



# PROGRESS REPORT 2023



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# POSITIVE ACTION IN 2023

Originally set up as part of GSK's Global Health Programmes in 1992, Positive Action, ViiV's grant-giving programme, has been supporting communities most affected by HIV and AIDS for over 30 years.

During 2023, Positive Action has worked with community-based and global partners to support and collaborate with communities to end AIDS by 2030, embodying ViiV Healthcare's mission of leaving no person living with HIV behind.

Our approach continues to centre around prioritising people, strengthening health systems, and collaborating strategically with partners to create healthier communities.

## Some of our key achievements from 2023:

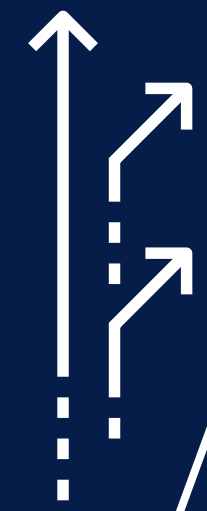
- **Formation of the new Gender Equality Fund** with GSK and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria to deliver gender-sensitive approaches to health, with a focus on HIV, TB, and malaria.
- **Renewed partnership with Y+Global** to continue to implement the HER Voice Fund that ensures adolescent girls and young women meaningfully engage and participate in decisions that affect their health and wellbeing.
- **Announced a further three years of the paediatric Breakthrough Partnership**, in collaboration with the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), Aidsfonds, UNICEF, and Paediatric-Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA), focused on increasing access to HIV testing, treatment, and retention in care for children in Mozambique, Nigeria, and Uganda, with a programme extension to Cameroon and Tanzania.
- **Funding 38 partners through five Community Strategic Initiatives funding rounds** to deliver projects focused on preventing new cases of HIV amongst adolescent girls and young women, providing harm reduction services to communities engaging in chemsex\* and addressing HIV stigma, including internalised stigma. Projects across 20 countries were supported.
- **Emergency funding provided** to communities affected by Cyclone Freddy in Malawi and Mozambique; as well as to communities impacted by the conflict in Ukraine.

Our efforts to increase and improve access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care for communities affected by HIV continue as we maintain and expand our funding to existing and new locations.

\*Chemsex is the intentional use of substances in a sexual context.

# 2023

## KEY RESULTS



**12.3M**

Total funds distributed



**99**

Grants across

**31**

Countries



**513,627**

People reached



# LOCATIONS OF 2023 POSITIVE ACTION GRANTS

**Innovator**  
 Burundi, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, Serbia, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

**Momentum**  
 Botswana, Cameroon, Eswatini, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Serbia, Somalia, Tanzania, Thailand, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

**mothers2mothers**  
 Ghana, Zambia

**Emergency Response Fund**  
 Malawi, Mozambique, and Ukraine

**Africa REACH**  
 South Africa and regional remit

**Public Health Institute**  
 Kenya

**HER VOICE Fund**  
 Botswana, Cameroon, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

**Breakthrough Paediatrics**  
 Mozambique, Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Tanzania

**SCDI**  
 Vietnam

**Women4GlobalFund**  
 Zimbabwe and global remit

**Harm Reduction**  
 Nigeria

**Unfinished Business**  
 South Africa





# COMMUNITY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In 2023, Positive Action supported **38 projects** with a total of **£4.7M** through Community Strategic Initiatives grants and **28 projects** with a total of **£940k** through the Emergency Fund.



