October 2020 at the Situation room of Uganda AIDS Commission offices in Kampala; the dialogue brought together 25 key stakeholders including; the Global Fund CCM representatives, opinion leaders, the police, teachers, parents, law enforcement, health workers, media fraternity, CSOs representatives, and young people.

From the dialogue, teachers acknowledged that stigma and discrimination against students living with HIV is still a critical issue in schools. “Many parents have not and still fear to disclose to their children, some teachers are not professional enough in dealing with students who have opened up about their HIV status to them!” said Mr. Muwesi Robert- Headteacher of Eden High School in Gayaza. Representatives from Schools emphasized the need for the Ministry of Education to work with organizations’ like the UNYPA in the promotion of HIV prevention awareness, encouraging abstinence among adolescents, and life skills development for students. Mr. Ssemakula David from Naalya SSS re-echoed; “Our students need to put a face to HIV, professional counselors don’t provide that- We want young people who are living with HIV just like these Y+ ambassadors to talk to our students; I am very confident that they will listen to them”.

The community service outreach was conducted in the slums of Soweto- Namuwongo with Y+ Ambassadors and staff of UNYPA cleaning Namuwongo market, and informing market tenants about the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and sanitation especially during the COVID19 pandemic. The team distributed over 12,000 pieces of male and female condoms and engaged over 300 members of public on the importance of correct and consistent condom use in the prevention of HIV infections, STIs, and unwanted pregnancies.

The central Regional Audition was hosted at Alive Medical Services in Namuwongo; it brought together a total of 63 contestants vying for the title of Mr. and Miss Y+ Central Region 2020/21. The ceremony was moderated by a team of three independent Judges namely, Ms. Zaituni Nabagereka; an SRHR- HIV expert with 10 years’ experience in working with and for young people, Ms. Blessings Bakashaba- Executive Director, Kakazi Foundation, and Mr. Okiror Benjamin- Mr. Y+ Eastern region 2019/20.

The winners for the central auditions were;

Mr. Y+ Central - Israel Luminsa, aged 21years from Baylor College of medicine Mulago,
Miss Y+ Central -Namayanja Sheirat, 19 years from Mildmay Uganda.

1st runner up - Semambo Joel, 20 years from TASO Mulago

1st runner up- Nakyejwe Katherine, 22 years from Baylor Uganda,

2nd runner up - Serunjongi Shafik, 19 years from MU-JHU- Mulago

2nd runner up -Mulungi Sanyu, 20 years from Namugongo Fund for special children.



EASTERN REGION AUDITIONS, KAMULI DISTRICT, 16TH – 17TH OCTOBER 2020

The eastern auditions were hosted in Kamuli district; it commenced with a community dialogue on Friday 16th October, 2020 at Kamuli District Disabled People's Union (KAMD-IPU) with 30 stakeholders which brought together teachers, health workers, like minded SRHR-HIV partners, policy makers, representatives from the media fraternity, religious, cultural and community opinion leaders among others to dialogue on the ongoing stigma and discrimination among young people living with HIV/AIDS (YPLHIV) especially in Kamuli district.

The Guest of honor for the community dialogue was one of the 11 chiefs of the Obwa'Kya-bazinga bwa Busoga led by HRH. WW Nadhiope IV, HRH Patrick Izimba Gologolo Ngobi of Kigulu chieftdom who was escorted by his Prime Minister Terwane Grace.

The main topic of discussion in the dialogue rotated around the social drivers for stigma and discrimination of YPLHIV. Mr. Brian Ibanda the District Coordinator of YPLHIV in Kamuli reiterated that implementing partners need to strengthen efforts to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS starting from prevention as well as care and management for PLHIV he said, "Very few people actually know their status, and even fewer know that they can live positively healthy. Everyone looks at you like you committed a crime getting the Virus. There is a very big gap in programming and inclusivity," Ibanda said. He commended interventions like the Y+ beauty pageant that frontline YPLHIV in the fight towards ending HIV in Uganda by 2030.

The community service event was hosted at Kamuli Central Market involving cleaning the market to discuss the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with 350 people, over 5,700 pieces of male and female condoms distributed, conducted condom education and demonstration as part of our campaign to increase access and utilization of condoms among young people in the region.

