



Ethiopia



Ghana



Indonesia



Kenya



Malawi



Pakistan



Uganda



“We strive for a world in which all young people are empowered to fulfil their SRHR.”

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights

GET UP, SPEAK OUT!
Celebrating five years of youth-powered
sexual and reproductive health and rights

INTRODUCTION

Get Up, Speak Out for Youth Rights! is an international youth SRHR programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 2016-2020 in seven countries in Asia and Africa. **We empower young people, especially girls and young women, to realise their SRHR and create positive mindsets towards young people's sexuality in the places where they live.** We do this through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.

This GUSO magazine celebrates our highlights, key outcomes and learnings, and the challenges we have overcome in the past 5 years. **Above all we celebrate our sustainable and inclusive country Alliances that are ready to continue empowering young people for many years to come.** This magazine is also a symbol of our commitment, and of all stakeholders, to keep striving for a world in which young people are empowered and fulfil their SRHR.

Young people are the driving force in the GUSO programme. Their structural engagement at all levels (40% on average in our country Alliances) ensures the relevance of the programme and builds their confidence and skills as SRHR advocates and leaders. **In 5 years we have supported 1,150 collaborations among and with young people, putting young people at the forefront of decisions that affect their lives.**



To read more about research and learnings, you can download the reports by scanning the QR code

WHY YOUTH SRHR?

In 2019, adolescents (10-19 years) comprised about one-fifth of the world's population. They are our future professionals, entrepreneurs, farmers, teachers, nurses, social workers, doctors, politicians, designers and brave new thinkers, leaders of faith and, of course, parents. **Investing in young people's sexual and reproductive health helps prepare them for the future.** Well-designed programmes can lead to improved health outcomes, avoiding consequences of early pregnancy and life-changing conditions such as HIV infection, while acquiring increased agency, and developing more gender-equitable views and behaviours. Yet many young people still face considerable barriers.

In GUSO countries of focus, young people face barriers such as unequal gender norms, negative attitudes towards their sexuality and taboos about sex, particularly for unmarried girls, sexuality, menstruation and abortion. Unequal power relations between young people and adults, especially those in positions of power, makes it challenging for them to stand up for their rights. Together with restrictive political-legal contexts and weak health and educational systems, these barriers negatively impact young people's access to SRHR information and services. These barriers stand in the way of honest and open communication about sexuality, and prevent young people from speaking out. **GUSO has been working to break these barriers and this magazine tells our story.**

**GET UP
SPEAK
OUT** for youth rights

GUSO has the overall objective of improving young people's SRHR, through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing the uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.

Young people's SRHR is not only influenced by their direct environment but also by the national and global context. The global Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, as well as growing opposition to sexual and reproductive rights in recent years, have presented some big challenges to GUSO partners.

COVID-19

The pandemic has created upheaval around the world and widespread disruption to already over-stretched health systems. Worldwide, sexual and reproductive rights, particularly access to safe abortion and contraceptives, are under threat, with particular impact for young people, women and marginalised groups. The pandemic has exacerbated the challenges young people already faced. GUSO set out to learn more about this, consulting 3,500 young people in Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya and Uganda. What did young people tell us? In Kenya and Uganda, over 60% of respondents reported feeling more depressed than before the crisis, and more than half reported a reduction in their income.

School closures led to many students dropping out of school, either because they could not follow the classes online, they were demotivated or their parents or relatives could no longer pay the fees.

"My mother has used up all the money she had saved up for my school fees. Now I don't know if I'm going back to school."

(Young person living with HIV, Uganda)

Closing schools often meant an end to CSE education or SRH clubs. Girls who were off school face an increased risk of unwanted pregnancy, sometimes as a result of gender-based violence. In many settings girls who become pregnant are not allowed to return to school after giving birth, thus forfeiting their education. One of the biggest impacts of school closures and lockdowns was that many girls could not access sanitary products or information about menstrual hygiene. Fear of Covid-19, lack of transport and the closure of the health facilities were commonly cited reasons among young women who were unable to access contraceptive services during the Covid-19 crisis.

"Before COVID-19 I used to see our school women's representative giving girls sanitary towels but now that they are not coming to school, it's very difficult for them to receive sanitary protection. They are really suffering - for example, you find a girl living with her grandmother and she can't access the pads. While they're in school it's easy to distribute, because they get them every two weeks."
(Young person living with a disability, Kenya)

Despite these challenges, the Alliances have stepped into the void and adapted activities to the reality of the pandemic, to ensure that young people's SRHR are affected as little as possible. Alliances have been offering more online sexuality education and using social media to provide spaces for young people to speak to policy makers on how the crisis affects their SRHR. We have seen that strong and flexible Alliances can respond to unforeseen challenges and continue to provide much needed support to young people.

GROWING OPPOSITION TO SRHR

Meanwhile, opposition to SRHR, particularly for young people, has grown and become more vocal in the past five years. During GUSO we have seen the reinstatement and expansion of the Mexico City Policy (i.e. Global Gag Rule) by the Trump administration in early 2017. Many partners were forced to decide between losing funding or choosing not to work on anything related to abortion. We have also seen a ban on comprehensive sexuality education by the Ugandan government, and a proposed Penal Code from the Indonesian government which would have negative consequences for SRHR. The growing influence of conservative groups and leadership makes progressive international agreements on SRHR harder to reach in UN processes, making it harder for us to hold our governments accountable for SRHR.

We are proud of how our partners have responded proactively, looking for ways to strengthen their network and limit the influence of conservative voices. You will find examples in this magazine of how the Ethiopia, Indonesia and Uganda Alliances, amongst others, responded to the opposition they encountered.



HOW DID GUSO START?

GUSO was developed by Rutgers, Aidsfonds, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, dance4life, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Simavi, in partnership with their partners in programme countries. GUSO brought together organisations from different backgrounds with a shared desire to make real progress towards young people's SRHR.

"Working in Alliances allows us to pool our expertise and networks and create greater impact."

The GUSO Theory of Change (ToC) was built on successes and experiences from two previous programmes; ASK and UFBR. The unique added value of GUSO is the ability to address the multitude of factors and actors influencing young people's SRHR using a **multi-component approach**. Our combined expertise means we successfully link sexuality education and information, quality, youth-friendly SRH services and support for youth SRHR in practice, norms and policies. At the same time, GUSO builds strong and inclusive country Alliances to take ownership of SRHR interventions that will continue long beyond GUSO.