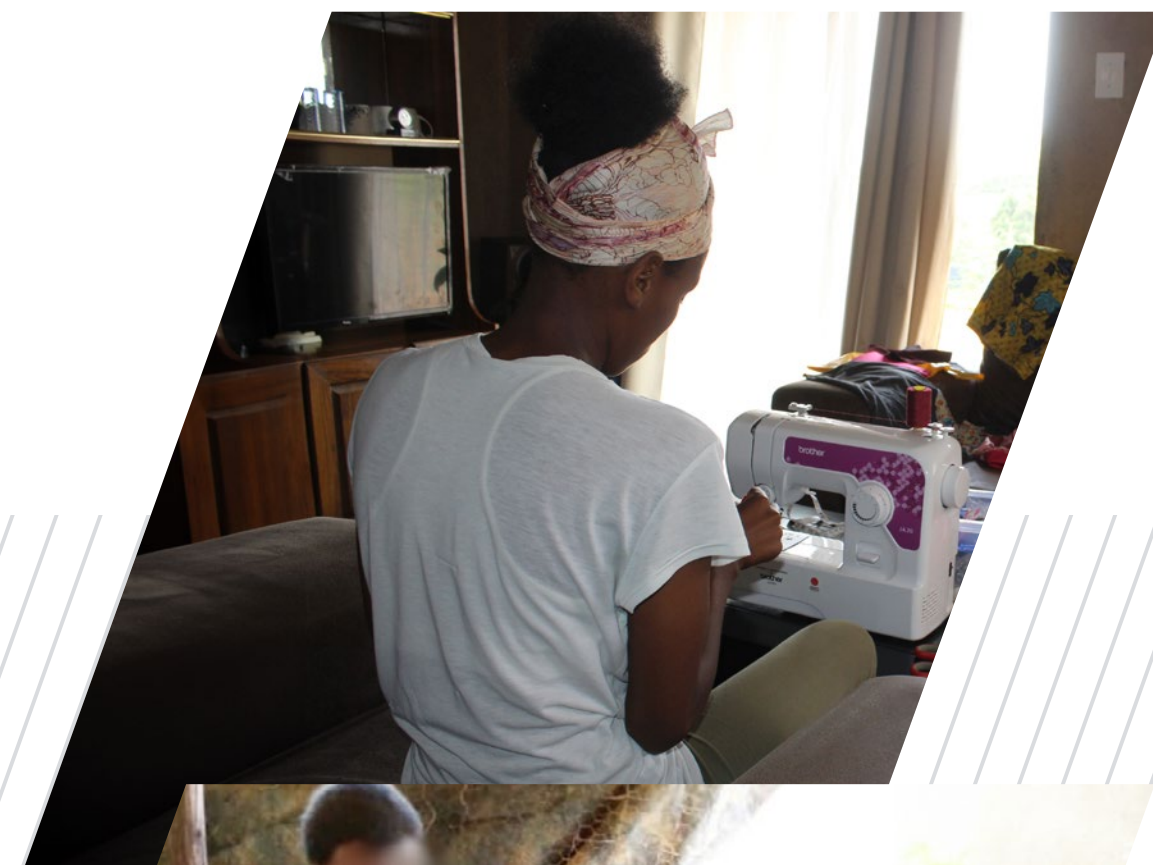


# INDIVIDUAL SPOTLIGHT: BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION - ESWATINI

The Baylor Foundation - Eswatini is committed to improving the health and well-being of children and families through direct healthcare services, education, research, and advocacy efforts focused on HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

With support from Positive Action, through the Momentum Paediatrics funding round focused on adolescent mothers living with HIV, Baylor delivers 'The Teen Mothers Club: Holistic Care of Adolescent Mothers Living with HIV and their children.' The project integrates psychosocial, clinical, and community-based interventions into a holistic package of care to improve the long-term health of young mothers living with HIV and their children.

# SONIA'S STORY:



Sonia (not her real name) is a young, orphaned 19-year-old mother living with HIV, who experienced numerous social, financial, and health challenges.

Through the Pregnant and Lactating Teen Mother programme delivered by Baylor, Sonia received support from the staff at the Teen Mothers' Club to ensure she was retained on care, as well as support to embark on a business venture selling broilers (chicken raised for meat). The Baylor Foundation provided Sonia with seed capital to start her business and through her profits, she started to expand her business.

With further support from The Baylor Foundation, Sonia was able to fulfil her aspirations of becoming a fashion designer. Baylor assisted her in leveraging her business profits to pursue an education in fashion design whilst maintaining her existing business. In May 2023, she celebrated a significant milestone, her graduation as a qualified fashion designer. Simultaneously, her business continues to flourish, now encompassing broilers, eggs, and achar (pickle fruit and vegetables).

Sonia's story is a testament to the power of targeted support. Sonia is healthy and receives HIV care and treatment with a steady flow of income from her business ventures bringing stability, economic independence, and long-term wellness which is beneficial to both Sonia and her child.

# PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORTED BY POSITIVE ACTION IN 2023

PARTNER	PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC PRIORITY
<b>GLOBAL FUND AND NIGERIAN IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS</b>	Providing support for women who inject drugs to eight community-based organisations across seven priority Nigerian states.	<b>HARM REDUCTION</b>
<b>THE CENTRE FOR SUPPORTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (SCDI) AND MAINLINE</b>	Improving the health and rights of people who use drugs in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.	<b>HARM REDUCTION</b>
<b>BREAKTHROUGH PARTNERSHIP</b>	Supporting interventions across Africa, which increase access to testing, treatment, and retention in care for children and adolescents living with HIV.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>GENDER EQUALITY FUND</b>	Integrating HIV, TB, malaria, and sexual & reproductive health and rights programming to tackle gender inequalities for girls and women.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>WOMEN4GLOBALFUND (W4GF)</b>	Ensuring the rights of women and girls through investment in HIV, AIDS, TB, and malaria programmes.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>AFRICA REACH</b>	Driving African-led accountability for paediatric, adolescent, and maternal HIV targets on the continent by 2025.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>MOTHERS2MOTHERS (M2M) GHANA AND ZAMBIA</b>	Strengthening primary prevention and paediatric case findings by integrating its reproductive, maternal, and child health development models.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>HER VOICE FUND</b>	Supporting adolescent girls and young women to have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their lives via a grants programme across 13 sub-Saharan African countries.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</b>	Focusing on high HIV burden districts in South Africa to scale effective paediatric and adolescent services in the health system.	<b>PAEDIATRIC AIDS</b>
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE (CAMI HEALTH)</b>	Developing a 'story-mapping' tool to highlight voices in Kenya on barriers to HIV prevention services, HIV stigma, and quality of life.	<b>PREVENTION</b>



## INDIVIDUAL SPOTLIGHT: THE HER VOICE FUND - KENYA

### Brenda Bakobye: Making a Difference as a HER Voice Fund Ambassador in Kenya

The HER Voice Fund supports and empowers adolescent girls and young women to take charge of decisions that affect them. Brenda Bakobye, serving as the HER Voice Fund Ambassador in Kenya, is passionate about advocacy. She's gained leadership, communication, and research skills through her advocacy work.

Recently, Brenda attended the quarterly stakeholders meeting organised by the Nairobi City County Health Services' Adolescent Unit. Here, she showcased the impactful work done by Y+ Kenya in Nairobi County and at the national level. She emphasised the importance of giving young people a say in decision-making and resource allocation.

Brenda believes that true success means distributing power and resources fairly among all communities and age groups. Unfortunately, many women and youth-led organisations struggle because they lack control over these resources.

Moreover, Brenda played a crucial role in creating advocacy requests for the Global Fund's GC7 process. This process has been vital in ensuring that adolescents and young people are meaningfully involved in Global Fund decision-making.







# PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: ZVANDIRI – ZIMBABWE

**In partnership with 14 countries across Africa, Zvandiri works to deliver HIV services to young people through trained and mentored peer counsellors living with HIV.**

Peer counsellors include Community Adolescent Treatment Supporters (CATS) and Young Mentor Mothers (YMMs). They provide holistic support to their peers, with the aim to ensure young people living with HIV access the care and support they require and realise their ambitions. Some young people living with HIV are born with HIV and experience internal/self-stigma and discrimination throughout their young lives, resulting in low self-esteem, anger, resentment, and low treatment adherence. Through Positive Action's Innovator Grant, Zvandiri worked in partnership with Beyond Stigma, and established a community stigma outreach programme called Wakakosha which targets young people living with HIV in Zimbabwe; addressing their unique beliefs and experiences of HIV self/internalised stigma, with the aim to move young people living with HIV from self-stigma to self-worth.

Through this grant, the programme was able to coordinate and facilitate a 5-day camp to train CATS coaches on facilitation skills. Following this training, CATS coaches facilitated a 10-day CATS training camp where they trained their peers and delivered the self/internalised-stigma interventions. To ensure that the CATS coaches continued to practice and utilise the skills they had learnt, Zvandiri facilitated a 3-day mentorship programme. A Beta Version of an Online Toolkit was developed to support CATS coaches in their online and community training. Overall results from the grant indicated an increase in self-confidence, self-worth, body positivity, self-forgiveness, and personal relationships for young people living with HIV.

In 2023, Zvandiri received additional funding from Positive Action to **scale up their Innovator project through the Momentum Stigma funding** round which aims to scale up evidence-based approaches to address HIV-related stigma and internalised stigma. Through this grant, Zvandiri seeks to increase the number of CATS coaches who will deliver Wakakosha and increase the number of support groups working to reduce self/internalised-stigma.





## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: RED SOMOS – COLOMBIA

**Red Somos is a community-based organisation based in Colombia working towards increasing the equity and recognition of vulnerable populations, including LGBTIQ+ individuals, migrants, refugees, and people living with HIV**

Their mission is to bring people, communities, and governments together to promote human rights and acknowledge sexual and gender diversity. Colombia has witnessed an increase in new HIV cases among adolescents and young people. However, due to the nature of the health system in Colombia, the needs for HIV testing, peer support, treatment, prevention, and adherence for young people are not always met. Red Somos established a community centre to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people.

In 2022, Red Somos was awarded a grant by Positive Action under the Innovator Prevention funding round, which focused on combination HIV prevention approaches for adolescents and young people (15-24 years) in their diversity. Through this grant, Red Somos seeks to **increase HIV knowledge, HIV diagnosis, and combination HIV prevention services** for adolescents and young people from vulnerable sub-groups through their community youth centre. The youth centre provides sexual health services with an emphasis on HIV

and STI prevention and care. To ensure the provision of holistic care, the team also provides **psychological, legal, and sexual health advice**. Red Somos also promotes political participation and advocacy to promote an inclusive society.

Positive Action funding enabled Red Somos to develop sessions aimed at increasing young people's knowledge of HIV prevention options, including delivering **HIV testing** and **informative sessions** at educational institutions and other spaces where young people socialise, such as parks, shopping centres, at artistic and cultural events. They also coordinated and facilitated **extracurricular activities** where young people were supported with **psychosocial sessions** and **legal counselling**. The team also supported young people newly diagnosed with HIV to access health services. Red Somos continues to reach young people through their youth centre and works closely with educational institutions to provide comprehensive sex education to young people.





## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: THE BREAKTHROUGH PARTNERSHIP – CAMEROON, NIGERIA, MOZAMBIQUE, TANZANIA, AND UGANDA

### The Paediatric Breakthrough Partnership is a collaborative initiative funded by Positive Action with the aim of ending paediatric AIDS by 2030

The Paediatric Breakthrough Partnership is a collaborative initiative funded by Positive Action with the aim of ending paediatric AIDS by 2030. The partnership consists of Aidsfonds, Elizabeth Glazer Pediatric Foundation (EGPAF), United National Children's Fund (UNICEF), Paediatric Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA), and Positive Action focusing on supporting communities to improve HIV diagnosis, care, and treatment for children and adolescents.

#### Phase 1

Phase 1 focused on Nigeria, Mozambique and Uganda. The partners co-created a workstream approach to implement at local, national, regional, and global levels, which leveraged the partners' respective expertise, to ensure accessible comprehensive HIV services for children and adolescents, with the ultimate goal of ending paediatric AIDS by 2030. Through Positive Action funding, significant progress towards providing a comprehensive HIV service for children and adolescents has been made across the three implementing countries.

In Nigeria, mentor mothers from five local government areas (LGAs) were trained to strengthen access and retention-in-care for mother-baby pairs, with services

provided to **749 women** and **543 children**. Adolescent psychosocial support (APSS) groups were established, with a total of **200 adolescents** aged 10-19 (84 males, 116 females) enrolled. A caregiver forum was also established targeting caregivers of children ages 0-9 to improve their access to treatment literacy and support them with expert caregivers. A total of **154 caregivers** were enrolled and supported by expert caregivers. Furthermore, clinics and communities collaborated to organise four community outreach programmes to improve the uptake of HIV testing services and improve awareness of sexual reproductive health and rights.

Mozambique witnessed improved viral suppression in children (0-14 years) from **74% in 2020 to 81% in 2023**. A workshop for disclosure, diagnostic, and transition of adolescents to adult care was held, with a total of 20 healthcare workers trained including psychologists, psychiatrists, and lay counsellors. 18 facilitators were trained to organise community dialogues which resulted in the mobilisation of 1,500 community members to discuss the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), HIV testing, early antiretroviral treatment initiation, adherence, and retention in care.





## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: THE BREAKTHROUGH PARTNERSHIP – CAMEROON, NIGERIA, MOZAMBIQUE, TANZANIA, AND UGANDA (CONT)

In Uganda, continued investment in optimal interventions to address gaps resulted in >95% children and adolescents retained in care, with >95% viral load coverage. Viral load suppression was also higher at 92% for adolescents and 84% for children, which is higher than the national average. Continued focus on economic empowerment for caregivers, through village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), and integration of adherence guidance sessions resulted in **253 children brought back into care**, and a total of **569 children benefiting**.

### Phase 2

In 2023, Positive Action extended the partnership for three years with the aim of building evidence around lessons learned from implementing programmes to support a **national scale-up** of successful approaches. This will utilise collective and catalytic advocacy to amplify the voices of children and adolescents to end

treatment inequalities and AIDS by 2030. The partnership will develop and operationalise a breakthrough data use plan to inform programme optimisation, linking, learning, and advocacy efforts.

ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action also announced the expansion of the partnership to **Cameroon and Tanzania**. In these new countries there will be a key focus on scoping paediatric and adolescent HIV-related services to identify gaps and develop implementation strategies where the Breakthrough Partnership can add the most value. They will also implement pilot activities, applying key lessons learned from phase one, testing new operating mechanisms, and laying the foundation for comprehensive service delivery of children and adolescents.





## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: YOUTHRISE – NIGERIA

### YouthRISE works to highlight, advocate for, and amplify the priorities of young people who use drugs and are affected by drug policies

They implement and support full-spectrum harm reduction strategies, ensuring the meaningful engagement, participation, and involvement of young people who use or are affected by drugs. With close to two million people living with HIV, Nigeria has a prevalence rate of approximately 10.9% among people who inject drugs increasing to 15.5% among female sex workers.<sup>1,2,3</sup> In response to this challenge, YouthRISE Nigeria received funding from Positive Action through the Strategic Partnerships mechanism focusing on harm reduction.

YouthRISE Nigeria implemented the Positive Action funded project to **increase access to comprehensive gender-responsive harm reduction services** among women who use and inject drugs (WUD) and their partners in Abuja, by **providing safe spaces and shelters**. YouthRISE Nigeria coordinated and facilitated capacity-building sessions for healthcare workers and community stakeholders reaching over **90 individuals across different sectors**. WUDs were also reached through community outreaches which included HIV testing, Hepatitis B&C screening, Hepatitis B vaccination,

enrolment into HIV treatment and care, and provision of sexual and reproductive health services. Through this grant, YouthRISE Nigeria has made significant strides in reaching WUD.

In 2023, YouthRISE Nigeria received additional funding from Positive Action to expand access to harm reduction and other complementary services for WUD in Lagos, Akwa-Ibom states, and Gwagwalada, an additional area council in the Federal Capital Territory. With this funding, they are:

- Improving access to comprehensive and gender-responsive harm reduction services among WUD (including those who sell sex) and their partners
- Strengthening referral and linkages for Hepatitis and TB intervention among WUD
- Documenting programme evidence on how gender-responsive harm reduction can lead to better health outcomes among WUD

#### References

1. Onovo AA, et al. 2023. Estimation of HIV prevalence and burden in Nigeria: a Bayesian predictive modelling study. *EClinicalMedicine*. 20:62:102098.
2. UNAIDS. 2022. Nigeria Country Factsheet. Available at: <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/nigeria>. Accessed February 2024.
3. Olugbenga-Bello AI, et al. 2022. Predictors of Adherence to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis among Female Sex Workers in South-Western Nigeria. *Journal of Clinical Research in HIV AIDS And Prevention*. 4(2):1-14.





In 2023, Positive Action continued to actively provide support to individuals living with and affected by HIV globally. We remained flexible and adaptable to address the social, cultural, and policy challenges of the global HIV response. Through collaboration with our trusted partners, these programmes have become a reality and continue to gain momentum.



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2024

We will continue to ensure that communities and people are at the forefront of our mission to end the HIV epidemic by 2030, through:



**Expanding and extending existing paediatric investments**



**Reducing internalised HIV-related stigma**



**Increasing awareness and access to harm reduction services for people who use drugs across Africa and Asia**



**Focusing on HIV prevention strategies for adolescent girls and young women**

We are committed to funding and amplifying programmes that will improve health systems and infrastructures with a sustainable approach to ongoing health challenges in vulnerable communities. Together with our partners, we will ensure that support will be provided for those in greatest need, as we look towards **a world free of AIDS.**