The auditions had a total of 57 contestants, the three judges were; Mairah Faith, Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) of the SRHR Alliance, Mr. Lyagaba Moses the Assistant District Health Officer (DHO) of Kamuli district, and Joseph Kakande Mr. Y+ Central region 2019/20.

The winners for the central auditions were;

Miss. Y+ Eastern- Miss Y+ Eastern: Phiona Mutonyi, 21 years from Mbale district,
Mr. Y+ Eastern: William Okedi, 20 years from Pallisa district,
Mr. Y+ first runner up: Norman Ntamu, 19 years from Mayuge district
1st Runner Up Miss Y+: Kiiza Namusobya, 23 years, Jinja district



NORTHERN AUDITIONS, KWANIA DISTRICT, 23RD- 24TH OCTOBER 2020

The northern auditions were hosted in Kwanja district, they kicked off with a community dialogue on 23rd October 2020 at the Kwanja district council hall; it hosted 30 participants, the stakeholders highlighted that; there was an urgent need to promote HIV/AIDS awareness at all levels in the communities including; strengthening the family institution to enable parents and caretakers to disclose to their children and to support them to live positively with HIV.

Mr. Okello Anthony, the Chairman LCV of Kwanja Town council officiated the dialogue. He expressed genuine concern about the effects of the rampant stigma in communities that continue to limit many from accessing HIV prevention, treatment, and care services. He quoted that; "Living with HIV is Not a death sentence", and people needed NOT to fear accessing life-saving medications because they are the gate pass to ending AIDS-related Deaths. Mr. Ojok Peter, the In charge of Aduku Health Centre IV restated that stigma and Discrimination were hatched in families with many parents NOT being role models to their children.

The community service event was held in Aduku village; engaging over 320 people at the market and the town sensitizing market vendors about COVID19 and the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and sanitation amidst the Pandemic. We also cleaned the market and distributed 5,000 pieces of female and male Condoms

The audition had a total of 52 contestants, the judges included; Naluggwa Milly- Project officer with RHITES- LANGO, Mr. Patrick Ayek, lecturer and medical officer with Lira University Hospital and Hajarrah Asimwe; Miss Y+ Western region 2018/19

The winners for the central auditions were;

Mr. Y+ Northern- Otim Oscar, 19 years, from TASO Gulu, Gulu district
Miss Y+; Acio Gladys, 22 years from TASO Gulu, Gulu district,
1st Runners up; Daniel Mwor, 19 years from Dokolo district
Miss Y+; Aketch Flower Nightingale, 19 years from Lira Regional Referral Hospital.



WESTERN AUDITIONS, KABALE DISTRICT, 30TH- 31ST OCTOBER 2020

The western auditions were conducted in the Switzerland of Uganda Kabale district; preceded by a community dialogue on Friday 30th October with key district officials and community gatekeepers to strategize means for the tackling of stigma and discrimination in the district. Dr. Didas Muhwezi, the Adolescent and Youth Coordinator at Kabale Regional Referral Hospital recognized that the Y+ Beauty Pageant is the first of its kind in Kigezi Sub-region and its important as it comes at a critical when the entire Kigezi region is crumbling with the perilous effects of HIV/AIDS.

The Guest of Honour, Mr. Namara John Bosco, the District Youth Chairperson while closing the dialogue highlighted the need for prioritization of Behavioral Change Communication initiatives that effectively engage communities in Fighting stigma and discrimination especially towards young people living with HIV/AIDS. He mentioned that the district youth council has intensified efforts and 10 out of the 13 sub counties in the district have fully functional youth centers from where young people can access information and services to make informed reproductive health choices.

The community service outreach was held at Kabale Central Market engaging 320 people. With the support of our Peer educators, we cleaned the central market and promoted awareness about the significance of correct and consistent condom use in ending new HIV infections. We also distributed a total of 4000 pieces Male and 2500 female condoms while educating.

