In collaboration with
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Kingdom of the Netherlands

READY
RESILIENT & EMPOWERED ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

FRONTLINE AIDS

Malawi AIDS Counseling and Resource Organisation
Shedding Light on Your Health



# EMPOWERING YOUNG LIVES

## READY+ Malawi: Celebrating the Journey, Impact and Legacy.

*From Voice to Leadership,*
*From Participation to Change*

## 2024–2026

CLOSE-OUT NEWSLETTER PROGRAMME PERIOD

**READY+ MALAWI**
Resilient and Empowered Adolescents and Young People Living with HIV

Implemented by MACRO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health; led by Frontline AIDS
macromw.org

ABOUT READY+

# UNDERSTANDING THE READY+ JOURNEY

**READY+** means **Resilient and Empowered Adolescents and Young People Living with HIV**. It supports young people living with or most affected by HIV to become resilient, empowered and knowledgeable, with the bodily autonomy, freedom and agency to realise their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In Malawi, MACRO delivered READY+ with Y+ Malawi and in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, at 15 health facilities in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzimba North districts. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands funded it, Frontline AIDS led the partnership, and Y+ Global, Zvandiri, PATA and REPSSI provided technical assistance.

WHO WE SERVE

**10–29 YEARS**

**ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV (AYPLHIV)**

Young people living with or most affected by HIV, supported where they already seek care.

Peer support | Safe Spaces | Life skills | Livelihoods




*Young people at the heart of READY+.*

## READY+ OUTCOME AREAS AND COVERAGE AT A GLANCE

- **Peer support and Safe Spaces**
- **Parents and community engagement**
- **Youth-friendly health services**
- **Youth advocacy and leadership**
- **Skills for livelihoods**

**BLANTYRE**
Makhetha, Bangwe, Mpemba and Chilomoni Health Centres; MACRO Limbe Clinic

**LILONGWE**
Kabudula, Area 25, Bwaila/Lighthouse and Mitundu Community Hospitals; MACRO Lilongwe Clinic

**MZIMBA NORTH**
Ekwendeni and St John's Mission Hospitals; Mzuzu Health Centre; Mzuzu Central Hospital; MACRO Mzuzu Clinic

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

# READY+ BY THE NUMBERS

Every number is a young person who is better supported, better informed and more hopeful.

## 4,346

**AYPLHIV ENROLLED**

Adolescents and Young People Living with HIV (AYPLHIV), aged 10–29, in 15 health facilities

## 104

**PEER SUPPORTERS TRAINED**

87% of the 120 target; 86 still active (83% retained)

## 92%

**VIRAL SUPPRESSION**

93% viral load coverage; 3,173 of 3,454 results suppressed

## 6,472

**AYPLHIV REACHED THROUGH GROUP SAFE SPACES**

With accurate HIV and SRH information; 101% of target

## 3,016

**PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS SENSITISED**

118% of target

**EID TRACKING**

## 343

**HIV-exposed infants (HEI) tracked**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 WEEKS | 306 tested, 4 positive |
| 1 YEAR | 171 tested, 0 positive |
| 2 YEARS | 58 tested, 0 positive |

**All 4 who tested positive were linked to treatment immediately.**

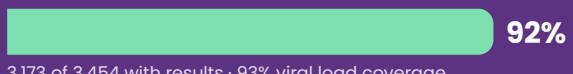
## MORE RESULTS

| | |
|---|---|
| 221 | Youth leaders trained<br>98% of the 226 target |
| 163 | Young people in vocational training and career guidance |
| 26 | Savings and loan groups formed; 22 remain active, with 302 members and MK12,472,680 in accrued savings |
| 34 | Health workers trained in service integration<br>113% of target |
| 15/15 | Sites implementing quality improvement plans<br>100% of target |
| 3,178 | People reached through community dialogue sessions<br>1,302 of them young people |

## VIRAL SUPPRESSION AND COVERAGE ROSE AFTER PEER SUPPORT




2,605 of 3,176 with results · 73% viral load coverage




3,173 of 3,454 with results · 93% viral load coverage

## INDIVIDUAL JOURNEYS

Viral load, copies/mL. LDL = lower than detectable limit.

| | |
|---|---|
| **A young man**<br>MACRO Blantyre Clinic | 198,739 → 769 |
| **A young man**<br>Peer Supporter client | 128,702 → LDL |
| **A young man**<br>Ekwendeni Hospital | 30,752 → LDL |

STORIES OF CHANGE

# BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Three young people, three journeys: resilience, peer support and leadership in their own words and in detail.



A YOUNG MAN · EKWENDENI HOSPITAL

## 30,752 TO UNDETECTABLE, THEN A PEER SUPPORTER

*Counselling and steady follow-up took a young man from a viral load of 30,752 to undetectable, and from patient to Volunteer Peer Supporter.*

He joined READY+ at Ekwendeni Hospital struggling to take his medication consistently. Drinking alcohol often made him miss doses, and his viral load stood at 30,752 copies/mL. READY+ gave him adherence counselling and psychosocial support, with regular follow-up from health workers and Peer Supporters. He learned why daily treatment matters, cut down on alcohol and kept his appointments. His next viral load result was LDL, meaning the virus was suppressed. His commitment led to his selection as a Volunteer Peer Supporter, and he now uses his own story to show other young people that change is possible.

