

## PRESENTATION BOOKLET

# #uproot

**A GLOBAL, YOUTH-LED POLITICAL AGENDA BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY, INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY, AIMED AT ENDING AIDS BY 2030 AND ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS, BY TACKLING THE BARRIERS, BIGOTRY AND EXCLUSION THAT JEOPARDIZE YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH.**





## CONTENT

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- What is #uproot?
- How are we going to do this?

## **SETTING THE SCENE**

In 2014, approximately 3.9 million young people aged 15–24 were living with HIV globally. While young people make up only 16% of the global population, according to UNAIDS estimates, they represent 34% of people acquiring HIV each year, with almost 2,000 new infections among young people every day. **Young women make up more than half of new infections globally**, and almost two-thirds of new infections in sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to more than 70% of the world's young people living with HIV, and where HIV prevalence among young women and girls is on average 3 times higher compared to their male peers.

Adolescents are particularly affected. In 2015, there were around **250,000 new HIV infections among adolescents aged 10–19** – almost one every two minutes. 65% of these new infections were among adolescent girls. Although data on coverage of HIV treatment among adolescents are limited, access to and uptake of treatment is often reported to be lower than it is among older groups. At a time when AIDS-related deaths are declining rapidly in other age groups, AIDS-related deaths among adolescents (aged 15–19 years) are not declining.

Legal and policy frameworks can pose barriers to young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services, jeopardizing their health and perpetuating the risks and vulnerabilities of young people to acquire HIV, die because of AIDS, or suffer stigma and discrimination because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. **Young key populations** (including gay men and other men who have sex with men, bisexual people, transgender people, young people who sell sex, young people who inject drugs, and young people who are incarcerated) **are at a higher risk of HIV infection, and face numerous human rights violations**. In many settings their behaviours are criminalized, and they face discrimination in school and healthcare settings, which poses significant barriers to accessing information and HIV and sexual and reproductive health services.

<< Legal and policy frameworks can pose barriers to young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services >>



## **SETTING THE SCENE**

Despite the fact that AIDS is one of the biggest causes of death in young people globally, only 35% of young men and 28% of young women have correct and accurate knowledge of HIV and how to prevent it. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 10% of young men and 15% of young women aged 15-24 are aware of their HIV status.

While political commitment to integrate Comprehensive Sexuality Education, an evidence-based critical intervention to increase young people's knowledge on how to protect themselves from HIV and avoid new HIV infections, into school curricula has been increasing in regions such as Latin America through the Ministerial Commitments on "Prevention with Education", and Eastern and Southern Africa, we still have a long way to go.



Additionally, we have made remarkable progress to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a landmark blueprint for advancing women's rights, was adopted in 1995 and brought these issues to the global stage - but in 2014, marking its 20th anniversary, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon acknowledged that "overall progress (...) has been unacceptably slow, with stagnation and even regression in some contexts. Change towards gender equality has not been deep enough, nor has it been irreversible."

<<Adolescents and young people are still acquiring HIV and dying from AIDS at disproportionate and unacceptable levels - it's time to take action. >>

# UPROOTING THE CAUSES

To end AIDS by 2030, we must tackle the systemic challenges that keep holding us back. These challenges, which are deeply entrenched and **rooted in inequalities, violence, discrimination and exclusion**, must be effectively addressed to secure a sustainable HIV response that guarantees that the progress achieved is not lost, and that we effectively pave the way forward to end AIDS by 2030. Without addressing these root causes that keep putting young people's health at risk, in the long-term we risk halting – and even reversing – our progress, which translates into more HIV infections, more AIDS-related deaths and more discrimination.