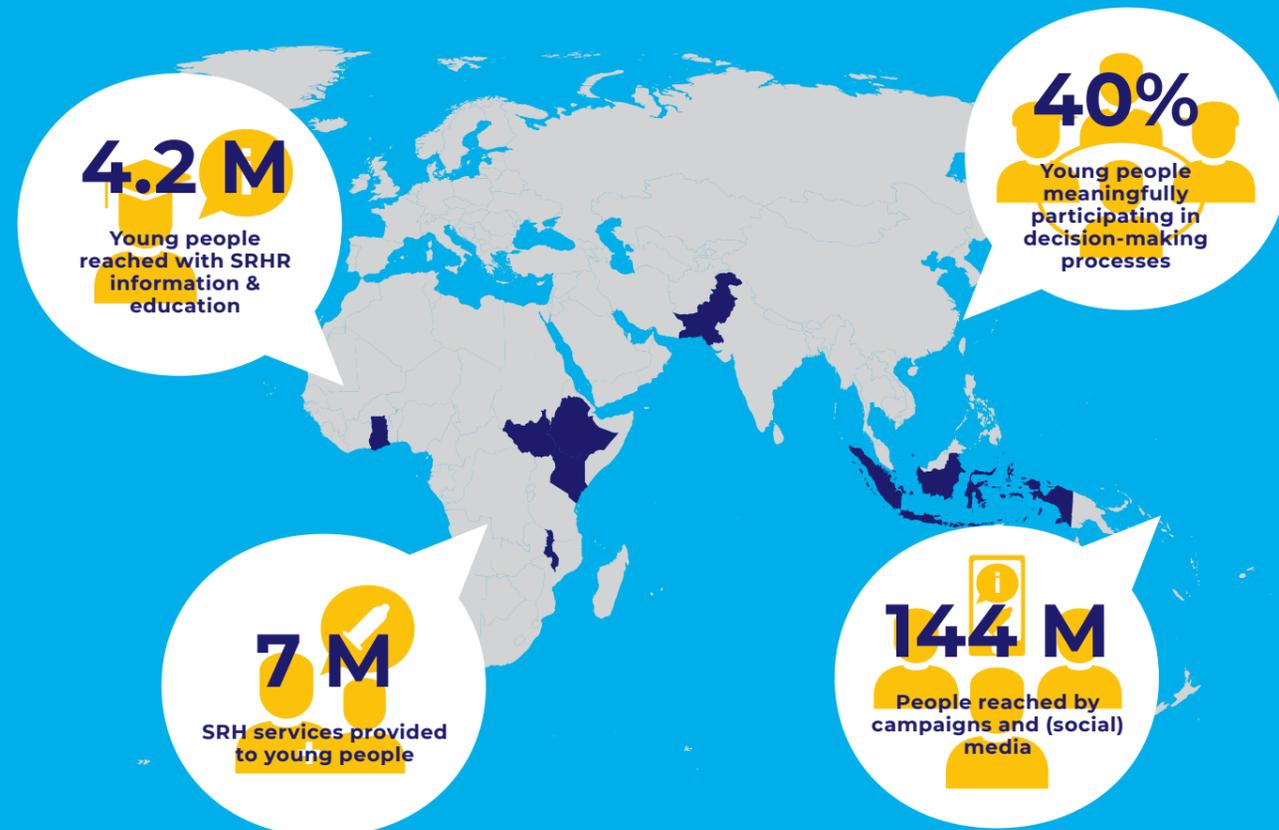
YOUTH MOTTO COMPETITION

In 2020, a competition was held in all GUSO countries to find the best motto for the global closing celebrations. Following careful selection from many applications, each country shared their country motto winner. From the winning mottos, a global winning motto was selected. The global winner is Luh Putu Wulandari Artha from Indonesia with her quote:

Youth is more, youth is power.

Winning motto by Wulan

Young people, when they get the chance to gain important knowledge & skills, become empowered to make their youth a strength, to build a better today, and a better future.



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Sustainable, strong Alliances & the multi-component approach** Alliances work! Working in an alliance and leveraging the experience of other partners helps to create synergy and maximum effectiveness when implementing a multi-component approach. It also gives a strong voice to alliance members to limit the influence of opposition on SRHR and makes them more agile to adapt programme activities in times of crisis like Covid-19.
- Meaningful Youth Participation** Meaningful Youth Participation was embraced as a core principle in GUSO. As a result, young people gained structural representation at the organisational and alliance levels; joined programming, policy, advocacy, and evaluation efforts; and acted as vital change agents in their local and national communities. There is still progress to be made in cultivating effective youth-adult partnerships - the innovative Youth Country Coordinator model presents a promising solution.
- Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Whole School Approach** The *Whole School Approach* - which means working with young people and all the key actors in schools to integrate Comprehensive Sexuality Education - creates safer school environments, strong referral systems to trusted counsellors and health professionals, and improves parent-child communication, resulting in better quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education and a more supportive environment for young people's SRHR.
- Social accountability** **Social Accountability is about empowerment.** In GUSO, youth-led social accountability approaches have increased young people's confidence, strengthened their voice, and improved the response of SRH service providers, local authorities and decision-makers. Social accountability can help break social and systemic barriers in contexts where national policies are insufficiently implemented. It has helped young people to know their rights and speak out, often leading to real and tangible changes at service and policy level.
- Gender-transformative approach and enabling environment** For many young people, restrictive gender norms and power imbalances stand in their way of accessing quality and inclusive SRH information and services. A gender-transformative approach examines, questions and transforms inequitable gender norms and power dynamics into positive values. This enhances gender equality and contributes to improved SRHR outcomes. In GUSO, a lot of groundwork has been done showing the effectiveness of such gender transformative approaches.

GUSO'S APPROACH?

GUSO uses a holistic, multi-component approach. The obstacles that young people face are not one-dimensional and are influenced by many factors outside of their control. Changes are needed in all areas for young people's SRHR to be fulfilled. In the past 5 years GUSO has contributed to structural changes thanks to this approach.



GUSO'S OBJECTIVES

Comprehensive SRHR information and education

Young people who have the skills and knowledge to make safe and informed decisions on SRHR, are better prepared to prevent sexual health issues (STIs, HIV, unwanted pregnancies etc.), go to health services, and have safe, equal and pleasurable (sexual) relationships. GUSO has been providing SRHR information and education in and out of schools.

Young people's SRHR are supported by their socio-cultural, political and legal environment

Young people's rights to SRH and their access to SRHR information, education and services must be supported in their homes, schools, communities, health clinics and by their governments. This means changing mindsets, cultural norms and showing them the importance of young people's SRHR. GUSO has been influencing these important actors in young people's lives to support and prioritise young people's SRHR.

Strong and sustainable national Alliances improve young people's SRHR

Working together makes us stronger! It means we can reach more young people from different backgrounds. GUSO has been building Alliances which live beyond the programme, working to advance young people's SRHR for many years to come.

Young people need access to quality and youth-friendly SRHR services

We help meet young people's needs by improving access to quality and comprehensive SRHR services, including HIV-testing and safe abortion. GUSO has been improving services available in public and private health centres, and in some cases providing services themselves.

Empowered young people voice their rights

Young people must be engaged in decisions which affect their lives. Through meaningful youth participation (MYP) we empower young people to claim their rights and influence SRHR advocacy and programmes. GUSO has been actively motivating young people to work together and with adults to stand up for their rights.

STRENGTHENING
SEXUALITY
INFORMATION &
EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING
YOUTH-FRIENDLY
SERVICES

LESSONS ON THE MULTI-COMPONENT APPROACH

- The multi-component approach allows flexibility to work in and address different contexts, social issues, cultural norms and the complexity of systems.
- The multi-component approach creates wide-scale impact and reach, leading to significant improvements in youth SRHR.
- The multi-component approach moves forward sensitive youth SRHR agendas in a variety of contexts

AMPLIFYING
COMMUNITY
AND SOCIETAL
SUPPORT

AMPLIFYING
GOVERNMENT
SUPPORT

GUSO'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Inclusive

Sustainability

Rights-based

Gender-transformative

Meaningful Youth Participation

GET UP
SPEAK
OUT
for youth rights



“With my peers, I discuss sexuality openly, including issues most young Ethiopians are ashamed to talk about.”
Read Fantanesh's Story.

ETHIOPIA

ETHIOPIA
GUSO
ALLIANCE

MEET THE ETHIOPIA GUSO ALLIANCE

Enhancing young people's awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and empowering them to make safe and informed decisions regarding their sexuality is at the foundation of the Ethiopia GUSO Alliance's work. The Ethiopia GUSO Alliance is a group of four SRHR organisations working together to empower adolescent and young people in Addis Ababa to demand their SRHR. To reach their goal, **the Alliance uses an inclusive approach and puts youth at the centre, providing youth-friendly SRH information and services, and creating an enabling environment using youth-led advocacy.**

The Alliance specialises in delivering Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for young people in and out of school. The Alliance also advocates on youth SRHR at the local, national and international levels and supports young people to be structurally engaged in decision making bodies to voice their rights.

The Alliance has a positive relationship with the government, working as an ally on youth SRHR, ultimately creating greater impact. **A huge opportunity for the Alliance came when the Ethiopian parliament revised the law on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), allowing them to advocate towards the government and adopt rights-based approaches.** Before this change, the Alliance looked into effective strategies for working on SRHR in restrictive settings. They also explored the benefits of youth-led social accountability as a strategy to improve SRH services for young people. **The scorecard process has greatly improved the relationship between health workers and young people, because health workers have more positive attitudes towards youth friendly services and better understand their needs.**



Empower.
Involve. Then
watch the
youth solve.