The auditions brought a lineup of 53 participants, judged by Micheal Ssenyonga- Mr. Y+ 2019/2020, Dr. Didas Muhwezi- Adolescent and youth coordinator- Kabale regional referral hospital and Miss Kyaka Margaret- councillor, Kabale district

The winners for the central auditions were;

Mr. Y+ Western: Noah Junior Tiago, TASO Mbarara, Mbarara

Miss Y+ Western: Naturinda Sheilah, Kamukira HCIV,

Mr. Y+ 1st Runners Up: Peter Ngambenawe, Kabale Regional Referral Hospital.

Miss Y+ 1st Runners Up: Ainebyona Precious

BASIC STATISTICS



NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED

REGION	CENTRAL	EASTERN	NORTHERN	WESTERN	TOTAL
COMMUNITY DIALOGUE	25	30	30	30	115
COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT	300	350	320	360	1,330
AUDITIONS	63 contestants 35 spectators	57 contestants 40 spectators	52 contestants 45 spectators	53 contestants 45 spectators	225 contestants 1651 spectators
CONDOMS DISTRIBUTED	1,200	5,700	5,000	6,500	18,400

From the auditions; the following were the regional winners who became the 18 national contestants vying for the national position;

CENTRAL	EASTERN	NORTHERN	WESTERN
Namayanja Sheirat, 19 Nakyejwe Catherine, 22 Luminsa Israel, 21 Ssemambo Joel, 20 Mulungi Sanyu Agnes, 20 Sserunjoji Shafik 19	Kiiza Namusobya, 16 Okedi Wilson, 24 Mutonyi Phiona, 24 Norman Ntamu, 22	Otim Oscar, 19 Mwori Daniel, 22 Akech Florence Nightingale, 22 Aol Gladys, 22 ,	Ngambenawe Peter, 23 Noah Junior, 21 Ainebyona Precious, 19 Naturinda Sheillah, 21yrs

THE BOOT CAMP

The boot camp is a week-long residential capacity building and strengthening training for the 18 regional winners of the Y+ Beauty pageant enhancing their presentation, advocacy and leadership skills in preparations for the grand finale and the year long leadership in advocating for and addressing issues that affect young people living with HIV/AIDS in their respective communities. The boot camp was run from 14th- 19th November 2020 at Banana village eco resort and brought together 18 Y+ ambassadors (4 from the North, 4 from the East, 4 from the West and 6 from the Central region of the country)

The boot camp is meant to empower YPLHIV as youth champions and advocates to speak out for their rights, to create a safe space for YPLHIV to express themselves freely, share stories of change and build coalitions to fight stigma within their own communities and to enhance a gender-transformative focus on empowering women, men, boys and girls; and strengthen their capacity to participate in and benefit from programs to reduce HIV related stigma and discrimination

Prior to the boot camp, different consultations were made on what the different ambassadors presented as capacity gaps and topics that needed to be covered in the boot camp besides the other life skills building drills and sessions prepared by the partners; informed the program of the boot camp. Other topics covered included; understanding the HIV/ADH trends in Uganda, youth led advocacy, innovations and SRHR, condom advocacy, effective communication and visibility, leadership and how leaders inspire action, Self-esteem, Body image dreaming and setting goals, Emerging trends on VAW in Cyber abuse and intimate partner violence, GBV, mental health and youth movement building.



THE BOOT CAMP



GRAND FINALE

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2020

The Grand Finale is the almost final step of the Y+ beauty pageant campaign; this is where the 18 crowned regional winners come to the national level to compete for the position of the national Mr. and Miss Y+ who shall lead the years' cohort of the Y+ ambassadors.

The 2020 Grand Finale was a glamorous scientific event held both physically and virtually on 20th November 2020 at Kampala Serena Hotel with participation of only 200 guests ranging from representatives from the HIV Parliamentary Committee, representatives from Ministry of Health, Education, Gender, the US Embassy, DUTCH Embassy, Embassy of Ireland, PEPFAR, UNFPA, UN Women, UNAIDS, Uganda AIDS Commission, Global network of people living with HIV, AIDS FONDS, Dutch Embassy, SRHR Alliance Uganda, Reproductive Health Uganda, Baylor, Mildmay, Reach Out Mbuya, Alive Medical Services, Aduku health centre 4, Kamuli DLG, Kwanja DLG, Kabale DLG, Kabale regional referral hospital, Aduku health center 4, Right Here, Right Now, PITCH consortium, GUSO, HOLIC pads, Sheebah Establishments