The answer to **how** are we going to address these challenges lingers on the HIV response as a call for all stakeholders to innovate, generate creative solutions to numerous barriers and bottlenecks that still jeopardize young people's health and their access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services, and secure the HIV response's sustainability so that progress achieved so far is not lost. It is imperative that young people drive this response at all levels. In order to secure an effective and sustainable response to end AIDS, we must acknowledge and highlight the following issues which hold us back:



## **Structural determinants that jeopardize young people's health need to be addressed.**

- Restrictive laws, policies and practices create barriers to young people's access HIV and SRH services including testing, treatment and counseling services.
- Young key populations and young women are disproportionately discriminated against, stigmatized and criminalized, violating their rights and jeopardizing their health



## **The HIV response needs more reform**

- Data does not adequately reflect young people's challenges, needs and priorities, due to lack of disaggregation by age bracket and other characteristics. HIV programming frequently regards young people as a homogenous population and ignores the huge diversity of young people's backgrounds and experiences, and the intersectionality of their experiences.

## UPROOTING THE CAUSES

- Young people are frequently left out of decision-making processes, and when they are included, in many cases their engagement is tokenistic and they are not supported in their roles as youth advocates and leaders.
- The HIV movement is siloed: more concrete partnerships with other social movements are needed to better capture the intersectionality of the epidemic and more effectively tackle its root causes and drivers, such as transphobia, homophobia, socioeconomic inequalities, and gender dynamics



### **Multi-stakeholder response to young people's health and rights needs more coordination and inclusiveness**

- We don't have a clear picture about the resources that are being invested into young people, HIV and sexual and reproductive health, and how they are used. There are not comprehensive mechanisms for young people to have a say on how resources are invested.
- More cross-platform coordination and coherence around the SDGs and the targets enclosed in the Political Declaration on HIV is needed.

**Now is the time to uproot these challenges for good: to pull these barriers out of the ground.**

**Young people are best placed to propose creative solutions to these challenges,** and are also the ones who will lead the final leap in the HIV response to end AIDS by 2030 and guarantee a safe future for the upcoming generations. Young people are natural innovators, mobilizers and leaders. Our capacity to identify creative solutions has more than once inspired political and socioeconomic reform that has led to more inclusive, tolerant, and democratic societies. At a time when the HIV response must reinvent itself to do more, faster, and better to reach the targets in the SDGs and the Political Declaration to end AIDS by 2030, **we can propose long-term solutions** to these systemic challenges which keep increasing young people's risks and vulnerabilities in the context of HIV.

# WHAT IS #UPROOT?

**#uproot** is a global, youth-led political agenda based on the principles of equity, inclusion and solidarity, aimed at ending AIDS by 2030 and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people by tackling the structural barriers, bigotry and exclusion that jeopardize young people's health, through decentralized coordination, crowdsourcing technical expertise, crowdfunding, and partnership building.



**In order to #uproot the barriers that keep putting young people at risk, we need to:**

- Repeal all laws and policies, everywhere, which keep putting young people at risk of HIV and negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
- Formalize young people's participation in all decision-making spaces that relate to their health and rights, everywhere.
- Ensure access to youth-friendly, comprehensive HIV and sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education for young people, everywhere.
- Build a renewed, sustainable, cohesive youth movement in the HIV response that takes the lead to end AIDS by 2030.

## Why now?

**#uproot** builds on the massive momentum created by young people in recent years surrounding the post-2015 negotiations and implementation of the SDGs. #uproot has been conceptualized by The PACT, a global coalition of youth-led and youth-serving organizations working collaboratively in the HIV response that was formed in 2013.





## WHAT IS #UPROOT?

The PACT's flagship programme is **ACT!2030**, which first began as ACT!2015 with the key aim of ensuring a post-2015 development framework that prioritized and advanced SRHR and the HIV response, making sure that young people were directly involved in advocacy around the new agenda and ensuring that governments were putting youth voices at the center of discussions around HIV and SRHR.

ACT!2030 is now a **global social action initiative working in 12 countries**, which supports youth alliances to use data and evidence to monitor national progress towards the targets within the SDGs and the Political Declaration, and to advocate for better policy in support of youth sexual and reproductive health and rights.