Winning motto of Ethiopia by
Hanna Mulugeta



I was a second-year college student when I joined GUSO's partner ECHO in 2018. I am passionate about this programme because I know that there are deep-rooted SRHR issues that can only be addressed if young people are part of the solution.

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KEY LEARNINGS:

- Engaging government agencies and departments, alongside other stakeholders, in programme advisory committees is an effective way to reduce opposition from the government, build trust and change attitudes of authorities and improve youth engagement in planning and monitoring youth-friendly services.
- The programme advisory committees provide a platform for young people to voice their concerns to policy and decision makers and increase accountability of government authorities to young people's SRH needs and rights. Ultimately, the Alliance convinced the city council of Addis Ababa to allocate funds for youth SRHR.
- Young people are now able to have free and open conversations with adults, thanks to the social accountability approach.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code



“I want every young person in Ethiopia to have access to sexuality education!”



“Now, I know myself so much better”

FANTANESH'S STORY

“The day I started my period I thought, ‘What’s happening to me?!’ And it was the hardest question to answer because I couldn’t answer it myself ... I want every young person in Ethiopia to have access to sexuality education, to be aware of their physical changes during puberty, to know about themselves and to make informed decisions in their life.”

Fantanesh, 18 years old, is a youth leader and advocate on Comprehensive Sexuality Education, or Mahareb as it’s referred to in Amharic, in targeted schools in Addis Ababa. She has helped empower adolescents to learn about their own sexuality and the decisions they may make through GUSO.

“Sex Education makes me know and understand what friendship and supporting each other means. One of the messages that is still in my mind is about knowing boundaries and ‘No means No’. Young girls in Ethiopia, including me, are subjected to different forms of violence and harmful traditional practices. I believe that learning about my sexuality, our sexuality, allows us to ask and demand our rights and say ‘NO’ for the things we see wrong.”

In Ethiopia, there is little awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among adolescents. Only around 33% of young people use modern contraceptives and the teenage pregnancy rate is 12%. Only 51% of school girls are knowledgeable about menstruation and how to manage it, and over 50% avoid going to school during their menstruation.

“With my peers, I discuss sexuality openly, including issues most young Ethiopians are ashamed to talk about. For instance, about relationships and sexual health, about unwanted pregnancy and

the use of a condom ... I advise young people to keep themselves safe, enjoy their sexuality, be bold, and be a part of Meharebe or any life skills education available in their school.”

“Even with my other friends who haven’t been in Mehareb sessions, discussion about sexuality is sometimes very difficult, or to be open. We are very influenced by the conservative culture. In my village, we don’t talk about sexuality openly, as it is considered as initiating children to commit themselves to early sexual activities.”

Fantanesh, who is from the suburbs of Addis Ababa, is one of five children living in the family home. As part of a low-income family she is expected to contribute to family finances. Next to her studies these responsibilities play a big role in her life. Before school, her chores include opening up her father’s small kiosk shop.

“My faith gives me peace and strength in life,” Fantanesh reflects.

She is able to engage with her peers about their sexuality, and the important issues they will be faced with, such as those regarding choice, consent and respect.

“I remember on the first day I ever took a sex education class, we started with a course, called ‘The World Starts with Me’ and how the room echoed with these words. The world starts with me, I thought! From that day forward I felt deeply how unique I was, and unique I am today. Now, I know myself so much better, how I will contribute to the world and the goals I want to achieve. I will address the SRHR problems, helping other young people across Ethiopia to learn what I now know to be true.”

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

PROVISION OF YOUTH FRIENDLY HEALTH SERVICES INCREASED

Youth friendly health services were not seen as a priority of government health bureaus in Addis Ababa and provision of youth friendly health services was low. For a long time this was a major hurdle to improving the quality and accessibility of youth friendly services. The Alliance set about changing this.

The Alliance used a number of advocacy channels to create pressure. By influencing the Health Advisory Committee, the Alliance secured the support of the Government Health Bureau Representative, who went on to advocate for increased budget. The Alliance also operated through the Public Private Partnership forum of the Addis Ababa Bureau of Health, using a Telegram group and a sensitization workshop to advocate for an increase in youth friendly health services in the city. Through their engagement, they have pushed for more clinics to provide minimum service packages.

In July 2019, the Addis Ababa health bureau allocated 2 billion ETB for youth health, with a focus on youth friendly SRH services. As of September 2020, 86% of Health Centers in the city now provide youth friendly health services or the minimum service package for youth friendly service delivery.



BUILDING UNDERSTANDING ON YOUTH SRHR THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Key community actors and parents have a lot of influence over young people's SRHR fulfilment and wellbeing. The Alliance set out to engage them to foster understanding between young people and their SRHR gatekeepers.

The Alliance brought together young people, parents, religious and community leaders and health workers to discuss SRHR issues affecting young people's lives. Gender-Based Violence is a major SRHR challenge affecting young people, particularly young women and girls. Young participants shared the case of two friends who were drugged at a party and then raped. The girls did not know where to go to receive emergency services and were too scared to talk to their parents. After hearing this and other stories young people shared, the community agreed to work with the local youth centre to make available Emergency Contraceptives and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis), and provide referrals to health services. The community also united to support the girls to pursue their case in court.

Holding intergenerational dialogues helps young people and adults in communities mutually understand young people's challenges and identify joint solutions to meet young people's SRHR needs.



YOUTH-LED SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

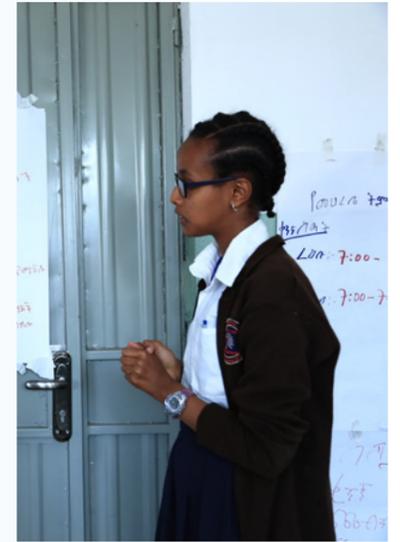
A key challenge is that progressive SRHR laws and policies often lack implementation. Social accountability engages citizens to build accountability among service providers and authorities.

The Alliance trained young change agents, staff, health workers and community representatives on youth-led social accountability and scorecards, which are used to collect data on services. After scoring the services, they were all brought together to discuss the gaps in service delivery and develop a joint action plan to address areas of improvement.

The sessions had immediate effects. Health workers became more open and understanding of young people's SRHR needs. Service hours were extended to include a half day on Saturday, a youth corner was created with youth friendly SRHR information, and ramps were built to improve access for people living with a disability. More importantly, they created a space where young people felt that their voice was heard.

The scorecard approach helped break the status quo: young people feel their SRH needs are more accepted by the community. By putting youth in the lead, the Alliance ensured young people were responsible for decisions that affect their lives.

"Young people can now say what they want freely. This has helped the healthcare providers to help more young people effectively and efficiently." (Female, 19)



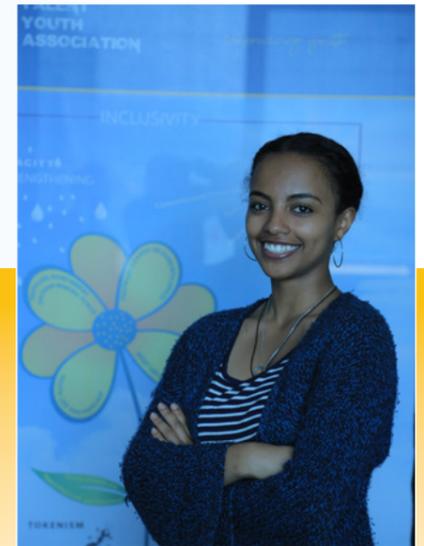
SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE ALLIANCE

ENGAGING IN RIGHTS-BASED ADVOCACY

The revision of the CSO law enables CSOs to advocate and apply a rights-based approach. CSOs are now encouraged to positively challenge and engage with government institutions.

