



Y+ Leadership Initiative

Leadership Code

The communities of people living with HIV (PLHIV) have played a critical role in the HIV response over the last 30 years. In the 1980s, PLHIV articulated their immediate priorities in the Denver Principles, in the 1990s, treatment activism made living a long life with HIV a reality for millions; and in the last ten years the movement for Universal Access and for human rights has been at the centre of the response. The influence and impact of the positive community depends to a large degree on the strength and depth of the community's leadership.

Supporting young emerging leaders is a shared responsibility of both the positive community and all people working in the HIV response. An integrated approach with a clear set of principles is needed to ensure that young leaders are supported at the international, national and community levels.

Young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) proposed a Leadership Code as a tool to set the principles for building leadership capacity and to hold relevant stakeholders accountable for supporting a new generation of positive leaders.

The Leadership Code will function as a guidance document for organizations and networks. Every signatory will, based on their organizational focus and capacity, come up with a statement including two to five commitments for the coming year on how they will work towards making their policies more responsive to the diverse needs of young people living with HIV and their leadership development. Organizations will be accountable to these commitments.

PURPOSE

The Leadership Code aims to:

- Share the responsibility of building the leadership capacity of YPLHIV among all people working in the HIV response (not only the positive community)
- Serve as a mechanism to hold organizations accountable for their commitments
- Set the principles for how organizations can build leadership capacity among young people living with HIV as an integrated part of their organization's long-term work

PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles

- We are committed to supporting a new generation of positive leaders in the AIDS response

- We advocate for the meaningful involvement of YPLHIV in all aspects of the AIDS response, through systematic, long-term involvement
- We recognize the unique skills and experiences of YPLHIV provide an added value to the AIDS response
- We recognize and respect the differences within YPLHIV communities, including but not limited to sexuality, gender, nationality, age, experience
- We recognize and understand the challenges faced by YPLHIV from key affected populations
- We respect the choice of young people whether to disclose their status or not and to whom they want to disclose their status
- Our communication with and among YPLHIV communities is transparent and respectful

Organizational principles

- We involve YPLHIV in all aspects of our work and throughout the organization, not only in a separate programme
- We ensure that we have the financial and staff capacity to meaningfully involve and support YPLHIV in our organization, including accurate compensation for young positive leaders to make participation possible, and having at least one staff person responsible to support YPLHIV who has the skills, capacity and scheduled time to provide guidance and mentorship
- We ensure that all our staff members are trained and sensitized to the issues and concerns of YPLHIV
- Our commitment to build YPLHIV leadership is reflected in key documents like our strategic plan, policies, funding proposals, budgets and job descriptions whenever possible
- We ensure that when inviting or sending a YPLHIV to a meeting or conference, this person gets the support he or she needs to:
 - fully understand the purpose of the meeting/conference
 - prepare interventions and set advocacy goals
 - get input from peers
 - debrief peers and colleagues after the meeting
 - reflect on what the outcomes of the meeting/conference mean for the work of the organisation
 - obtain the skills this young leader needs to actively participate in a meeting with often older and more experienced people
- We encourage YPLHIV to learn from their experiences, including failures. Successes are celebrated and contributions recognized.
- We have a mechanism for YPLHIV to report any stigma and discrimination they experience inside or outside of the organization while working with us
- We partner with local, national and international organizations of YPLHIV, to ensure support for organizations and networks as well as individuals
- We understand youth leadership is transitional by nature, and ensure we support the transitions of YPLHIV as they enter our organization with capacity building and leave our organization with guidance and support for identifying their next opportunity

Programming principles

- We commit to initiating and/or sustaining programmes focused on building leadership among YPLHIV
- We ensure involvement of YPLHIV throughout the programme cycle, including programming, execution and evaluation of programmes