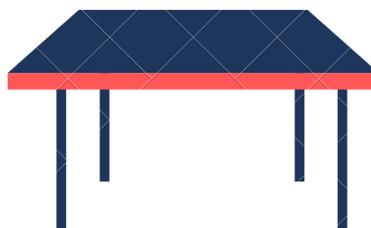
Following a coordination meeting in Delhi in 2016, youth advocates expressed a need for a revival of the global grassroots youth movement – a way to bring young people across the world together around a **shared goal of ending AIDS by 2030** and ensuring the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people by targeting the persistent human rights and equality issues that disadvantage young people.

### A youth political agenda to fast track HIV and Human Rights response by, with and for young people

**#uproot** is based on a “**3 Ps**” approach to achieve change: *Participation, Policy and Partnerships*. An integrated approach with these three key areas is necessary to ensure a sustainable HIV response for young people.

## **P**articipation

Participation is empowering. Young people, especially from key populations, should be provided equal opportunities for meaningful participation at all levels of interventions including lobbying, advocacy, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation.





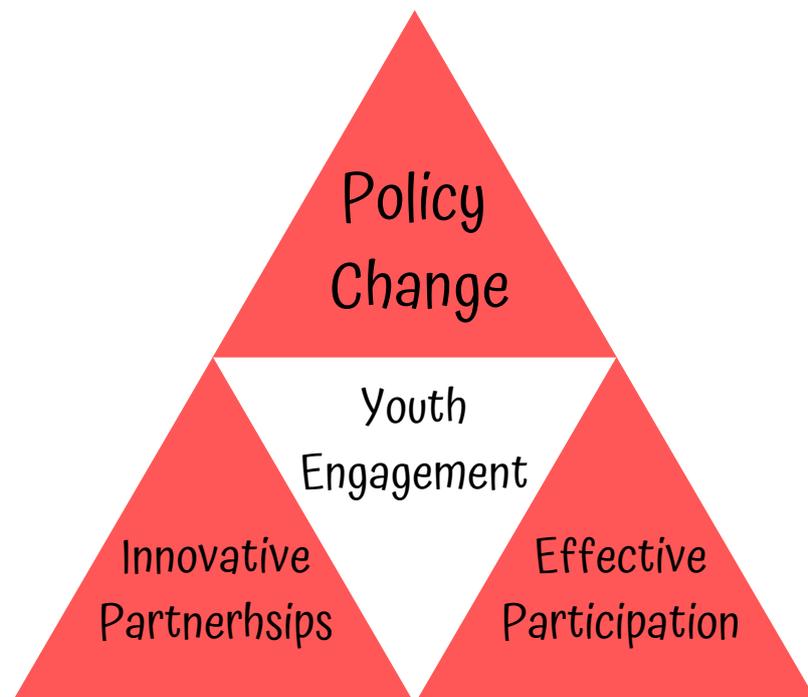
# WHAT IS #UPROOT?

## **P**olicy

Policy is politics. Policies that promote engagement of young people ranging from beneficiaries to decision makers should be upheld and replicated. Those that prevent young people's access to meaningful engagement should be addressed. By adopting enabling policies, civic and political engagement of young people will pave the way to a sustainable HIV response and the fulfilment of young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## **P**artnerships

Partnerships are enabling. Partnerships should be fostered to facilitate both participation and policy changes. Partners are key to effective and sustainable interventions that can address evolving issues and concerns of the community.