Once the law was changed, the Alliance took action; organizing an advocacy training, revising SRHR information and education materials with a rights-based perspective, and advocating on youth friendly service provision. The Alliance also strengthened the capacity of young people to advocate and influence national and regional health policies, strategies and programmes. This paved the way for youth participation in Technical Working Groups and Task Forces on public-private partnerships, CSE, and a CSO advisory group.

Since the new law was adopted, the relationship between the government and the Alliance has improved. Their positive working relationship with government ministries positions the Alliance as an ally, rather than an opponent, to the government. Just as importantly, it ensures young people are meaningfully engaged in decision making about their own lives.



“With GUSO I connect-
ed with young people,
developed my person-
ality and my SRH which
will stay with me for my
whole life!”

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“GUSO is a light for our youth to walk their preferred route. I feel inspired by GUSO achievements, yet more attention must be given to reach young people in need in Ethiopia and worldwide. For the generation to come, youth SRHR is a key intervention to be strengthened.”

Berhanu Demissie
– NGB Chair

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Alliance values a united approach and has taken steps to ensure their sustainability beyond GUSO. The Alliance has a clear governance structure, policy, systems and SRHR materials that support their implementation and design of SRHR programmes. They have a fundraising strategy to help secure funding and a communications strategy to increase the visibility of their work. The good relationship with stakeholders, ability to connect with people in the communities they serve, as well as the inclusion of young people in all layers of alliance decision making structures, supports them in their work and will benefit future programmes. In the future, the Alliance plans to build on their joint experience and continue working together to advance young people’s SRHR!

**ETHIOPIA
GUSO
ALLIANCE**



“I am empowered, committed, and proud advocate for youth SRHR”
Read Maxwell’s Story

GHANA

GHASRHR Alliance
for young people

MEET THE GHANA SRHR ALLIANCE

Young people are supported with reproductive health education and youth-friendly services through the Ghana SRHR Alliance for Young People. **The Alliance advocates to increase young people's access to right-based, gender-sensitive and youth friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in Ghana, building consensus and partnership by convening relevant stakeholders for policy discussions and actions.**

To strengthen the Alliance and support sustainability, they focus on attaining their shared ambition, financial sustainability, visibility and favourable reputation and open culture. **They are the national alliance focused on young people's SRHR.**

The Alliance has been exploring sex-positive approaches to sexuality education, the impact of COVID-19 on young people's SRHR, and how youth-led accountability can improve SRH services for young people. By using social accountability scorecards and talking openly with health workers, **young people have gained the confidence to demand quality SRH services and become empowered as SRHR advocates.** Health centres have even expanded their opening hours to make it easier for young people to visit.



We stand,
we speak,
we live our
rights.

Winning motto of Ghana by
Max Ayamber



Before I joined GUSO, I had very little information about my SRHR rights and my head was filled with misconceptions and myths, for instance I viewed Young People who accessed abortion services as wayward people. I never felt comfortable to discuss anything about sexuality because I thought it was wrong and unacceptable. But after being trained by the GUSO project I have realized the importance of SRHR education.

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125.374

Young people reached with SRHR information & education

54%

Young people meaningfully participating in decision-making processes

351.449

SRH services provided to young people

5.1 M

People reached by campaigns and (social) media

KEY LEARNINGS:

- Reproductive health educators are more likely to be positive towards SRHR if they have seen or experienced violations of sexual rights, have had positive experiences related to sexuality, have received repeat trainings on sexuality and reproductive health rights that helps question negative socio-cultural norms on gender and sexuality, or are surrounded by other gender-sensitive and rights affirming persons.
- Young people are interested in having education on their Sexual and Reproductive Health, particularly on their sexuality and healthy relationships.
- Young people see that using scorecards has improved the quality of SRH services. During the scorecard process, health workers speak directly with young people and learn to stand in their shoes. When they understand the challenges young people face, they are motivated to improve their performance.
- Facebook Live is a key channel to provide young people in Ghana with a needed platform to discuss key SRHR issues and obtain feedback from reliable sources during situations such as Covid-19.
- Social media platforms, especially Twitter, are useful for SRHR advocacy, even during Covid-19, by targeting the accounts of key stakeholders and key media channels to project the SRHR causes for which young people are advocating.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code



“What I learned overhauled my entire perception about sexuality education”



“I was so excited to start providing SRHR information to young people”

MAXWELL'S STORY

My name is Maxwell, though many call me Max. I am 26 years of age and a resident of Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana. My childhood was spent in a small village in the Upper-east Region. Though it is relatively better now, the attitude of most people towards sexuality education, contraception and family planning in places like my village was very 'hostile'. I grew up immersed in these attitudes and I believed them myself -- perceiving young people who were open about their sexuality as promiscuous and disgusting, particularly those who used contraceptives.

As a young man, I constantly wondered why unmarried people would even think of “doing” family planning, and wanted nothing to do with girls who were on contraceptives because I felt they were “bad girls”. I was an “against ambassador” for contraceptive use, in charge of despising and mocking people who used it.

By May 2018, I had completed university and didn't have a job or work experience so I was interested in volunteering opportunities. My big brother told me that young people were needed to train in Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), so I contacted the officer in charge and was given the opportunity to participate in a 5-day intensive

training held in Tamale. What I learned there “overhauled” my entire perception about sexuality education, contraception and family planning. The science-based information provided during the training cleared many misconceptions I had, and helped me see other perspectives. Some of the girls shared how they struggled with their first menstruation experience, because no one had ever prepared them for it. Other girls discussed instances of sexual abuse and harassment they had experienced in their previous schools. It struck me that a lot of young people are going through abuse and other struggles and may have no one to talk to. The training taught me how important sexuality education and family planning is, especially for young people, and I was so excited to start providing SRHR information to young people — and also to serve as a confidant and an advocate.

For the past 16 months, I have zealously provided Comprehensive Sexuality Education to young people in and out of school and also talked to adults about family planning. The once 'hater' of sexuality and family planning is now an empowered, committed, and proud advocate for youth SRHR, leading other young people to fight for this cause.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

IMAMS IN THE NORTH OF GHANA STAND UP FOR YOUTH SRHR

Religious leaders in the northern parts of Ghana often hold negative views towards young people's SRHR and are outspoken about this in their communities. Their high levels of influence means their attitudes present a major barrier to advancing young people's SRHR.

The Alliance set about to change this. They engaged religious leaders in a series of meetings about young people's SRHR. **With greater knowledge and understanding, religious leaders began to change their attitudes. Many Imams in the area have now become advocates for young people's SRHR, providing space for a short discussion on youth SRHR issues with health workers before commencing religious services.** This has the knock-on effect of changing parents' attitudes too, who are now more open to talking about SRHR with their children.

By educating religious leaders and securing their support, the Alliance has diffused fear and stigma, and created an environment in which young people are able to voice their SRHR.



MAKING SRHR MORE ATTRACTIVE

The Alliance uses many different strategies to provide SRHR education and services to young people. **One of the most important factors is to ensure young people feel safe and confident to learn, ask questions and use services, free from judgement.**

The Alliance uses school-based CSE clubs with both computer- and paper-based courses. *The World Starts With Me and My World My Life* are formed of 14 lessons which use games, presentations, group work and homework to engage students in a child-centred and youth friendly way. Teachers and peer educators deliver these fun sessions together.

The Alliance also uses Sports Days to engage young people and provide a platform for health providers to educate young people about SRHR. Football contests and athletics competitions attracted young people, either as participants or spectators. Peer educators make their way through the crowds, chatting and talking to people about SRHR issues. Health staff set up around the sports field to provide first aid, and SRHR information and services, including condoms and contraceptives. These events draw a large crowd and provide a safe and engaging environment to learn about SRHR.

