



## CHANGE STORY SOUTH AFRICA

A PARTNER CHANGE STORY BY POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK SOUTH AFRICA, Y+ GLOBAL AND GNP+

### INTRODUCTION

Positive Women's Network South Africa conceptualized and implemented the Purple Blood Youth Camps building on the Ina-MUDA Festival. PWN-SA adopted the Ina-MUDA model after learning about it as a member of the Young, Wild & Free...? network that was supported by GNP+ and Y+ Global through Bridging the Gaps.

**“ It was more fun and also educational for us [than sitting in a workshop]. We will get more young people to participate and share ideas on how to advocate for services available for us.”**

### PROBLEM

Young people living with HIV, especially young women, face a lot of stigma in South Africa. Unfortunately it commonly starts in our own families and our close community. Sexist views in our society often blame women for bringing HIV into the household. Many people grow up in houses where women are the target of abuse and ridicule because of their HIV status, even if both parents are living with HIV. “Seeing our mother’s blamed for everything has made us not want to disclose our own HIV statuses and it is even more difficult to be in a relationship.” Additionally, young women have difficulty accessing health services, specifically contraceptives because of our status. Young women experience humiliation and ridicule from health care workers, who commonly make assumptions especially when asking for contraceptives. “It is like you telling them that you wanna have unprotected sex and distribute HIV to others which is not true.” The fear of experiencing this type of abuse forces many young women to not disclose their HIV status, often putting themselves at risk for other STIs, unplanned pregnancy, and in some cases not being supported to adhere to their ARVs.

Bridging the Gaps is an international HIV programme with a focus on the health and rights for LGBT people, sex workers and people who use drugs, currently operating in fifteen countries. For more information on the programme, visit [www.hivgaps.org](http://www.hivgaps.org).

**BRIDGING THE GAPS**  
Health and rights  for key populations



## THE CHANGE

PWN-SA was part of the international Young, Wild & Free network with 8 other networks of young key populations. Through this process PWN learned about a number of amazing events and programs that young people living with HIV were implementing in other countries. Each country network was asked to implement one activity in a best practice exchange, so PWN-SA chose to adapt Ina-Muda's festival. Purple Blood Youth Camp, was a three-day camp for young women living with HIV in KwaZulu Natal. Together young women developed a program and framework for creating a safe space for young people to talk about their lives and the particular issues that were associated with their HIV status. The camp was co-facilitated by PWN-SA and the Matatane Camp facilitators. The PWN team focused on health, human rights, sexual and reproductive health knowledge, and sharing of experiences of young women in health care facilities; while the Matatane team focused on team building activities, leadership, and survival. In total 35 young people participated in the Purple Blood Youth Camp and were linked to other young people with shared experience - some for the very first time. This unique space, supported young people to express increased confidence to share with each other in the group. An important outcome was that some of the participants for the first time reported that they disclosed their HIV status to close friends and family upon returning home helping them to link to much needed support in their lives. Additionally, the youth who participated in Purple Blood Youth Camp created the KZN Provincial Support Group on WhatsApp and in local communities also started ARV youth adherence clubs in their local context.

## YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHANGE

This is a powerful example of micro level change that had a big impact on a few young key populations who went to the Purple Blood Youth Camp that will spread into potential longer term community impact. GNP+ and Y+ Global were able to start this process by linking PWN to other young key populations outside of their previous local network and support them to engage in dialogue and share learnings through Young, Wild & Free...?. The sustained engagement and resources to support the implementation meant that PWN-SA was able to get feedback and recommendations not only from their internal workgroup in South Africa but Ina-Muda and the other participants in the Young, Wild & Free...? network. Creating space, gave PWN and other groups of young key populations the intentional time, space and resources to dedicate to strengthening their projects.

## ANALYSIS

Overall the Purple Blood Youth Camp was a success. Months after its implementation the resolution that was made during the camp but the campers, which were concerning support and adherence of young women living with HIV was put to action in KZN. As of September 2021, there are now 3 support groups now in action as well as an adherence club. The online WhatsApp group is thriving and growing. PWN-Sa is also planning for the next two camps to be implemented.

“Since we had the camp we have been doing dialogues every two weeks. So it was very helpful and I hope to reach more young people.”

## LOOKING AHEAD: LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking ahead, PWN, wants to continue to focus on remote areas of South Africa and reach young women living with HIV who might have very little access to knowledge about HIV and SRHR services.

“We have seen that a lot of remote places in the country are forgotten so we need to focus more on them so we can all go together as a country so more funds in rural area projects will definitely be a good start and programme to empower young people.”

