THE PACT STRATEGIC AGENDA
2021-2025
Message from the Steering Committee Chair

Dear members of The PACT,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I am able to present to you our strategic agenda to guide our work from 2021 to 2025, a crucial period of time in the global HIV/AIDS response and the start of the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. This is also a time of renewed commitment by some of the global leaders, with UNAIDS adopting their strategy and countries reaffirming their commitments to HIV at a High-Level Meeting.

Despite progress, the HIV response is off track. Crucially, the response and commitments made to young people, despite us being disproportionately impacted by the AIDS epidemic, have been failed even more so. Now, more than ever, the need for youth leadership from the community grassroots level all the way to the global level is clear.

At The PACT, as a coalition of vibrant member organisations representing young people in all their diversity, we are committed to ensuring that decision makers are held accountable to their commitments to youth, and to supporting our member organisations to do the same. As an organisation committed to an intersectional approach to tackling the issues facing young people in the context of the HIV epidemic, we will support and empower youth working at every level within the HIV response and continue to push for greater accountability by decision-makers to young people.

In this critical period, it is essential that young people are recognised as leaders and visionaries, to push the boundaries of HIV programming and take innovative new approaches to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment. The advent of new technologies such as PrEP will not mean anything if the basic needs of young people are not met. Decision-makers need to realise that HIV programming for young people goes beyond providing condoms and HIV tests, and that it encompasses a holistic assessment of the needs of young people to lead a full and healthy life. This is especially crucial in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS ............................................................................. 03

HISTORY OF THE PACT ....................................................................................... 04

WHAT IS THE PACT? .......................................................................................... 05

VISION: .............................................................................................................. 05

OVERALL MISSION: ............................................................................................. 05

THE PACT'S OVERARCHING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: ................................. 05

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: ....................................................................................... 06

THE PACT STEERING COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: ................ 06

THE PACT STRATEGIC AGENDA 2021-2025 .................................................. 07

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 07

THE EXPECTED OUTPUTS OF THE PACT'S 2021-2025 STRATEGY .............. 08

OUTPUT 1. YOUTH VOICES AMPLIFIED TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS ON HIV/AIDS AND RELATED ISSUES ................................................................. 09

1. SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN KEY GLOBAL/ REGIONAL ADVOCACY EVENTS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES....... 10

2. DEVELOPING AND DISSEMINATING KEY ADVOCACY MESSAGES, BEST PRACTICES, POSITIVE STORIES OF CHANGE AND LESSONS LEARNT IN THE HIV RESPONSE. ................................................................. 10

3. SUPPORT MEMBER ENGAGEMENT............................................................ 10

OUTPUT 2. A STRONG HIV YOUTH MOVEMENT THAT IS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED AND STRENGTHENED TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS. ..................... 11

1. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING ........................................................................ 11

2. YOUTH-LED ACCOUNTABILITY AND ADVOCACY ................................... 11

OUTPUT 3. INVESTMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HIV YOUTH MOVEMENT INCREASED ................................................................. 12

1. CHANNELLING FUNDS .................................................................................... 12

2. DONOR ADVOCACY ...................................................................................... 13
## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>Comprehensive Sexuality Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Commission on Population and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on the Status of Women</td>
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<td>HLPF</td>
<td>High Level Political Forum</td>
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<td>WHA</td>
<td>World Health Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>WG</td>
<td>Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDUs</td>
<td>Injecting Drug Users</td>
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<tr>
<td>YKPs</td>
<td>Young Key Populations</td>
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</tbody>
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History of the PACT

The PACT was an outcome of the Youth and UNAIDS: a PACT for Social Transformation meeting in Hammamet, Tunisia from 20-22 May 2013. The meeting created a space for participating organizations to set the strategic direction for the youth AIDS movement. It brought together 15 youth organizations who were nominated by civil society, as well as the members of the UNAIDS Youth Advisory Forum, to discuss how they could collaborate more effectively. From this meeting emerged The PACT for Social Transformation - a collaboration framework that aims to build solidarity among youth-led and youth-serving organisations in the HIV response and support them to work collaboratively and strategically towards ensuring the health, wellbeing and human rights of all young people. Driving this initiative is the PACT.