Creating a positive environment is important in order to ensure young people have access to the information and services they need, feel comfortable and adopt positive attitudes.



SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IMPROVES SRHR SERVICE QUALITY

Fostering open discussions between young people and health workers can be an effective way to improve access to SRH services. The Alliance helps young people monitor how youth friendly services are and initiate change.

Young people use scorecards to rate services and indicate their concerns. Together with health workers, health management teams and community members, they openly discuss their issues and develop a joint action plan to improve services. Topics which frequently come up include negative attitudes of health workers, concerns about privacy and confidentiality, long waiting times and high costs of services for young people.



Young people feel empowered through these activities.

They now have the confidence to go to sexual and reproductive health services without fear. **Now, young people know the health workers personally and feel more able to approach them and visit the facility when they have problems.** Young people know they can go to the clinic and ask for condoms without being judged, and girls find it easier to discuss menstruation with nurses. Young people now know their rights and feel empowered to demand quality services that meet their needs. **Young people have become advocates for their SRHR, working with local health authorities and other duty bearers to remove barriers to SRH services.**

In the Northern region, the Alliance took action to stop health workers asking young people to pay unapproved fees for services. Having empowered young people with social accountability, the Alliance organized meetings with young people and district authorities. Together, they secured commitments from the District Health Management Teams to develop and implement youth friendly SRH service plans. The Alliance has also introduced a league table for best performing health facilities on youth friendly services. Young people are also taking matters into their own hands – they know their SRH rights and feel empowered to refuse any unreasonable costs at the health centre.

SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE ALLIANCE

GHANA ALLIANCE YOUTH ADVISORY BODY

Young people's meaningful engagement in decision-making is at the heart of the GUSO programme. Looking for ways to engage young people, the Alliance turned to their colleagues in Uganda for inspiration. The success of the Youth Advisory Body in the Uganda SRHR Alliance encouraged the Ghana Alliance to try this too.

The Youth Advisory Body was to become the mouthpiece for young people in the Alliance. A Youth Advisory Body of youth leaders representing each partner organization was formed, who then outlined their vision for the Alliance. They have their own budget, ensuring they are truly in charge of their direction and influence the SRHR issues that matter to them.

Since its creation, the Youth Advisory Body has been involved in planning and decision making of the Alliance and has improved meaningful youth engagement in the Alliance. **The Youth Advisory Body champions the interests of young people and ensures the Alliance is by young people, for young people.**



“who would better contribute to the growth of an economy than an young person empowered to make sound reproductive health decisions!”
Sandra Tom Dery

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



FUTURE OUTLOOK

Working together helps the Alliance to reach more young people than when working alone, and the Ghana SRHR Alliance for Young People is committed to continue their work beyond the GUSO programme. They have registered as an Alliance, developed a five-year strategic plan and a resource mobilisation strategy to support their financial sustainability. All partners will play their role to make the Alliance a self-sufficient organisation and a thought leader on youth SRHR policy issues in Ghana!

“Young People must be at the centre of every initiative that is meant to serve them; not negotiable anymore”.

Alhaji Mohammed Awal Alhassan, Chairman – NGB Chairman



GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



“I am the living proof of how young people can be empowered when they are trusted with leadership”
Read Eka’s Story

INDONESIA



MEET THE INDONESIA SRHR ALLIANCE

Young people in Indonesia from different backgrounds are empowered to claim their right to sexual and reproductive health, thanks to the One Vision Alliance. The One Vision Alliance works to fulfil the SRHR of women, young people and marginalized groups. They focus on the provision of and advocacy for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), SRH services, and services responding to sexual and gender-based violence. The Alliance implements the GUSO programme in 5 cities: Bandar Lampung, Jakarta, Semarang, Denpasar and Kupang.

The Alliance has made significant advances under GUSO, working with 128 schools, 85 communities and a network of more than 440 educators to integrate CSE so that young people receive the SRHR information they need. The Alliance created a network of Youth Journalists on SRHR and has supported more than 360 youth-led campaigns and advocacy initiatives. The Alliance contributed to the adoption of the CSE guidelines for young people with disabilities by the Ministry of Education, and worked with the Ministry of Health to achieve the adoption of a community-based youth friendly services model. This is a major step forward for young people's SRHR!

This is the only alliance in Indonesia that focuses on SRHR, bringing the voices of women and young people to public attention. Working together in partnership helps the Alliance address the sensitivity, complexity and magnitude of SRHR in this culturally and religiously diverse country. Dealing with opposition to SRHR is a constant challenge, and it was a central focus during the programme. Opposition encountered from conservative groups demonstrated the Alliance's collective strength, collaborative spirit and commitment.



Youth is more, youth is power.

Winning motto of Indonesia by Wulan

Young people, when they get the chance to gain important knowledge & skills, become empowered to make their youth a strength... to build a better today, and a better future.

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights

GUSO has the overall objective of improving young people's SRHR, through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing the uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.

215.139

Young people reached with SRHR information & education

42%

Young people meaningfully participating in decision-making processes

209.627

SRH services provided to young people

14,4 M

People reached by campaigns and (social) media

KEY LEARNINGS:

- The Alliance has been strong and fearless in supporting its cause. The Alliance's strength lies in its capacity to mobilize public support around sensitive issues, backed by years of experience working with diverse vulnerable groups.
- Creating a social movement requires a commitment to a shared vision and a collaborative spirit among members, as well as strong partnership with like-minded Alliances and networks.
- Multi-stakeholder fora (of local stakeholders, religious leaders, community leaders, journalists etc) are a prerequisite for building support for youth SRHR information and services.

Young people represent 80% of the programme managers in the Indonesia GUSO programme. This is possible when they are equipped with skills and knowledge, and given the trust and power to carry out this role.

- In-school comprehensive sexuality education has enormous potential for addressing much of the adversity girls and boys in Indonesia face - such as bullying and sexual harassment and feeling guilty and insecure about their developing bodies - and also contributes to more equal gender attitudes.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code



“Everyone is worthy, so don’t be afraid to be your true self. You are amazing just the way you are!”



EKA’S STORY

“Speaking out means we access our rights and contribute to building a better community.”

Eka lives with her family in a small house in Bali, and works at the Planned Parenthood Association (PKBI). She is committed to her work, putting in full-time hours even though she’s only employed part-time. Since junior high school, Eka has been aware that the issue of sexuality greatly affects the psychology of adolescents. This is what attracted her to learn more.

“I had friends who lost their enthusiasm for school or stopped eating because of problems in their romantic relationships.”

At college, Eka learned that sexuality education in school is taboo, which forces young people to search the internet for information – and what they find there is often random, misleading or just wrong.

Eka was offered the opportunity to become the GUSO programme manager at PKBI Bali. Her main responsibility is to ensure young people are engaged in the programme.

“I am living proof of how young people can be empowered when they are trusted with leadership and actively involved in the decision-making process of youth SRHR programmes.”

Eka leads sessions where she is able to take these ideas to a bigger audience. She is passionate about involving young people in the implementation process SRHR programmes from the beginning, asserting that they must be the main actors and advocates about the issues that influence their lives.

“I believe that education is key to promoting equality, including gender equality.”

Even though the GUSO programme has ended, Eka hopes that she can keep making an impact on young people’s lives. Eka’s dream in life is to build a foundation or organisation focused on education for underprivileged young people in Bali, and Indonesia in general.

As Eka has gained more knowledge and skills on sexuality education, and had opportunities to discuss the issues around gender equality, she realized that her perspective, in the way she sees the sexuality problems that affect young people, has changed.

“I now see that these problems - teen pregnancy, child marriage and gender-based violence - are caused by multiple factors, but are largely a product of a system that denies young people access to proper SRHR education.”

