



Positive Stories! Positive Teens! Positive Lives!

YOUTH Call To Action



We, the youth, demand consideration, compassion and informed, holistic efforts to address the realities we face as young people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

AIDS is the second leading cause of death among adolescents globally. Since 2000, AIDS-related deaths have tripled. In 2014, 2.0 million adolescents were living with HIV worldwide. For too long, we young people have not been seen and have not been heard in a way that leads to change on a big scale! Our experiences, opinions and ideas have not influenced the people who make decisions on our behalf about our health and bodies. In order to address the significant rise in new HIV infections and AIDS related deaths of young people across the globe, we need to prioritize the following:

- **Health services must be appropriately pitched, equitable, non-discriminatory and effective to meet the needs of all children and youth.**
- **Youth-friendly services should be provided to improve access, treatment and increase returns to health facilities.**
- **Youth should be able to obtain all health services at one site for free**
- **Holistic and integrated sexual and reproductive health education and services must be provided where youth find themselves. At school, at places of worship, in families.**

Our Call To Action



TO OUR GOVERNMENT: Thank you for your leadership in providing free and accessible treatment. Although I sometimes feel like you talk down to me and not with me. You make decisions on my behalf without asking me. I ask that you please consult me. I ask that you realise that I am not just “our tomorrow,” but a part of society that matters today.

TO OUR POLICY MAKERS: You are in a unique position to create policies that make all youth lives better. I am not a statistic. I exist. Your individual policies come together to affect my whole experience. Please shape policies that are inclusive and equitable for all youth irrespective of gender, race, ability, and economics.

TO OUR FAMILIES: Thank you for giving me a chance at life. Please talk to me. Please be open and honest. Please love me and support me enough so that I feel safe to share my opinions. I am valuable and deserving of your love, safety and protection.

TO OUR FRIENDS: Don't turn away from me. I need your friendship more than I ever have for the big things and the small. You are crucial to my wellbeing. It is because I trust you, my friend, that I ask you to stand in support with me.

TO THE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES: Thank you for reducing the pills i need to take from three to one. I understand that you work hard and often without success. We are connected by the value of life, health and wellbeing. I plead with you to value people before profit.

TO OUR NURSES AND DOCTORS: Thank you for some of the answers you can provide. My parents do not have all the answers, so I rely on you. I know that you are always on your feet. You wake up early and

the hours are long. I know you care. When we meet each other, let us be free of judgment and full of compassion for each other.

TO THE MEDIA: You are the custodian of my story. Too often you portray me as careless, uninformed and powerless. I ask that you tell my story with dignity, agency and respect for the experiences I have shared. By telling my story, you help someone else feel less alone in the world.

TO NGO's: Thank you for helping me live a life without fear, now i can talk, I am confident and brave. You walk where others do not. You push through the fatigue even when the purse is not full. I urge you to work together and not to compete. There is so much power working collaboratively to make sure youth have a platform to use their voice.

TO THE SOCIAL WORKER: You are my heart, a parent and friend. You are the record keeper of my story. I know that it is easy for me to become another face in your long list of visits and things to do. I recognize your value in responding beyond the call of duty.

TO THE WORLD OF BUSINESS: Your ideas and innovations excite us! You are the drivers of industry. Strong businesses should be about supporting quality of life. We need you to support the health and livelihood of every young person your business affects.

TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: You are the conveyors of knowledge. Your research has taken us so far. We have further to go. We need research that reflects youth experiences to make strong and effective policies. I too have knowledge to share. If we are to change anything my voice and opinion must matter.