Since its inception in 2013, The PACT has driven three strategic and programmatic agendas based on its strategic priorities: ACT!2015, ACT!2030, and the #UPROOT Political Agenda.

ACT!2015 was a 2-year movement-building initiative aimed at securing a post-2015 development framework that advances the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV response for young people following two components:

1. A global 'campaign' for country-level social action to advance SRHR and the HIV response in the Post-2015 development framework and national responses based on grassroots organizing methodology.

2. Implementation of a political advocacy strategy that focused on influencing 10 opinion leaders for in-country and UN permanent mission lobbying and advocacy.

ACT!2030 (continuation of ACT!2015) was a collaboration between The PACT and a selected youth-led organization (the ACT!2030 Alliance) in twelve participating countries. It was envisioned as a movement implemented in four phases from September 2013 to December 2017. Each phase of the initiative was built on the achievements of the preceding phase. Activities in the earlier phases focused on the conceptualization, strategic planning, youth mobilization, and development of advocacy and communications tools, while phases 3 and 4 aimed to increase youth-led accountability on SRHR through strengthened national and international youth advocacy and lobbying, as well as improved collection and use of data at country level.

In 2016, The PACT worked with UNAIDS to create #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 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. This agenda’s three pillars are: advocacy for policy change, promotion of youth participation in decision-making, and enabling partnerships to facilitate both policy change and participation.

With the #UPROOT agenda finalized in 2020, The PACT began the development of a new agenda to ensure cohesion and strategic direction for the global youth and HIV/SRHR movement. The PACT Strategic Agenda (2021-2025) builds upon lessons learned from past the programmatic agendas and flagship initiatives, new emerging priorities expressed by The PACT member organizations, and the evidence around key indicators for an effective HIV response for young people.
What is the PACT?

The PACT is a coalition of youth-led and youth serving organisations within the AIDS movement. It seeks to unite youth organisations working on HIV and related issues – such as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) – towards common goals. Through collaboration at the international, regional and national levels, The PACT hopes to continually create a strong youth movement on HIV based on the following vision, mission, principles, priorities and structure:

Vision

We envisage a world where young people are recognised as integral to ending the AIDS epidemic and are engaged as experts in decision-making processes and leaders in programmatic implementation.

Mission Statement

The PACT, as a global coalition of youth-led organisations, works to secure meaningful youth engagement in global decision-making spaces and provides opportunities for youth-led accountability within the global AIDS response through engaging in global events and creating tools and learning environments for our membership.

The PACT’s Overarching Strategic Priorities

- Priority 1. Advocate and promote youth-led accountability and participation for the integration of HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services and policies, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

- Priority 2. Mobilize young people and engage decision makers to increase access to evidence-informed HIV prevention and treatment.

- Priority 3. Strengthen young people’s capacity to change the legal and policy frameworks that prevent young people from accessing HIV and SRHR services.

- Priority 4. Advocate for young people’s participation in global and regional decision-making processes around resource mobilisation and allocation, to ensure adequate funding for young people in the context of HIV and SRHR.
Guiding Principles:

The PACT believes that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and adhere to several guiding principles for collaboration:

1. Transparency: Organisations continually share and update each other.

2. Meaningful youth participation: Committing to consultation with our key constituencies at country level.

3. Diversity: Representation of different youth communities.

4. Honesty: Sharing challenges and successes with each other, working through individual differences.

5. Solidarity: Collaborating on issues where we are stronger together.

6. Commitment: Active involvement in the PACT.

7. Collaboration: The PACT acts as a platform for member organisations to collaborate with each other and support the work of The PACT. The PACT does not aim to compete with member organisations for funding, but aims to amplify the messages of national organisations in the global spaces.