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

STANDING STRONG IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

Growing conservative opposition in Indonesia presents a significant obstacle to improving SRHR for young people. While this has presented challenges to the Alliance, they haven't let it hold them back!

In January 2019, the Alliance faced online attacks for their work supporting a draft Policy on Elimination of Sexual Violence. A conservative group spread hoax news online and started a petition against the draft policy. **The Alliance swiftly took down any sensitive information and responded publicly through their own social media. They were publicly supported by the National Commission on Violence Against Women**, which used its network to share correct information about the policy and hosted a national press conference to address the attack.

The Alliance now has mechanisms, including a shared procedure for digital security, in place to prevent and respond to future attacks. They have also adapted their communication strategy, focusing on human stories which speak to the Indonesian public and are more broadly relatable. **The Alliance's strong collaboration helps partners stand strong against opposition, communicate jointly and work together on online security.**

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Many young women in Indonesia face sexual and gender-based violence. The culture makes it hard for survivors to come forward about their experiences and receive the help they need. Survivors are often blamed for what happened to them and fear stigma from their families and communities if they speak out. All too often, their voices remain unheard.

The Alliance has been exploring new ways to reach survivors and help them overcome their experiences, and change attitudes more broadly. Using Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, partners set up platforms to share information about sexual violence, mental health, men's role in preventing violence, building healthy relationships and human rights. Survivors could also use these platforms to confidentially share their stories, **like Aisyah who shared her experience of sexual harassment while commuting in the train using Instagram Story.**

The Alliance quickly attracted a large following with this content, positive calls to action and practical tips. As their following increased, **demand for counselling also grew dramatically, as survivors felt able to come forward and seek support following their experiences.** The Alliance partners now have more than 700 clients.

By using social media, the Alliance has found **an innovative way to help survivors come forward and share their experiences** more openly. Seeing these stories helps even more survivors speak out and receive the support they need.



POLICY MAKERS SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S SRHR

Young people can only be supported with quality SRHR information when there is a budget to do so. This is why the Alliance works with local authorities in Denpasar City to make sure they understand this important issue and secure support for young people's SRHR. The Alliance works with the Denpasar City Health Office, the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Family Planning and Population Control, the Education, Youth and Sports Office, and the Regional Planning and Development Agency to achieve this goal. Together, they advocate for the city government to provide comprehensive reproductive health education in schools. Through ongoing discussions and capacity strengthening of these offices, **the Alliance has secured budget commitments to support the production of promotional posters and banners for youth-friendly services and to train teachers in 12 schools on comprehensive reproductive health education.**

Securing support from local authorities means young people will receive quality SRHR education and services, even after the GUSO programme finishes. These **local authorities are now committed advocates for young people's SRHR**, helping the Denpasar City government to support comprehensive reproductive health education for many years to come.

YOUTH SPEAK OUT FOR INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING

Youth involvement in decision making is essential for their SRHR to be fulfilled in meaningful ways. **The Alliance supports young people to become youth SRHR leaders.**

In 2017, the Alliance provided an advocacy training series to the Kupang Youth Community on achieving social change, youth-led organizing and youth-led advocacy. As well as empowering them to become advocates, these skills give young people the confidence to speak out. One participant, **Narwati, was particularly inspired and became determined to persuade the local government to commit to SRHR and support young people to engage in decision making.** With support from the Alliance, Narwati prepared and presented a statement to the City Development and Planning Agency about engaging young people in preparing development plans.

Narwati is now confident to voice the needs and priorities of young people, and encourage the Regional Development and Planning Agency to involve youth in the neighborhood and city planning processes.

HOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT?

Young people are involved in all GUSO programme structures in Indonesia. **Alliance partners adopted organizational policies on Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP) to commit to young people's involvement in decision making.** The Alliance provides mentors, as well as formal and informal training, to support young people in their work and conducts MYP sensitization training for managerial staff. Young people are involved in budget management and are responsible for dedicated budget lines. The Alliance also uses youth-led concepts such as a "Youth Academy" to strengthen youth collaborations and movements across the target area.



“If we are empowered, we can make our own choices that lead to our life goals.”

Alfiya Tri Wahyuni

“We need to amplify the promising practices of GUSO to other parts of Indonesia, so no young people are left behind. So that we can work towards a just society!”

Bonitha Merlina
- Chair of NSC

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Alliance has defined a vision to guide their future work: “Young people with diverse identities and backgrounds enjoy their right to sexual and reproductive health.” In the years to come, the Alliance hopes to sustain the achievements of GUSO in programme areas using local resources and scaling up promising practices into more areas of Indonesia. Alliance members show their commitment to the future by paying a membership fee which the Alliance hopes to supplement with donor funding. The Alliance has already secured support from the Canadian government and are looking for more donors to support their cause.



“To make young people feel respected and listened to, I take time to fully interact and socialise with them as equals.”

Read Zopher's story.

KENYA



MEET THE KENYAN SRHR ALLIANCE

Ensuring that young people enjoy their SRHR and are able to meaningfully participate in the SRHR planning and implementation process at the community, sub-county, county and national levels is the specific focus of the Kenya SRHR Alliance in GUSO. In Kenya, 10 member organizations within the Kenya SRHR Alliance are implementing GUSO in Bungoma, Homabay, Kakamega, Kisumu, Nairobi and Siaya. The Alliance priorities are to create an enabling environment for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for young people and marginalized groups, as well as to provide Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and SRHR information, services and commodities through advocacy in regional, national and county level spaces.

The Alliance is immensely proud of the meaningful participation of young people by all Alliance partners, with 80% of the partners having youth representation in their highest decision making bodies. The Alliance has built close relationships with the Government and key ministries, as well as with other NGOs, UN bodies, academia and the private sector.

It hasn't all been easy. The Alliance has faced challenges along the way, with continued attacks from opposition groups in Kenya who are against 'sensitive' topics such as safe abortion, sexual diversities and Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The Alliance has gathered insights on a number of topics to enhance their work, exploring the use of a Gender Transformative Approach to train health workers and improve young people's SRHR, sex-positive approaches to Comprehensive Sexuality Education, as well as the effects of Covid-19 on young people's SRHR. It also examined youth participation in SRHR advocacy and the value of Youth-Adult partnerships.



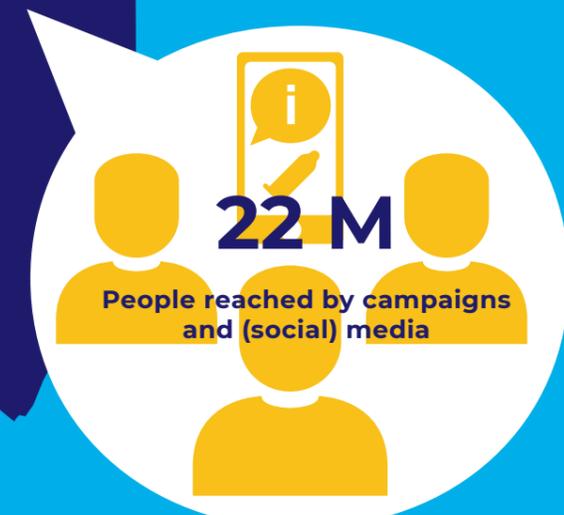
Your Voice,
Your power,
Your right!

Winning motto of Kenya
by Alvin Mwangi

I have been empowered to use my voice to fight for my rights. The right to information and access to reproductive health services.

**GET UP
SPEAK
OUT** for youth rights

GUSO has the overall objective of improving young people's SRHR, through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing the uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.



