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AMSTERDAM
FAST-TRACK CITIES 2023

Presentation Title

*Comfort Corner : Bridging the Gap of
love and ART Adherence Among Youth
Living with HIV in Blantyre City.*

Presenter

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Introduction

FACT Malawi

A local youth led organization, that works to provide youth friendly sexual reproductive health services and information to young people using a peer-to-peer model.

Fast Track Cities Project

FACT Malawi implemented fast track cities project from 2021 to 2023 in Blantyre city. The project aimed at increasing demand for HIV testing among sexually active university students with the aim of reducing new HIV infections among young people.

Why this target is important. ?

Young people in BT have the highest HIV prevalence and incident rate, with adolescent girls and young women being 7 times more likely at risk of HIV compared to their male counter parts. And the highest number of infections has been recorded in the universities. And Blantyre has the highest number of Universities in Malawi.

During the project, over 10 000 young people were reached with HIV prevention services, including HIV testing.,

Project Findings

The data collected during the implementation of the project show that young people living with HIV are distressed over finding love and relationships due to their status.

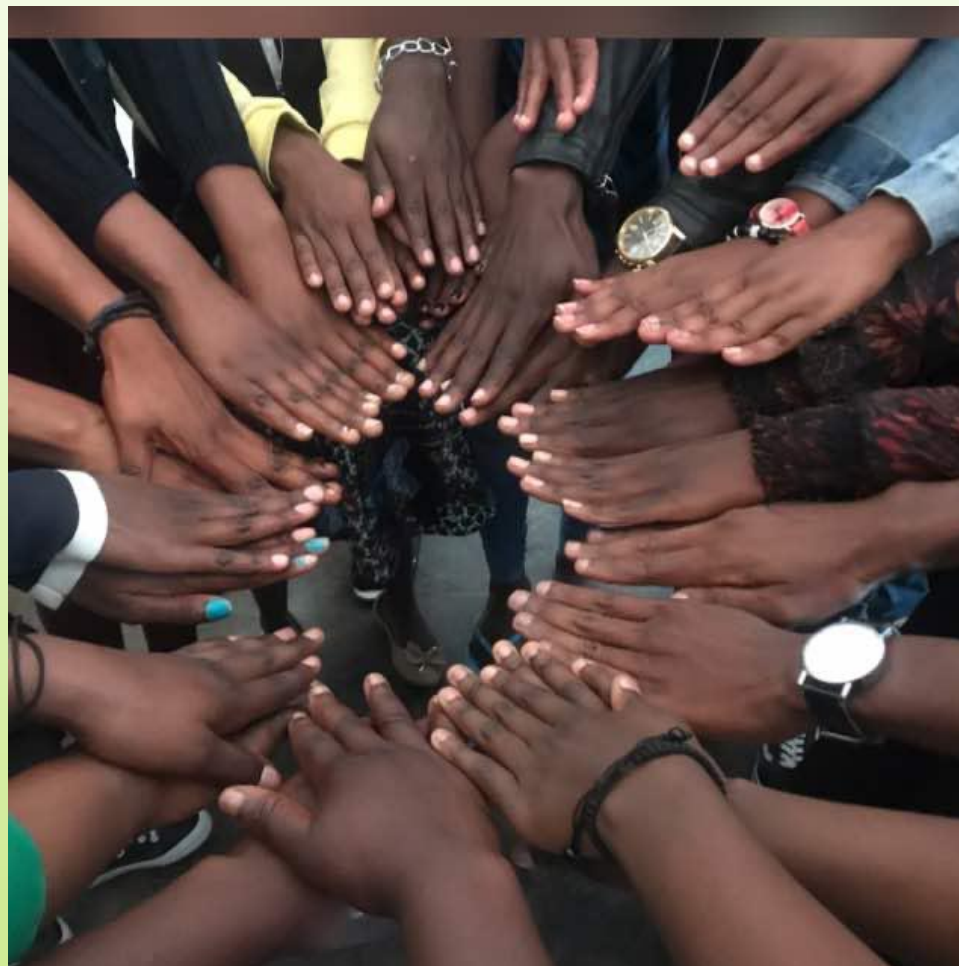
Some of the reasons that they YPLHIV expressed were;

- People assume that if you are HIV status you are a prostitute.
- Having conversations about your status with a boyfriend/girlfriend is not easy even if they accept you.
- Relationships are a game of chance; you can not express your status to everyone.
- Bitterness over HIV status.

These challenges have made many YPLHIV to resort to lying about their HIV status which often leads to secret medication intake and subsequent poor adherence to HIV medication.

Comfort Corner

- ▶ In response to the critical concern over courtship and discrimination, FACT Malawi established "Comfort Corner"



Comfort corner

- ▶ Over 500 YPLHIV
- ▶ Why it matters

Peer Engagement space

Openness

Combat Stigma


Alleviate loneliness

ART Adherence

Lesson Learned

By providing a space for honest and compassionate engagement, Comfort corner has;

- Effectively reduced stigma
- Encouraged ART adherence
- Helped young people speak freely of their status(Example Hope at world AIDS Day,2022)



Young people in comfort corner have reported feeling less lonely, more connected, and motivated to prioritize their health.

Way Forward

Comfort Corner is a part of the Youth Friendly HIV and SRHR services and information Hub that FACT Malawi has in Blantyre City.

Looking at the successes Comfort corner and the Hub has had for the last 2 years FACT looks forward to establishing 5 more Hub within Blantyre City in the next 2 years.

In 5 years, FACT aims at establishing the YF HIV and SRH Hubs in 5 more HIV burdened cities and town in Blantyre city.

Lastly FACT Malawi would want to add more services at the Hub.

Thank you.

Zikomo.