The PACT Steering Committee Governance Structure:
The PACT Strategic Agenda 2021-2025

Introduction

Despite the progress made in the past 10 years the world is behind on achieving targets set for young people in the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. With new targets and challenges ahead, we need to redouble efforts for achieving the goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Scaling up prevention efforts for and by young key populations, ensuring the implementation of good quality CSE in and out of school, extending the integration of services, removing the barriers that still exist for young people to access HIV/SRH services, recognizing young people’s right to engage and participate in decision making and ensure programmatic, ending the stigma and discrimination and increasing financial support to youth-led organizations and initiatives are some of the persisting requirements that need to addressed to ensure an adequate HIV response for young people. The rise of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased these gaps and further exposed the inequalities that drive the HIV epidemic.

Despite all these challenges, youth-led organisations have showed resilience and proactiveness to respond and mitigate the impacts of both the HIV and the COVID-19 pandemic. Their responsiveness and agility have enabled youth leadership and involvement in the provision of HIV and SRH services using innovative approaches, and further demonstrate that youth leadership is key to tackling HIV in this population.

With its 2021-2025 Strategic Agenda, The PACT aims to continue providing cohesion and coordination for the global youth HIV movement, serving as a global support platform for young people and youth organisations from all over the world, which provides information, resources and mentorship to strengthen a growing youth constituency who are ready and able to engage in the HIV and SRHR response at all levels.

Furthermore, The PACT will continue advocating for youth engagement and participation in key spaces of the HIV response, support youth-led accountability and advocacy to address the structural drivers that keep young people vulnerable and at risk.

The Methodology

The development of this Strategic Agenda was undertaken by a youth consultant with the technical advice from The PACT’s Chair and Vice-Chair.

A thorough consultation process was conducted to identify the key outputs of the new agenda including:

1. Desk Review of The PACT’s previous flagship initiatives as well as other reference documents.

2. An Online Survey disseminated among The PACT member organisations through Basecamp.

3. 12 one-on-one video interviews with key informants including current and former Steering Committee Members along with the focal points of some of The PACT member organisations. Regional representation was taken into account while identifying the key informants.

4. An Online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the PACT member organisations.
The expected outputs of The PACT’s 2021-2025 Strategy

Based on the consultation process and the situation analysis, three Key Outputs were identified for The PACT to focus on in its Strategic Agenda (2021-2025),

**Output 1:** Youth voices amplified to influence decisions on HIV/AIDS and related issues

**Key Strategic Areas:**
1. Supporting meaningful youth participation in key global/regional advocacy events and decision making process
2. Developing and disseminating key advocacy messages, best practices, positive stories of change and lessons learnt in the HIV response.
3. Support Member Engagement

**Output 2:** A strong HIV Youth Movement that is consistently supported and strengthened to achieve its goals.

**Key Strategic Areas:**
1. Capacity Strengthening
2. Youth-led accountability and advocacy

**Output 3:** Investment for the sustainability of the HIV youth movement increased.

**Key Strategic Areas:**
1. Channelling Funds
2. Donor Advocacy
Output 1. Youth voices amplified to influence decisions on HIV/AIDS and related issues.

We believe that amplification of youth voices, particularly from those living with and affected by HIV from across all regions, is critical in mobilising the global youth movement and catalysing action to ensure meaningful youth participation and influence key strategic policy and programmatic decisions.

Since its formation, The PACT has strived to ensure that young people not only have a seat at the table in major advocacy events but are also given the opportunities in informing key decisions on national, regional and global platforms. For example, ACT!2015 aimed at securing a post-2015 development framework that advances the SRHR and HIV response for young people. This was followed by ACT!2030 that focused on the conceptualization, strategic planning, youth mobilization, and development of advocacy and communications tools.

In August 2020, The PACT organised a Global Youth Consultation1 which was a window of opportunity for the youth movement to inform the development of the Global AIDS Strategy through identifying key priorities and setting relevant targets to reduce young people’s vulnerability to HIV and strengthen young people’s leadership and meaningful engagement in the HIV response at all levels. Consequently, the outcome report from this consultation helped to inform the Global Strategy Development process and UNAIDS has highlighted the need to focus on further strengthening youth empowerment and leadership in the new Global AIDS Strategy in order to seize the potential of communication, education and capacity-building for the next generation2. This is a good example of how The PACT can ensure that the voices of young people and young key populations are not just heard but also taken into account during the development of key strategies and global accountability mechanisms.