KEY LEARNINGS:

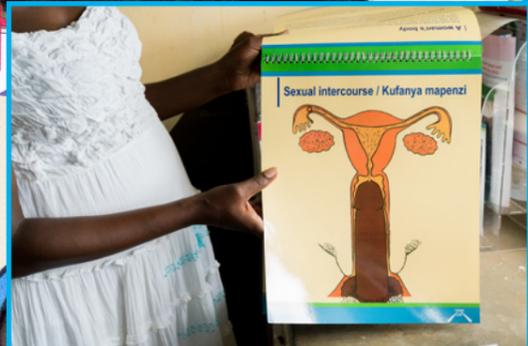
- Sexuality educators are more likely to be sex-positive if they have seen or experience violations of sexual rights, have had positive experiences related to sexuality, have received repeat trainings on sexuality and sexual rights that helps question sociocultural norms on gender and sexuality, or are surrounded by other sex-positive, gender-sensitive, rights affirming persons.
- It is important for adults in Youth-Adult Partnerships to find the balance between giving input to youth and stepping back to allow them to take the lead: Negotiate boundaries and then give space for young people to be in charge!
- A Gender Transformative Approach can be used to trigger health workers to have more positive attitudes to young people's SRHR and provide better services. Policy makers should be engaged to make it a part of training for health professionals.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code.

ZOPHER'S STORY

KALUO HEALTH CENTRE SERVICE CHARTER		
SERVICE	CHARGE	WAITING TIME
REGISTRATION	Free	2 days
CONSULTATION / OPD	Free	30 mins
LABORATORY CLINIC	Free	30 mins
FAMILY PLANNING	Free	25 mins
PHYSIO THERAPY	Free	IMMEDIATELY
INVESTIGATING SERVICES	Free	20 mins
TREATMENT / DRUGS	Free	30 mins
YOUTH FRIENDLY SERVICES	Free	30 mins
CCC (HIV)	Free	30 mins
CANCER SCREENING	Free	30 mins
IMMUNITY SERVICES	Free	IMMEDIATELY
LABORATORY SERVICES	Free	30 mins
V.V.M.C	Free	30 mins
INPATIENT	Free	30 mins



“they also see me as their mentor”

NATIONAL POLICY ON MATERNAL, INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD NUTRITION
 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION
 Summary Statement
 Every facility providing Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services should:
 (1) Adhere to the National Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition Policy, which should be routinely communicated to all health staff and publicly displayed;
 (2) Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy;
 (3) Provide information to all pregnant and lactating mothers and their partners on the benefits and management of breastfeeding;
 (4) Assist mothers initiate breastfeeding within the first one hour of birth;
 (5) Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated (details in the National MCH guidelines);
 (6) Show mothers how to breastfeed and to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants;
 (7) Practice rooming in, allow infants to remain together with the mother 24 hours a day;
 (8) Encourage and support exclusive breastfeeding on demand;
 (9) Encourage and actively promote exclusive breastfeeding for infants up to six months;
 (10) Provide information and demonstrate to mothers how to introduce and prepare appropriate and nutritious complementary feeds to their infants after six months;
 (11) Encourage mothers to breastfeed for at least 24 months (see Infant Feeding and HIV guidelines below);
 (12) Foster the establishment of infant and young child nutrition support groups and refer mothers to these on discharge from hospital or clinic;
 (13) Not accept any free samples and supplies of breast milk substitutes;
 (14) Not allow any publicity by the manufacturers or agents of breast milk substitutes;
 (15) Give no pacifiers, artificial teats or feeds using bottles to all infants;
 (16) Ensure that health workers do not accept any gifts or materials from manufacturers of breast milk substitutes and designated products.

INFANT FEEDING AND HIV GUIDELINES
 ALL PARENTS SHOULD BE GIVEN INFORMATION ON:
 • Benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continue breastfeeding for 2 years
 • Risks of mother for child transmission of HIV
 • Prevention and management of breastfeeding problems
 • Appropriate complementary feeding
 • Promotion of good maternal nutrition and self care

HIV COUNSELLING AND TESTING
 HIV NEGATIVE MOTHERS
 • Reinforce risk reduction
 • Promote exclusive breastfeeding
 HIV POSITIVE MOTHERS
 • Guidance and support on exclusive breast feeding and appropriate ARVs for mother and baby
 • Reinforce optimal feeding practices
 • Reinforce risk reduction
 MOTHERS NOT TESTED
 • Promote A support exclusive breastfeeding
 • Encourage HIV counselling & testing
 • Reinforce risk reduction
 MOTHERS WITH SPECIAL SITUATIONS
 • Reinforce risk reduction
 • Support exclusive breastfeeding
 • Encourage HIV counselling & testing
 • Reinforce risk reduction to couple

“I take time to fully interact and socialise with young people”

“Mike, 22, and Milly, 20, walk into the tent holding hands and seem happy together. They’ve been dating for a while, but they face a recurring issue: Mike doesn’t want Milly to get pregnant, but he also doesn’t want her to use contraception. As Milly describes their story, I realise that there is more sadness than happiness here, because Milly is being asked to do things she isn’t comfortable with – like having unprotected sex.”

This is part of a diary entry written by Zopher, a 25-year-old volunteer counsellor and health worker based at the Bondo Youth Centre in Kenya. Zopher saw from a young age the impact that a complete lack of sexual health information had on him and his peers. At university, he led the first Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights campaign, ‘Let Us End Unsafe Abortion’. He now spends his days speaking to youth, or young couples, about sexual health and rights, and about harmful gender norms that too often dominate behaviour, leading to unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortions, HIV/AIDS, abusive relationships, etc. Zopher isn’t just a health worker; he’s a listening ear, a support, a non-judgemental source of vital information, and a lifeline to so many young Kenyans with nowhere else to turn.

“To make young people feel respected and listened to, I take time to fully interact and socialise with them as equals.”

This egalitarian ethos is at the heart of the Bondo Youth Centre’s approach to educating young people about their bodies and how they can protect themselves when engaging in sexual activities.

“Most of the young people who turn up not only take health advice, but also see me as their mentor. I have been able to prevent some of the worst cases that might have occurred due to a lack of SRHR information. I recently prevented a young woman from washing her genitals with bleach to get rid of an STI.”

Zopher uses his diary to reflect on the consultations and the impact he has made. This is part of research being conducted on shifting harmful gender norms among the young people through a ‘Gender Transformative Approach’. This approach involves training, through exercises such as ‘body-mapping’ and open discussions with young people, intended to break down the deeply entrenched gender-based societal beliefs that contribute to inequality and poor health outcomes.

Young people open up about many different harmful gender norms during these sessions. “We talk about why these norms stick around for generation after generation, and discuss how to find lasting solutions.”

Currently, the Centre is the only place in the sub-county for young people to get accurate information and access to contraception. However, Zopher is optimistic:

“It’s about individual development. Young people are gradually developing the ability to take full responsibility for their actions and decisions.”

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

USING A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVE SRHR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Biased attitudes of health providers, stemming from social norms, are an important barrier to young people's access to SRH services. Gender transformative approaches (GTA) provoke participants to question social and cultural norms and to develop gender equal attitudes and can improve health outcomes, such as reducing rates of unintended pregnancy or STIs.

The Alliance used this approach to build awareness among youth SRH service providers about their own gendered and sexual norms and to positively influence their knowledge, consciousness and attitudes for inclusive, good quality care. After two intensive trainings on the gender-transformative approach, twenty four health workers were followed for 5 months and supported to reflect on and become conscious of their own attitudes and biases.

By the end, sustained changes were seen, with **health workers holding more positive attitudes, including on gender and sexual diversity**. This improved the quality and inclusiveness of SRH services for young people. Health workers were now fully listening to young people, actively assuring privacy and confidentiality, and ensuring young people know that it is their right to seek services. **These positive changes led to more young people coming to the health facilities.**

SETTING UP A 'TRACKING TOOL' TO ENSURE COMMODITY SECURITY

Shortages of SRH commodities are a problem in many health facilities across Kenya, meaning young people cannot access the supplies they need, such as condoms and contraceptives. Addressing this issue is essential to fulfil young people's SRHR.