The Grand Finale event also hosted a number of special Guests just to mention but a few; Her Excellence; Natalie Brown, Ambassador of the USA to Uganda, the Country Director of CDC; Dr. Lisa Nelson, the Country Representative for UN Women; Dr. Maxime Houinato, the Country Director UNAIDS; Dr. Karusa Kiragu, The chairperson of the UCCM; Dr. Maggie Kigozi, Rosemary Mwesigwa Kindyomunda, National Programme Specialist-UNFPA, Mr. Mondo Kyateka- Commissioner for youth and children, Ministry of Gender, representatives from Ministry of Health, Education and Sports, National Coordinator, SRHR Alliance; Mr. Charles Owekmeno, Ms. Elizabeth Mushabe, Primrose Kibirigi- UN Women, Dr. Dan Byamukama- Uganda AIDS Commission, Tezera Lutaaya, Ms. Brenda Nanyonga- CORDAID, Ms. Tezera Lutaaya, Mrs. Alesi Jacqueline Ssozi, UNYPA board members under the leadership of Mr. Paddy Masembe, Y+ ambassadors and many other key dignitaries were present.



The pageant was won by;

Mr. Y+; Otim Oscar,
19 years, Lira district

Miss Y+; Aol Gladys, 22,
Gulu district also the brand
ambassador for HOLIC pads.

**1st runner up Mr. Y+; Norman
Ntamu, 19 years from Mayuge
district**

**1st runner up Miss Y+; Namayanja
Sheirat, 19 years from Kampala**

**2nd runner up Mr. Y+; Noah Junior
Tiago, Mbarara**

**2nd runner up Miss Y+; Mulungi
Sanyu, 20 years from Kampala**

The finale competition was presided over by a panel of five judges;

Quiin Abenakyo; Miss Uganda 2018, Miss
World 2018 and Executive Director; Quiin
Abenakyo Foundation,

Natasha Sinayobye; an actress, business
entrepreneur, model, show host with 19 years
in the fashion and entertainment scene,

Nyanzi Huzairu; founder, Batabaazi cultural
group and Mr. Y+ 2017/18,

Lillian Mworeko; Executive Director, Interna-
tional Community of Women living with
HIV/AIDS in East Africa (ICWEA) and

Musah Lumumba; team leader at the East and
Southern Youth Alliance on SRHR and HIV



Speaking to participants, our team leader **Nicholas Niwagaba mentioned,**

“I am very grateful for what is happening today. Words may fail to express how deep our gratitude is but I thank you all for continuing to walk this journey with us as we create a safe environment for YPLHIV in Uganda. In 2014 we only had 10 contestants, seven years down the road, we have 1,109 ambassadors around the country as of today, it means that we are breaking the chains of HIV stigma and discrimination in Uganda”

Special awards were also presented to Y+ ambassadors who have worked much exceedingly in their communities to ensure that fellow young people access and utilize SRHR- HIV information and services namely;

Taliba Zainab,
Miss Y+ Northern region 2019/2020
- Grassroot advocate of the year

Esther Kabashambo,
Miss Y+ 2019/2020
- Outstanding ambassador of the year

Ruth Akullu,
1st runner up Miss Y+ 2019/2020
- Media advocate of the year

Sharon Amongi,
Miss Y+ Northern region 2018/2019
- Peer mentor of the year

Special awards were awarded to the contestants;

Mr. Otim Oscar and Miss Sheila Naturinda were identified as the **Mr. and Miss talent 2020/2021**

Kiiza Namusobya- **Miss. Popularity**

Norman Ntamu - **Mr Popularity**

Creative Wear Award; Aol Gladys & Otim Oscar

Mr. Personality- Shafik Sserunjoji,

Miss. Personality- Nakyejwe Catherine

Rising Man- Luminsa Israel,

Rising Woman- Mulungi Sanyu Agnes

The Grand Finale is an opportunity for UNYPA to leverage on music, dance and fashion to speak to the communities they are targeting and encouraged all partners to join hands with UNYPA to help young positives in fighting young positives to address both self and community stigma.

