

Young Voices Africa project



Young Voices Africa is a co-creation project that has developed an interactive package of sexual health information materials – created by, and for, young people between 15 and 24 years old in Southern Africa.

Our Young Voices project started in October 2017 when we brought together a group of young people from across Southern Africa for a week-long workshop in Johannesburg. We talked about the information available to them on sex and HIV – what’s good, what’s bad, what’s missing, where they felt misunderstood, and how they wanted to talk about sex and relationships.

Together we created a series of videos and comics, on the issues that they felt were most important to them and their friends. Contemporary and empowering, the materials are about engaging young people to think through their own situations and those of their peers, giving them the knowledge and skills to make informed choices and take control of their own sexual health.

What’s in the Young Voices package?

Through the materials, we meet characters who face their own dilemmas relating to sex, relationships and HIV. Each story addresses a theme that is relevant to young people living in the region –having sex without a condom, unhealthy relationships, options for contraception, dating older people, talking about HIV, consent and communication in relationships.

The stories are designed to promote thinking and discussion, aided by supplementary materials including fact sheets and questions for discussion. There is also an online (and printable) comic creator – giving young people a chance to create their own comic strip ending to the characters’ stories, in their own words. These can be completed alone or as part of group work.

Take a look at the [Young Voices Africa materials](#) and the online [comic creator](#).

Co-Creation – at the heart of Young Voices

We believe young people know best what types of materials will engage their peers. They know what themes should be given priority, and what messages are the most powerful, engaging and relevant to their experiences.

That's why the messaging and content for Young Voices was developed in collaboration with young people from the five target countries (Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe) through an initial workshop and with follow-up through WhatsApp groups.

By using a participatory content-creation process we have produced materials that are tailored to the needs of young people and resonate with their lived experiences, so as to better promote HIV knowledge and behaviour change.

Who is Young Voices for?

Young Voices is free to use for any organisation or peer support group, school or individual. All the resources are easily accessed and downloadable on the [Avert Young Voices Africa](#) page, where you can explore the specific themes and meet the characters.

Achievements so far

In July 2018 we launched six Young Voices animations and content packages. By promoting the content through our social media channels and working with organisations who deliver peer education in the region the content has reached millions of people.

The videos have garnered a high level of engagement across our social media channels and sparked debate between young people.

So far on Facebook and Instagram Young Voices has:

- reached over 2.8 million people
- had over 1.8 million engagements
- been watched over 630,000 times (viewing 50% or more).

An initial analysis of the comments left on our social media channels found 59% of people participating in online discussions showed deeper engagement with the issues covered in the animations, by, for example, expressing that they have gained knowledge; changing their perspective; or relating the issue back to their own experience.

We have also started to get some data back from organisations using our Young Voices materials via online surveys. 86% of respondents said the materials were 'very useful', with the same percentage saying they had enhanced their training/sessions 'a lot'.

Looking ahead

Work on more Young Voices content is under way, and two more packages – on the themes of using

condoms and consent – will be ready for launch this year. Using the co-creation model we continue to work through WhatsApp groups to involve young people from Southern Africa in every step of the content creation process.

In partnership with [the Centre for Infectious Diseases Research Zambia \(CIDRZ\)](#) we are planning an impact evaluation of the Young Voices project. We want to know what impact the Young Voices content has on the young people who watch and engage with it. Does it have an effect on their sexual health choices? Does it successfully influence attitudes and intention to act? And to what extent?

Findings from this research will inform and improve our work and that of others working in digital health and behaviour change.

If you are interested in finding out more about our impact assessment, or supporting future co-creation work please [get in touch with us](#).

HELP US HELP OTHERS

Avert.org is helping to prevent the spread of HIV and improve sexual health by giving people trusted, up-to date information.

We provide all this for FREE, but it takes time and money to keep Avert.org going.

[Can you support us and protect our future?](#)

Every contribution helps, no matter how small.

[PLEASE DONATE NOW](#)

Last full review:

29 June 2018

Next full review:

29 June 2019