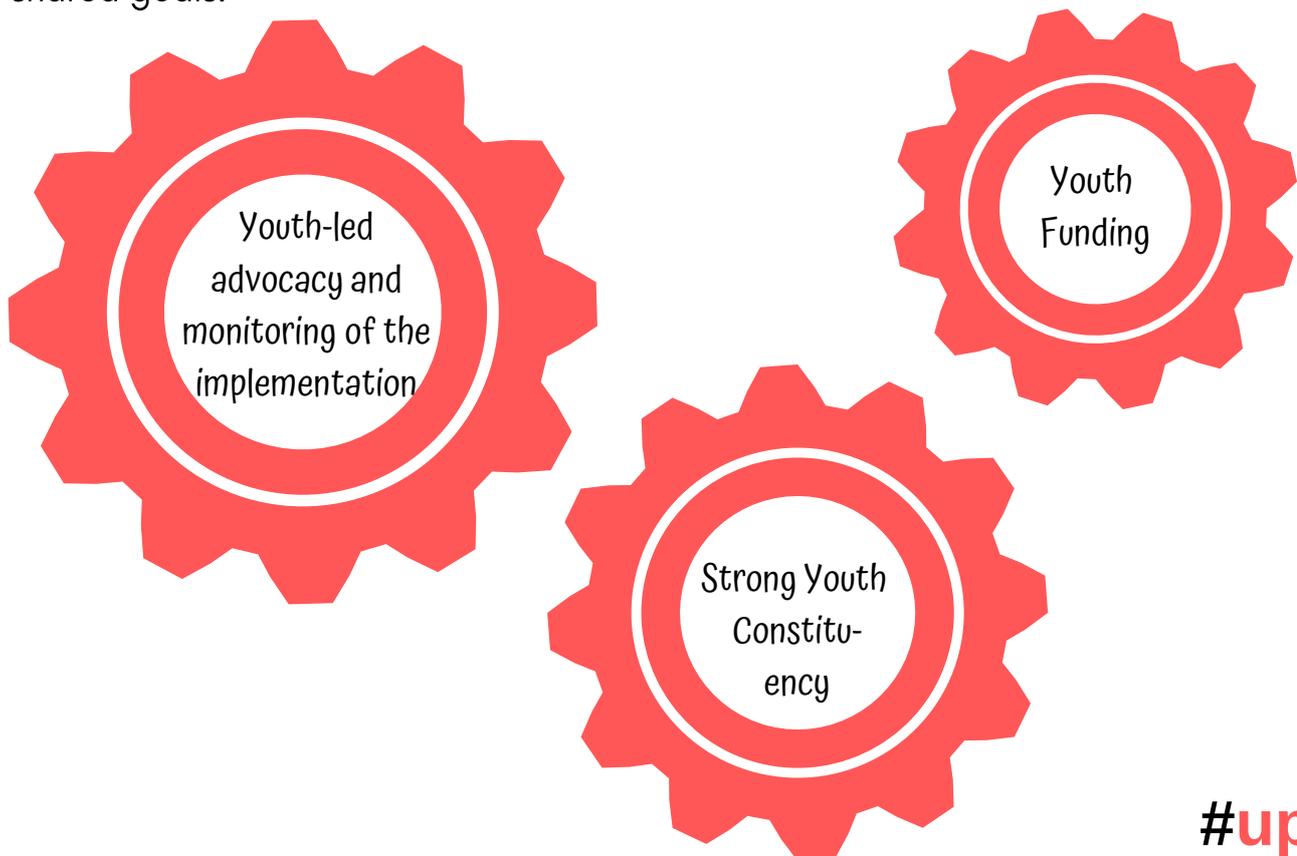


## WHAT IS #UPROOT?

In addition, organizations of young people, especially from key populations, should be provided with equal opportunities to streamline their activities with these three key areas for effective advocacy, interventions and service delivery to young key populations. These three key areas are supported by three enabling pillars of youth engagement:

- Capacitated, coordinated and **cohesive youth movement**.
- **Increased funding** for youth led and youth serving advocacy and programming.
- **Youth-led advocacy and monitoring of the implementation** of commitments and strategic recommendations to end AIDS and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for and with young people, and hold governments to account.