The event was produced by Joram Model Management and was graced with members from the fashion and entertainment industry including the amazing hosts; **Deedan and Ronnie McVex**; media personalities, **Fenon records, Fezaabu Hair and Make-up shop, Compassion Dance crew, Abryans, Tric Media**, fashion houses including; **Jo Kisaka, Hakeem Lusimbo, Bantu X, Raphael, Ganyana Fashion House, Dominus Apparell, Abryans, Joram Muzira, Judith Heard, Carol Flower, Natasha Sinayobye, Judith Heard**, with special performances from **Spice Diana, Lillian and The Sundowners**

THE SPOTLIGHT CAFÉ;



The café was hosted by; Robinah Babirye- Miss Y+ 2017/2018 running under the topic; **Youth empowerment; Pre-cursor to challenging the drivers of gender-based violence towards adolescent girls and young women**, she interviewed a number of participants at the event including Ms. Tezera Lutaaya, Y+ ambassadors, Ms. Lillian Mworeko, Mr. Charles Owekmeno, Mr. James Tumusiime.

The Spotlight Initiative media café coiled conversations on the role of stakeholders in achieving Gender equality, strengthening HIV prevention/ management initiatives, promoting condom Use and HIV related stigma.

The engaging discussion highlighted how HIV related stigma and discrimina-

tion contributes to Gender Based Violence and vice versa especially among adolescent girls and young women living with HIV, the panelists also discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has re-defined the landscape for access and utilization of SRHR- HIV information and services as well as the necessary steps/ interventions that need to be put in place in order to combat and eventually end GBV against adolescent girls and young women living with HIV.

The conversation also discussed the need for continued condom advocacy to promote correct and consistent condom use among young people encouraging behavioral change communication to adopt proper condom use as a lifestyle among young people who are sexually active.

COMMITMENTS FROM INTERACTIVE PANEL

UN Women, committed to support young people to mobilize resources that shall continue the efforts of empowering young positives to end HIV related stigma.

UNFPA, committed to support young people to elevate condom advocacy to promote condom use as a lifestyle among young people.

PEPFAR; committed to continue to invest in young people to end HIV and to continue encouraging young people and partners to continue fighting the epidemic.

Uganda Aids Commission (UAC), committed to keep the fight on as there are 1.2 million people on treatment and there will be total epidemic treatment by next year; UAC committed to ensure that everyone joins the movement to end HIV by 2030

UNAIDS; committed to work with UNYPA and other partners to make sure that no one is left behind in the area of HIV & AIDS and to always do reminders to all stakeholders to keep fighting and put a lot of confidence in Young people



VOICE OF SUPPORT

Mr. Mark Vermeulen, Executive Director, Aidsfonds

In his video of support, he expressed how proud Aidsfonds is to work with UNYPA on the pageant as it is an innovation which encourages YPLHIV to share their beauty and abilities with everyone in their surroundings including transforming their country; by molding them into a generation of new leaders fronting positive healthy living, redefining the conversation of stigma and changing the narrative for YPLHIV just as expressed in the theme of the event,

He mentioned that, “COVID-19 threatened to downplay progress made in the HIV response but proud to share that YPLHIV networks like UNYPA exhibited resilience in the tough times; we saw Y+ making deliveries for ART, TB, food and other SRHR commodities and it warmed our hearts to

see the power of peer to peer support among YPLHIV in Uganda; we secured additional funding and supported the work of UNYPA to ensure they reach the last mile community member. This innovation has far reaching effects beyond this event and hence needs all our support”

In his conclusion he mentioned that it is still important to address stigma and discrimination as it has a detrimental effect on PLHIV; it puts YPLHIV at a risk of mental health challenges, poor adherence eventually leading to a poor quality of life for YPLHIV and even deters people from testing to know their status; it is important therefore for us all to work for an environment which support PLHIV to live healthy, productive and efficient lives

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Maxime Houinato, the country representative for UN Women

The key note address was delivered by Dr. Maxime Houinato, the country representative for UN Women in Uganda; he mentioned that the UN Women is excited about the work of young people especially in using innovations to address the SRHR- HIV challenges that they struggle with, it is important to have adolescent girls and young women at the centre of these initiatives because they are most disproportionately affected and bare even thrice the burden.