RESILIENCE · LEADERSHIP



A YOUNG WOMAN · CHILOMONI

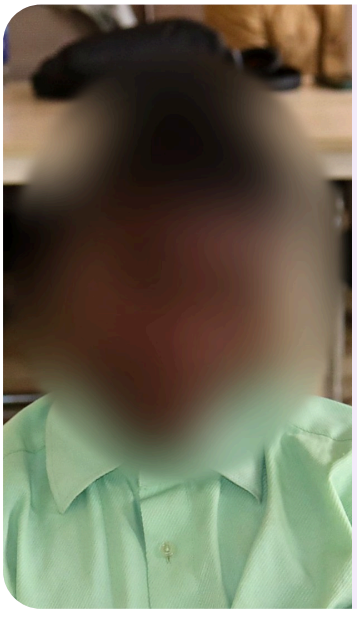
## THE 7PM PILL THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

*Moving her medicine to 7pm, when she is home, helped a young woman supporting her whole family suppress her viral load.*

She cares for her grandmother, two siblings and her daughter, and sells breakfast at the market, leaving early and returning late. She kept forgetting her morning medicine, so her viral load was high, and she feared for her health, her family and talking to her partner. The turning point came in November 2025 during a Youth Clinic session, where READY+ Peer Supporters were providing young people with information on HIV, treatment, sexual and reproductive health and safe sex. Inspired by what she learned, she approached a Peer Supporter and declared that she was now ready to be part of the programme. Her Peer Supporter listened first, then made a plan with her: take the medicine at 7pm, when she is home. Her partner also agreed to start PrEP. She kept to the routine and her appointments, and months later her viral load was suppressed.

> *"If mornings don't work, let's try evenings. What about 7pm when you're home?"*
> Her Peer Supporter, Chilomoni

PEER SUPPORT · RESILIENCE



A YOUNG MAN · BANGWE

## FROM HIDING TO HEALING: 128,702 TO UNDETECTABLE

*Afraid of exposure, he avoided Peer Supporters for months. Trust, and a clear explanation of viral load, took him from 128,702 to undetectable.*

When READY+ offered home visits and phone calls, he feared his status would be exposed. He gave a wrong phone number, refused visits and avoided the READY+ Peer Supporters from May 2025 until late November. Through a youth clinic at the facility, he came to understand that Peer Supporters are very helpful and able to maintain confidentiality. This gave him the confidence to join the programme, and Peer Supporters helped him understand how treatment works and the importance of viral load monitoring. This knowledge motivated him to adhere to treatment, and his viral load improved from 128,702 copies to undetectable. He remains adherent to treatment and enjoys his friendship with his Peer Supporter.

> *"My friendship with the Peer Supporters helped me understand how the medicine works and why we must take it on schedule."*
> Peer Supporter client, Bangwe

TRUST · PERSONAL GROWTH

OUR FIVE OUTCOME AREAS

# FIVE AREAS, ONE SHARED VISION

Every part of READY+ works towards young people who are informed, supported and in control of their futures.

01

## POWERFUL ADOLESCENTS

**Peer support, group safe spaces, life skills training**

Peer Supporters and Safe Spaces build young people's confidence, knowledge and friendships.

**FROM FEAR TO ROLE MODEL**

A 19-year-old from Mitundu (Lilongwe) struggled to accept her status, missed appointments and faced stigma. In a peer support group she found counselling and accurate information. She now takes her medication daily and joins youth awareness activities.



02

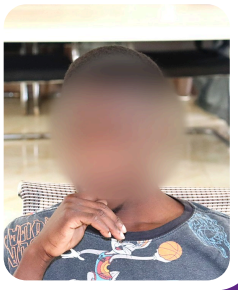
## SAFE COMMUNITIES

**Engaging parents, caregivers, community leaders and Peer Supporters**

Parents, caregivers, leaders and Peer Supporters work together so care continues at home.

**A SISTER'S SUPPORT**

With a viral load of 198,739 and no one at home to remind him, a young man at MACRO Blantyre Clinic moved in with his sister, who became his treatment supporter. With follow-up from the linkage nurse and Safe Space peer support sessions, his viral load fell to 769.



03

## HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

**Youth-friendly health services**

Health workers and Peer Supporters make facilities friendlier; quality improvement plans run at all 15 sites.

**A REFERRAL THAT WORKED**

His sister called a Peer Supporter when his mental health worsened and he stopped ART. A Mzuzu Health Centre clinician referred him straight to St John of God for specialist care. He is now eating well and back on ART. Linked referrals like this are what quality improvement plans strengthen.



04

## GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

**Training youth advocates and influencing policy change**

Young people are trained to speak up for their rights and to hold services to account.

**A VOICE FOR OTHERS**

Virally suppressed but isolated, a 28-year-old young man found friends and counselling through Peer Supporters. He completed advocacy training and now speaks up for the rights and needs of other young people.