It is imperative that the **commitments** made to young people with the ambition to end the HIV epidemic **are monitored** throughout the implementation phase and evaluation phase to hold the duty bearers accountable. Similarly, youth-led and youth-serving organizations especially from key populations should be adequately resourced to ensure their **sustainability and effectiveness**. The HIV and SRHR youth movement, in turn, must come together under a common political and advocacy message, that contributes to steer individual efforts, and foster joint collaboration for shared goals.





# WHAT IS #UPROOT?

## What do we plan to do?

Based on the 3 Ps approach for change, and its related enablers of youth engagement, #uproot will focus on four priority objectives to reach our goals:



### **1 Challenge policy and legal barriers that pose obstacles for young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services.**

- Promote and support meaningful engagement of young people in policy advocacy at local, regional and international levels by establishing specific youth positions in working committees, advisory groups and boards.
- Facilitate meaningful youth engagement through supporting the development of technical briefs, papers and tools with the support of technical partners at the national, regional and international levels, including advocacy briefs on the key policy and legal barriers that deter young people from accessing HIV and sexual and reproductive health services.
- Launch a social media campaign to directly target key decision makers, to raise awareness about the main challenges that young people face to accessing HIV, SRHR and harm reduction services (including stigma).



### **2 Support young people's participation in community-led responses through fostering leadership and youth participation in decision-making.**

- Foster dialogues, including intergenerational dialogues and mentorship programmes to develop and promote emerging leadership in the HIV response, particularly among young people living with HIV, young key populations and young women.
- Assess community-based young people's participation in service delivery, demand creation, linkages to care and uptake of HIV and sexual and reproductive health services



## WHAT IS #UPROOT?

- Broker technical and financial support to address the gaps to strengthen the advocacy, outreach and organization of networks of young key populations and young people living with HIV.
- Showcase models of community-based youth participation in service delivery, demand creation and uptake of HIV and sexual and reproductive health services, including developing a set of proposed indicators to measure progress.



### **Support the scale-up of age-sensitive, youth friendly HIV and sexual and reproductive health services**

- Use online tools and platforms to crowdsource young people's recommendations on how to make HIV and SRH services youth-friendly and responsive.
- Support ongoing efforts by youth-led and youth serving organizations and networks at the country level to sensitize health service providers on providing friendly and welcoming HIV health services to young people especially from key populations.
- Support advocacy on youth friendly HIV health services by youth-led and youth serving organizations at high level advocacy forums at national, regional and international levels to facilitate policy reforms and changes.
- Produce and disseminate country progress report cards, developed by young people, which track progress on the targets agreed in the Political Declaration, allowing young people to hold their governments accountable for these commitments.



### **Facilitate and strengthen partnerships between youth-led and youth serving organizations and other stake holders for an effective HIV response**

- Support south-south collaboration between regional and country networks of young key populations and young people living with HIV for more coherent and impactful youth participation in global advocacy.



## WHAT IS #UPROOT?

- Develop an online survey/other research tools targeting youth networks and youth-led /youth-serving organizations to understand the level and quality of collaboration with other CSOs
- Establish strategic alliances between networks of young people living with HIV and medical students to promote sensitization of healthcare providers and linkage to care.
- Supporting youth-led networks and organizations from donor countries to advocate for prioritization of HIV in their countries international aid policies



## HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS?

**#uproot** is an initiative lead by and implemented The PACT, a global coalition of youth-led and youth serving organizations and networks working on HIV and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.

The activities described above will be undertaken and updated every year. **#uproot** will run until the end of 2020, when the AIDS response will track its progress to achieve the 2030 targets.

Throughout the implementation of the activities described above, The PACT will support other youth organizations and networks, social movements outside the HIV response, potential allies and partners to become involved and contribute to **#uproot**'s four goals and objectives. This will be done by producing an engagement guide with concrete, no-cost activities that any individual or organization, anywhere, can undertake depending on their resources, capacity and time-availability.

**#uproot**

[www.theyouthpact.org/uproot.html](http://www.theyouthpact.org/uproot.html)