“UN Women is proud to partner with UNYPA to spearhead youth empowerment to elevate the fight on violence against women and girls; the Y+ pageant plays a key role in strengthening the district YPLHIV movement hence increasing the mass of young people protecting and promoting the rights of adolescents and young girls in their communities; this event is a strong advocacy agenda that we all need to push forward”

- Dr. Maxime

He encouraged young people to continuously harness their energy, courage and power appropriately to change their lives and those of the people around them



SPEECH FROM GUEST OF HONOR H.E Natalie Brown, Ambassador of the USA to Uganda



The Grand finale was graced with the presence of special guests including the Guest of Honor; Her Excellency; Natalie Brown, Ambassador of the USA to Uganda, on her first public appearance since her appointment to Uganda

'I am excited to be here, I can't think of a better way to begin my term in a beautiful country than by taking part in an activity designed and implemented by young people committed to changing their lives, the lives of their peers and to changing how society views those living with HIV; the theme 'changing the narrative is so very appropriate! When I asked my colleagues about this event, they lit up when describing what an amazing celebration this is and its relevance in showcasing the talent, creativity, and commitment of Uganda's youth and the critical role this majority of the population plays in not just shaping the future but what happens today!!'

H.E Natalie E Brown, US Ambassador to Uganda.

For more information on the 2020 Y+ beauty pageant campaign please follow the links; with videos,

Different stakeholders and prominent media gurus took to social and mainstream media, held fruitful discussions regarding the pageant using the hashtags #ChangingTheNarrative and #YPlusPageant20. The Y+ beauty Pageant was also live on Facebook using the official UNYPA Facebook page and on NBS live

Please follow this link to access the digital; social, print, audio, visual reports for the Y+ beauty pageant;

The launch; https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QCWlazeBo0_maqlz6dPiXkh4kzKsGIbl/view?usp=drive_web--

Central Audition video; <https://youtu.be/BiR8LJki9Yw>

Central Auditions Blog posts; <https://unypa.org/y-plus-beauty-pageant-central-region-2020-21/>

Eastern; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucpdoKrHkMA&t=6s>

Eastern blog; <https://unypa.org/kamuli-bound-for-the-eastern-region-y-beauty-pageant-auditions/>

Northern Auditions; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuYpACWlr1o>

Northern Blog; <https://unypa.org/kings-and-queens-of-the-land-of-odii/>

Western video; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lEAbDyB0j8

Western Blog; <https://unypa.org/hailing-the-y-queens-and-kings-from-the-switzerland-of-africa/>

News Articles;

- <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1530769/crowned-miss>
- UNYPA Unveils New HIV/AIDS Stigma And Discrimination Ambassadors <https://thetowerpost.com/2020/11/23/unypa-unveils-new-hiv-aids-stigma-and-discrimination-ambassadors/>
Northern region takes the Y+ Beauty Pageant grand finale <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1533322/northern-region-takes-beauty-pageant-grand-finale>
- <https://theugandan.com/2020/11/aol-gladys-and-os-car-otim-win-the-crown-as-top-ambassadors-against-hiv-aids-stigma-and-discrimination-2/>
- Who will be crowned the next Mr Y+/Miss Y+? <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1530769/crowned-miss>
- Naturinda wins HIV Beauty Pageant For Western Uganda <https://chimpreports.com/naturinda-wins-hiv-beauty-pageant-for-western-uganda/>
- UNYPA To Unveil Mini Condom Campaign At Launch Of Y+ Beauty Pageant This Friday <https://thetowerpost.com/2020/09/24/unypa-set-to-launch-a-virtual-mini-condom-campaign-together-with-the-y-beauty-pageant-this-friday/>
- UNYPA launches condom use campaign to reduce STDs incidence, and unwanted pregnancies <https://chimpreports.com/unypa-launches-condom-use-campaign-to-reduce-stds-incidence-unwanted-pregnancies/>
- The Y+ Beauty Pageant 2020 launched <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1528032/beauty-pageant-2020-launched>
- Health workers to drive youth to suicide in Northern Uganda using stigma <https://www.independent.co.ug/health-workers-to-drive-youth-to-suicide-in-northern-uganda-using-stigma/>
- HIV is not a death sentence - Kwania LC5 Boss <https://chimpreports.com/hiv-is-not-a-death-sentence-kwania-lc5-boss/>
- Who Will Wear The Y+ Beauty Pageant Crown? <https://campusbee.ug/news/who-will-wear-the-y-beauty-pageant-crown/>

