



**World AIDS Day 2020: #GenEndIt**

***#GenEndIt Coalition Members: Avert, CTAOP, EGPAF, ETAF, Grassroot Soccer, MTV Staying Alive Foundation, The PACT, Sentebale, UNAIDS***

**Young People Are #GenEndIt - The Generation to End HIV as a Public Health Threat**  
**December 1st, 2020**

In many countries around the world, young people - specifically young women and girls and young key populations (men who have sex with men, people of trans experience, sex workers, people who inject drugs, and people in incarceration) face particular challenges that leave them at an elevated risk for violence and disease. This high level of vulnerability is fuelled by a complex matrix of social, economic and structural drivers, including poverty, gender inequality, unequal power and relationship dynamics, sexual and gender-based violence, social isolation, limited access to schooling, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. We are living at the intersection of multiple global health crises.

This World AIDS Day, we reiterate our firm commitment of continuing to support young people on the ground all over the world to address their HIV and SRHR needs while traversing the new COVID-19 global health threat. In order to support young people we must increase investment in them, hear their voices, and recognize their right to participate in and influence the creation of solutions to issues that affect them. Members of the #GenEndIt coalition are already on the forefront of innovative and comprehensive responses, establishing synergies and integration of HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, mental health and psychosocial support services in the context of COVID-19.

We believe this quote from our partner Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is an exemplary representation of the aforementioned:

*“As the global health community and the world come together to face the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to share what this means for Grassroot Soccer and how our organization is responding in these challenging times. Every*

*decision we make is being guided by our long-standing commitment to putting the health of adolescents, and their broader communities, at the center of our work. We are committed to our mission – educating, inspiring, and mobilizing at-risk youth in developing countries to overcome their greatest health challenges– which is even more urgent given the imminent spread of coronavirus in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

*There is no doubt, we are all in this together. We are working closely with all of our partners to navigate how we can best serve adolescents, including those who already face unique health challenges. We seek to engage with and learn from our partners, so that we can share resources, information, approaches, and important moral support.*

*Much has changed in the past weeks and months, and our focus on investing in adolescents and helping them overcome their greatest health challenges has never been more urgent. Grassroot Soccer is all about adolescents, their families & their communities: COVID-19 affects everyone. Some worse than others. Ultimately, we believe in the power of adolescents **to be agents of change** during these challenging times.”*

To learn more about #GenEndIt Coalition Members and their work in the context of COVID-19, please see links below:

[Avert](#)

[CTAOP](#)

[EGPAF](#)

[ETAF](#)

[Grassroot Soccer](#)

[MTV Staying Alive Foundation](#)

[The PACT](#)

[Sentebale](#)

[UNAIDS](#)

The coronavirus has brought increased challenges to communities already facing adverse conditions. Due to lockdowns, curfews, and restrictions recommended by global health officials and mandated by local and national governments, we've seen a global increase in gender-based violence and challenges specific to young people who rely on safe spaces and direct care services including access to education, sexual and reproductive health materials (ie: menstruation products), and access to testing, prevention, and treatment for HIV. The response to COVID-19 is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities which lead to violence, stigma, and discrimination against youth. And while we agree that social restrictions are necessary and are being put in place to curb the spread COVID-19, we have to acknowledge the consequences and impact of halting life-saving services and safe spaces young people need to keep themselves healthy and safe from both HIV and the coronavirus. We are living at a crossroads of multiple global health threats and the #GenEndIt coalition will continue to help strengthen the linkages between young people and access to education, social protection, employment, and justice. **Young people are #GenEndIt.**