According to the 2018 UNAIDS Youth and HIV Report, globally, youth participation was reported to occur more often in civil society coordination spaces and the development, review and update of National AIDS Strategies and Plans than it was with national AIDS coordinating authorities or the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs). This data suggests that while young people participate in the development, consultation, validation or review of strategic documents that guide the HIV response at the country level, they participate much less frequently in spaces where decisions are made about the policy framework or resources invested in the HIV response.

We are aware that the global community will never be able to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 if young people, who are the key drivers of social change, are not fully engaged and respected as leaders in their own right. That being said, we will set the stage for youth organisations to voice their needs, and share their success stories along with their best practices and lessons learnt to consistently communicate the youth vision of change while continuing to support the shift of youth participation in decision-making spaces from tokenism to meaningful youth engagement.
Key Strategic Areas:

Supporting meaningful youth participation in key global/regional advocacy events and decision-making processes.

We will continue to support meaningful youth engagement and participation in key global events (ECOSOC Youth Forum, CPD, CSW, HLPF, WHA, UNGA, and International AIDS Conference, among others) to advocate for the issues identified by our membership. This will be through, for example, organizing side events, and monitoring commitments made during key advocacy convenings. The PACT will also explore the benefit of bringing together the movement in regional and global events and will secure slots for youth to voice their ideas on diverse platforms such as in media, at conferences and through online channels. An internal nomination process will be developed through which member organisations can nominate young people for these opportunities.

In addition, we will create a Calendar of International Days and Advocacy Events, to guide us with our participation as well as inform our social media campaigns for the year. This Calendar shall be updated on a yearly basis to include key national, regional and global events and to allow youth organisations to join forces and plan ahead for their advocacy campaigns more strategically and collaboratively.

Developing and disseminating key advocacy messages, best practices, positive stories of change and lessons learnt in the HIV response.

Stemming from the belief that highlighting and sharing best practices, and positive stories of change across national, regional and global platforms is a key element in movement building, we will mobilise our member organisations to share news, stories, information and key messages through our social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn). Amplifying youth voices and sharing positive stories of change will keep our members informed, engaged and inspired. It will also foster cross-learning between the different regions, spark conversations around the issues of concern for young people and in turn accelerate the engagement of key stakeholders as well as the public support for the movement.

Through an improved regionally-sensitive governance structure, we – with the support of our member organisations- will help in identifying the key issues, priorities and stakeholders in each region and tailor our advocacy strategy and messaging to the regional context. In this process, engaging young key populations (YKPs) and young people living with and affected by HIV will be a priority. We are aware of the heterogeneity of the youth population, so we will be proactive in ensuring that young people in all their diversity have a say in setting the youth agenda for advocacy.

Support Member Engagement

Since its inception in 2013, we have had an open invitation to organisations and networks who share our vision and guiding principles to join the coalition. With a membership base of more than 80 organisations from across the globe, we acknowledge the essential role of our members in the success of the youth movement. In the Strategic Agenda (2021-2025), The PACT is planning to use a synergistic approach to enhance communications, bridge the gaps and promote knowledge sharing between the member organisations. This is a two-directional relationship between The PACT and the Member Organisations, with learning, support and collaboration helping both parties achieve their goals.
Another area of focus for The PACT will be identifying and recruiting new member organisations working towards the same goals within the HIV/SRHR Movement. Individuals will also be able to engage with The PACT and receive updates by signing up to our social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). This will help the coalition in increasing engagement, strengthening the ownership of the member organisations and amplify the key messages and actions of its members.

Output 2. A strong HIV Youth Movement that is consistently supported and strengthened to achieve its goals.

Since the start of the HIV epidemic, young people living with HIV, young key populations and other youth partners have significantly contributed to the HIV response in many ways including but not limited to, service delivery, challenging HIV-related stigma and discrimination, advocacy and accountability. However, to ensure the sustainability of a strong HIV Youth Movement, youth organisations have to be continuously supported, strengthened and provided opportunities for learning and growth.