- UNYPA UNVEILS THE WESTERN AMBASSADORS OF THE Y+ BEAUTY PAGEANT IN KABALE <https://theugandan.com/2020/11/unypa-unveils-the-western-ambassadors-of-the-y-beauty-pageant-in-kabale/>
- CENTRAL REGION GETS NEW AMBASSADORS TO SPEAR HEAD FIGHT AGAINST HIV STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION <https://theugandan.com/2020/10/central-region-gets-new-ambassadors-to-spear-head-fight-against-hiv-stigma-and-discrimination/>
- UNYPA to Launch a mini condom campaign and the Y+ Beauty Pageant <https://ugmirror.com/index.php/2020/09/24/unypa-to-launch-a-mini-condom-campaign-and-the-y-beauty-pageant/>
- UNYPA Set to Launch Y+ Beauty Pageant 2020 <http://thisisuganda.org/unypa-set-to-launch-y-beauty-pageant-2020/>
- Y+ Beauty Pageant: This Pageant Aims at Fighting Stigma And Discrimination of Young People Living With HIV <http://thisisuganda.org/y-beauty-pageant-this-pageant-aims-at-fighting-stigma-and-discrimination-of-young-people-living-with-hiv/>

QUOTES

“The Y+ Beauty pageant boosted my self-esteem and Self-confidence, before participating I could not disclose my status but with the mentorship of this platform, I’m now a champion of Positive Prevention in my community”

- Esther Kabashambo, Miss Y+ 2019/20.

“Remember the road to ending HIV stigma starts at home. Leading by example helps get closer to a stigma free future for all, When people are afraid of experiencing discrimination, they are less likely to be tested or treated for HIV/AIDS,”

- Akullu Ruth, Y+ ambassador

“The pageant for the past 7 years has empowered over 1000 ambassadors and these are young people empowered with skills across the country advocating for the rights of their fellow young women and men. The Y+ pageant is about fighting stigma and building the capacities of young people to overcome self-stigma, it is about creating awareness in the community to challenge negative criticisms that are aimed at YPLHIV. The pageant is not just a mere event, but an empowerment platform whose basis is about building a movement of confident YPLHIV and engaging stakeholders”

- Nicholas Niwagaba, Team Leader, UNYPA

OUTPUTS

- Community dialogues ensured open inter- generational dialogue on how to address the SRHR challenges faced by YPLHIV especially adolescent girls and young women and how to effectively address them.
- The dialogues enhanced the gender-transformative approach by strengthening capacities of women, men, girls and boys to equally participate in and benefit from programs to reduce gender inequalities but also address stigma and discrimination.
- The community service events ensured that community members were educated on the importance of personal hygiene, sanitation especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; encouraging hand washing and sanitizing at all times to improve sanitation maintenance.
- 115 people engaged in the community dialogues, 1,330 engaged in the community service events.
- 225 YPLHIV engaged as Y+ ambassadors, 1,651 people in the audience.
- 18,400 pieces of condoms distributed by the end of the campaign.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1 The Y+ Beauty pageant; an annual advocacy campaign has been awarded twice as an “outstanding community initiative in the HIV response” during the International conference on AIDs and STIs

in Africa 2017 (ICASA) held in Ivory Coast and during the International AIDs Society (IAS 2018) conference in Amsterdam Netherlands.

2 The Y+ beauty pageant has mobilized a total of 1,069 ambassadors within the 7 years of it’s implementation with an annual multiplier effect of now 50 YPLHIV per year.