05

## IMPROVED SKILLS FOR LIVELIHOODS

**Vocational, leadership and entrepreneurship training**

Savings groups and skills training open the way to income and independence.

**BUSINESS SCALE UP**

A young woman sold only tomatoes on a small capital. After joining READY+ in March 2026 and a Savings and Loan Group in May, she saved MWK5,000 a week, then borrowed MWK150,000 to add fish and rice. She repaid the loan and now runs several businesses selling tomatoes, fish and rice. She depends less on her uncle and is now able to provide for herself and her child.



PARTNERSHIPS & LESSONS

# BUILDING CHANGE TOGETHER

READY+ worked because many hands carried it: partners, stakeholders, health workers, communities, and the young people themselves.

**GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS**
The Ministry of Health, district health offices and the Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development worked with MACRO.

**FUNDER**
The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Maputo funded READY+ in Malawi.

**LEAD PARTNER**
Frontline AIDS led the READY+ partnership and the regional programme.

**IMPLEMENTER**
MACRO delivered READY+ at 15 health facilities in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzimba North, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

**NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNER**
Worked in collaboration with MACRO, keeping young people living with HIV at the centre.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
The global network of young people living with HIV, keeping youth leadership central.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
Peer-led, community-based support for adolescents and young people living with HIV.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
Pediatric AIDS Treatment Africa, a network for adolescent and youth friendly HIV care.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
Psychosocial support for children and young people affected by HIV.

### KEY GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Health (DHA, NAC, District Health Offices for Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzimba North); Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development under the Ministry of Gender; Malawi Interfaith Association for Action (MIAA).

### HEALTH WORKERS

Clinicians and linkage nurses who delivered youth-friendly health services and referrals.

### YOUNG PEOPLE

Peer supporters who listen first and walk with their peers.

### FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Caregivers and leaders who give reminders, meals and a safe home, and reduce stigma.

## THREE LESSONS WE ARE TAKING FORWARD

**1**

### TRUST AND CONFIDENTIALITY COME FIRST

Fear of exposure kept some young people away for months. Confidential, patient follow-up by Peer Supporters turned fear into trust.

**2**

### UNDERSTANDING DRIVES ADHERENCE

When young people understand viral load and treatment, they own their health. Suppression rose from 82% to 92%.

**3**

### HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Multisectoral interventions enhance health outcomes among AYPLHIV.

SUSTAINING THE LEGACY

# THE PROJECT ENDS, THE WORK CONTINUES!

READY+ built people and systems that stay: young leaders, trained health workers and groups owned by their members.

### PEER SUPPORT

Peer Supporters are rooted in their clinics and communities. Young people who once received support now volunteer as Peer Supporters themselves.

CARRIED BY PEER SUPPORTERS AND FACILITY TEAMS

### YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Young advocates trained in READY+ keep speaking up. Safe Space friendships and Savings and Loan Groups continue to be run by their own members.

CARRIED BY YOUNG LEADERS AND SLG MEMBERS

### YOUTH-FRIENDLY HEALTH SERVICES

Health workers and linkage nurses keep the skills to deliver welcoming, confidential care, with family and community support around each young person.

CARRIED BY HEALTH WORKERS AND DISTRICT TEAMS

## SUSTAINABILITY: WHAT IS ALREADY AVAILABLE

1. **Trained young leaders.** READY+ has empowered 86 young people living with HIV who are well trained and available to work with health care providers to support other young people on HIV treatment, should they be given the chance.
2. **Better youth-friendly health services.** Facilities now offer improved youth-friendly health services, through quality improvement projects and strengthened youth-friendly structures.
3. **Government capacity.** The Malawi Government has the technical capacity to train additional Peer Supporters should the need arise, through the Ministry of Health and the Department of Social Welfare.
4. **Skills and savings.** Young people trained in vocational skills are willing to take part in economic empowerment activities, including Savings and Loan Groups. Ultimately, AYPLHIV are now able to resolve financial constraints that affect their treatment outcomes.

> *Now I have hope and I feel loved.*
>
> A YOUNG WOMAN, MPEMBA HEALTH CENTRE

> *I now know that I am not limited. I can accomplish anything in life.*
>
> A YOUNG MAN, MACRO LILONGWE CLINIC

# THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

READY+ Malawi has shown what happens when young people are trusted, supported and given a voice. The project may be closing, but the confidence, friendships and skills it built will keep growing.

### THANK YOU, YOUNG PEOPLE

For your trust, courage, honesty and leadership. You are the heart of READY+.

### THANK YOU, PEER SUPPORTERS

For listening first and walking beside your peers every step of the way.

### THANK YOU, COMMUNITIES

For creating safe spaces to facilitate the demand and access of HIV and SRH services among young people.

### THANK YOU, PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

For investing and believing in young people to lead the programme. Your unwavering support has made the programme a success in Malawi.

## STAY CONNECTED

macromw.org

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READY+ Project Malawi
Facebook · X: MACROMalawi · Instagram: macromalawi

**TOGETHER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MALAWI

Kingdom of the Netherlands

READY+ RESILIENT & EMPOWERED ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

FRONTLINE AIDS

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NAYPLHIV

GLOBAL NETWORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

zvandiri

PATA

REPSSI