When The PACT was launched 7 years ago, we pledged to serve as a global support platform for young people and youth organisations from all over the world, which provides information, resources and mentorship and shares global trends and emerging information from the global level to its individual youth partners – including new research, new data, and key conversations and decisions to strengthen a growing youth constituency who are ready and able to engage in the HIV and SRHR response at all levels. In this new Strategy, we are reiterating our commitment to supporting our member organisations through focusing on the following

Key Strategic Areas:

Capacity Strengthening

Responding to the gaps and needs identified by the member organisations in the Needs Assessment Exercise conducted recently, we will provide opportunities for capacity development tailored to these needs. We envisage conducting workshops in collaboration with key partners to strengthen the member organisations’ capacities to mobilize and advocate. This includes workshops on how to develop grant proposals, manage resources and establish periodic monitoring and evaluation and other accountability mechanisms. This aligns with the key recommendations of UNAIDS in supporting youth as leaders in the HIV response.

Youth-led accountability and advocacy

According to a Factsheet4 developed by STOPAIDS in 2016 on Adolescents and Young People and HIV, there are considerable data gaps around adolescents and young people and HIV, particularly for younger adolescents because of the challenges in getting parental approval for their involvement in surveys and a lack of age-appropriate questions. Where data exists, limited sample sizes and lack of disaggregation limits the available evidence to inform programming. In part because of these gaps, adolescents and young people are often missing from national HIV strategic plans.
In that same year, the PACT worked with UNAIDS to create the #UPROOT Youth-led Scorecards. The #UPROOT Scorecard is a community-led monitoring tool that was facilitated and implemented by young people and for young people. The tool gathers qualitative and quantitative data from young people to measure a country’s performance in achieving the commitments on adolescent and young people, adopted in the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. The Scorecards have been rolled out in 17 countries so far and we foresee effective partnerships between The PACT member organisations and UNAIDS to roll them out in more countries.

We will also continue sharing emerging data, new evidence and research to keep our member organisations informed about the Global HIV/AIDS Landscape. Additionally, we will highlight commitments made by international and regional decision makers for the purposes of youth-led accountability and continue supporting evidence-based advocacy processes.

The scorecards provide strategic information to inform and ignite advocacy movements at the national level giving an opportunity for The PACT members to hold governments accountable and address the identified gaps and challenges. The scorecards are also relevant to inform national processes such as the Global Fund proposal development and grant implementation or as inputs for reporting and review mechanisms such as the Voluntary National Reviews.

Output 3. Investment for the sustainability of the HIV youth movement increased.

We believe that global youth advocacy, including influencing policy and donors is crucial for mainstreaming the three-lens approach to youth participation into the HIV response policies and programmes which involves engaging youth as beneficiaries, partners and leaders to strive for more meaningful and effective youth participation. It can also help create opportunities for youth-led and community-led organisations to access additional resources to ensure their sustainability.

We will contribute towards this output through focusing on the following Key Strategic Areas:

Channelling Funds

As a coalition of youth-led and youth serving organisations, we are aware that our role is to support our member organisations and not compete with them over funds. And accordingly, we envision The PACT as a channel (Review Committee) through which donors can subgrant to its member organisations. We are currently in the process of developing a proposal and a plan with more details around how The PACT can mobilise funds to financially support its members.
Donor Advocacy

There has always been a fundamental lack of accessible funding for young people particularly for young key populations (YKPs) who are almost always disproportionately underfunded. With COVID-19 and the changing funding priorities, this has become even more of an issue, that has impacted the sustainability of youth organisations. To scale up the efforts done by young people and young key populations in the HIV response and secure additional resources, we will identify and map out potential donors and partners including, bilateral, multilateral funders and private trusts and foundations who can be urged through advocacy to unlock new and additional resources for young people and young key populations.

Finally, for the sustainability of The PACT as a coalition, we will develop a resource mobilisation plan that responds to the needs and priorities of the coalition according to its new work plan. This will include engaging with existing partners, and with new potential collaborators.