3 The campaign strengthens the self-esteem and confidence of the ambassadors; they are exposed to supportive natural environments

4 The Moroto forum of people living with HIV committed to hosting and coordinating the youth constituency to establish a function youth network for YPLHIV in the district.

5 Coaching and mentor-ship especially during the boot camp, the facilitators develop a personal and professional relationship with the ambassadors; they teach, guide and work with them on the different aspects of life including personal conduct, effective communication, pitching, report writing and interpersonal relations.

6 The Kabale forum of people living with HIV committed to hosting and coordinating the youth constituency to establish a function youth network for YPLHIV in the district.

7 The event brought together the public and private sector to work together in the fight against HIV

8 The event ensured HIV- SRHR integration programming for young people in Uganda

9 The beauty pageant was an opportunity

for continued condom advocacy to encourage the continued access and utilization of condoms among young people

10 All the ambassadors signed their terms of references and Volunteer agreements under the organization volunteer policy that will guide the work the ambassadors will be doing.

11 The bootcamp provided grounds for team building among the ambassadors as they had ample time to get to know one another "We no longer feel like this is a competition of who is better than the other but rather a process to select who will lead us as we great Chang for young people living with HIV in our communities" Said Catherine during the reflection session

CHALLENGES

- 01** Stigma and discrimination still remain high in the communities as much as there are many efforts invested in curbing this,
- 02** The pageant is still mis- perceived by some players as a promoter and beautifier of HIV rather than fighting it for the ugly disease it is.
- 03** Shortage of resources to cover many more districts.
- 04** The COVID-19 pandemic is still a threat for YPLHIV, the challenges of myths and misconceptions around COVID and HIV

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need to strengthen integration of SRHR-HIV information and services into youth friendly service provision especially within public health facilities.

There is need to strengthen partnership and collaboration with the private sector.

There is need to diversify the pageant to reach out to the YPLHIV who are also living with disabilities.

Need to scale up the regional auditions so as to widen the number of people reached by the campaign

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

UN women, UNFPA, HIV Parliamentary Committee, US Embassy, PEPFAR, UNAIDS, Uganda AIDS Commission, Global network of people living with HIV, AIDSFONDS, Dutch Embassy, SRHR Alliance Uganda, Reproductive Health Uganda, Baylor, Mildmay, Reach Out Mbuya, Alive Medical Services, Aduku health centre 4, Kamuli DLG, Kwanja DLG, Kabale DLG, Kabale regional referral hospital, Aduku health center 4



CONCLUSION

The Y+ Beauty Pageant Model has been tested since 2014 from 10 contestants and this number has increased over the 6 years to 1,109 youth advocates commonly referred to as the Y Plus ambassadors as of 2020. These have taken up the responsibility of fighting and discrimination in their different communities through different activities like school outreaches, peer to peer support groups, dialogues and representation on both national and international high-level meetings.

The Y-Plus pageant model in Uganda is now a nationally and internationally recognized and awarded model for a successful fight against HIV-related stigma and discrimination, increasing awareness on HIV prevention but of more critical concern still largely remains unaddressed the problem of stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS and society's attitude to it is still a big concern. The contest doesn't focus on looks, but on a young positive being a role model for other young people with HIV, on being able to advocate for the needs of young people, and to increase acceptance and understanding of young people living with HIV in society.

The Y+ Beauty Pageant 2020 comes at a critical time when Uganda and the entire world is battling the widespread and of the COVID19 pandemic; the impacts of COVID-19 have been far-reaching, exerting pressure on the already weak health system limiting access and utilization of general health services and even worsened for access and utilization to SRHR/HIV information and services. Particularly in HIV programming, there were multiple disruptions on HIV service delivery, ARV stockouts, supply chain delays, and service interruptions increasingly reported across the region in Uganda. The pandemic has also further exacerbated HIV-related stigma and discrimination, which has not only affected effective ART adherence but the overall healthy and mental well-being of people living with HIV especially Children, Adolescents and young people.

The campaign shall continue next year in bigger spirits and glories!!

SPONSORS



PARTNERS