The Alliance noticed that a coordinated effort to address commodity security was missing. As members of the Homabay Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health CSO network, they advocated to make commodity shortages a priority, resulting in a commodity security Technical Working Group (TWG). **Alliance partners became members of the TWG and their efforts led to adoption of a Commodity Tracking Tool and they supported health workers with training and mentorship to use the tool.**

The Commodity Tracking Tool is now **used in 267 health facilities**. It provides **real time tracking of commodities in health facilities**, and informs decisions on ordering and redistribution of commodities. Consultations with young people show that services have improved.

EMPOWERED COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS

Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) play a critical role in the health system – mobilising communities on health and providing basic healthcare at the community level. They receive a monthly stipend from the government however this alone is too little to support their families. While many programmes empower CHVs with health information, the Alliance wanted to empower them economically, too.

The Alliance decided to **empower CHVs as Community Health Entrepreneurs**, enabling them to integrate a small health business in their daily work. A group of motivated CHVs were trained on



business skills, communication and SRHR. The entrepreneurs were provided with a kit of health commodities, products and basic medicines to kick-start their business. **They now go house-to-house, selling their commodities and sharing information about SRHR, HIV and health issues, and make referrals to health services.**

This model makes CHVs' work more sustainable and has proven very popular. In fact, partners are overwhelmed with requests from other CHVs who want to join the programme!

"As a CHV... I was suffering a lot. Payment of stipend could delay and this made life hard for the children and I. But now, I'm able to run my business and make some money to support myself";
Community Health Volunteer, Homabay County

SIAYA COUNTY GOVERNMENT ALLOCATES BUDGET FOR SHR TRAINING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Poor SRH indicators in Siaya and neighbouring counties show that improving SRH information and services must be a priority. So the Alliance engaged on a long journey to advocate for this.

The Alliance trained Members of the County Assembly on reproductive health and highlighted the poor SRH outcomes in the county. **This mobilized them as Reproductive Health Champions and led to the commitment of 2 million Kenya Shillings (\$18,000) for reproductive health training**, as well as action plans for the county.

The Alliance **youth advocates participated in public forums to influence decisions on the budget allocation and action plans.**

This budget allocation will be used to train health workers on youth friendly services and SRH commodities, and increase young people's access to SRH services.



HOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT?

In 2017, the Alliance consulted young people about how to strengthen their engagement in the GUSO programme. Their key recommendations - guidelines on meaningful youth participation (MYP) in the Alliance and an Alliance Youth Council - were both adopted by the Alliance the following year.

A participatory workshop was held with 16 young people from the Alliance members to **develop the SRHR Alliance MYP Guidelines, which now guide MYP in the Alliance and its work**. A Youth Council was also established, with representatives from 11 Alliance partners. **The Youth Council promotes efficient and effective MYP in the Alliance partners and creates SRHR youth movements in the country.**

These steps show the **Alliance's commitment to meaningfully engage young people**. The Youth Council, in particular, places young people in **strategic positions to influence change** and ensure interventions meaningfully address the needs and priorities of young people.



I'm empowered with a lot more information on SRHR and make change in my own way"

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



"The current strategic focus for the Kenyan Alliance is to consolidate lessons and networks to situate the ourselves as the ultimate national and regional sustainable leader for sexual and reproductive health rights."

Charles Wafula
- NGB Chairman

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Alliance plans to build on their cooperation from the past 9 years and wants to continue being recognized as a key player in SRHR advocacy and programme implementation. Over the years, the Alliance has learnt the importance of identifying and building strategic allies for working on these issues. Together, allies have the ability to influence decisions. The Alliance will continue to build on their positive partnership with the government, and national and international NGOs to lead the SRHR in Kenya and beyond!



GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



"I needed to help others, so they don't go through what I went through."
Read Jenipher's story

MALAWI



MEET THE MALAWI SRHR ALLIANCE

The GUSO programme in Malawi is implemented in the districts of Chikwawa and Mangochi by the Malawi SRHR Alliance.

Empowering and mobilizing young people, women and vulnerable groups to lead advocacy and claim their sexual reproductive health and rights is the specific focus of the Malawi GUSO programme.

Access to youth-friendly health services remains challenging for many, particularly in rural areas, so the Alliance supports youth-friendly service provision through training health workers and youth providers. The Alliance also advocates for policies that promote the SRHR of young people, women and vulnerable groups, including sensitive issues such as legal reform on safe abortion laws, sexual and gender-based violence, youth friendly health services and LGBTQI rights.

The Malawi Alliance is proud that youth mobilization on the issue of pregnancy helped put pressure on Members of Parliament and contributed to the Termination of Pregnancy Bill coming before Parliament.

The Alliance values partnership and fosters collaboration with SRHR partners and stakeholders in Malawi, from national and international NGOs, to key departments in the government, including the Ministries of Gender, Youth and Health.

In the last years, important lessons have been captured on youth empowerment and youth-led advocacy in GUSO. **Social accountability has helped many young people come to realise that they can exercise their rights as clients of SRH services.** Now young people are engaged: while in the past they passively accepted whatever services they received, they now voice their needs, confident that they will be heard.



NOW I KNOW, MY BODY, MY RIGHT

Winning motto of Malawi by Mphatso Prisca Kantwanje

“My fellow Peer Educators and I have managed to raise awareness of LGBTQI rights, which has lead to a gradual decrease in the backlash towards LGBTQI youth in my home town. People are gradually accepting us as human beings with rights, just as they are”

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights

GUSO has the overall objective of improving young people's SRHR, through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing the uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.

509.959

Young people reached with SRHR information & education

37%

Young people meaningfully participating in decision-making processes

883.523

SRH services provided to young people

2,7 M

People reached by campaigns and (social) media

KEY LEARNINGS:

- Working with youth increases young people's confidence and knowledge on SRHR, and supports them to learn from each other and build new skills.
- Empowered young people are able to recognize gaps in SRHR policy and practice and advocate for the changes they need.
- Results Based Advocacy should be youth-led and grounded on solid evidence.
- Social accountability fosters respect and mutual understanding between young people and health service providers.
- Engaging in Youth-Led Social Accountability increases young people's leadership skills and political engagement; It motivates them to take up leadership positions in their communities.
- Working with religious and cultural opposition on youth SRHR is essential, especially on sensitive issues like LGBTQI, safe abortion and CSE.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code



“I was afraid to go to a hospital”



“I needed to help others”

JENIPHER’S STORY

Jenipher (19), was persuaded to have unprotected sex by a boy at school. He promised he would marry her but when she told him she was 3 months pregnant he abandoned her and denied any involvement with her. In Jenipher’s mind the only solution was to seek help through a traditional healer. The healer offered her traditional herbs to abort the pregnancy, free of charge. The herbs worked and the pregnancy was terminated. However Jenipher, underwent the extremely painful consequences of an unsafe abortion in silence.

“I was afraid to go to a hospital, even though my health status required me to. I knew that abortion is against the law.”

The next day she went to school in pain and confided in her best friend Memory, who helped her to seek the medical care she urgently needed. Memory, introduced her to Victor, a peer educator, who was able to arrange comprehensive abortion care at Mangochi District Hospital. Victor told her that healthcare is a right, abortions are not legal in Malawi, but the country’s constitution does state that everyone has the right to healthcare.

“I was afraid of revealing my story to a doctor. But with the help of a peer educator, I was assisted well. It made me happy, because I realised that I have rights like everyone else even though I chose to abort my pregnancy.”

Jenipher underwent a manual vacuum aspiration to clear her uterus. Thankfully, she was able to go home and fully recovered after a month. After having successfully finished her education, Jenipher is now a sexual and reproductive health educator. Along with Victor they initiated a campaign to inform and educate young people in their villages about safe abortions and related sexual health services.

Jenipher is now a positive role model for young women in her village. As a result of her experience, she has become a champion for sexual and reproductive health and rights, encouraging the use of contraceptives and using existing sexual health facilities.

“I needed to help others, so they don’t go through what I went through.”

Radio shows are seen as a good way to access young people in hard-to-reach areas. Here, we see an open discussion on sexual and reproductive health rights issues, despite the taboo.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

ENABLING ACCESS TO SRH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

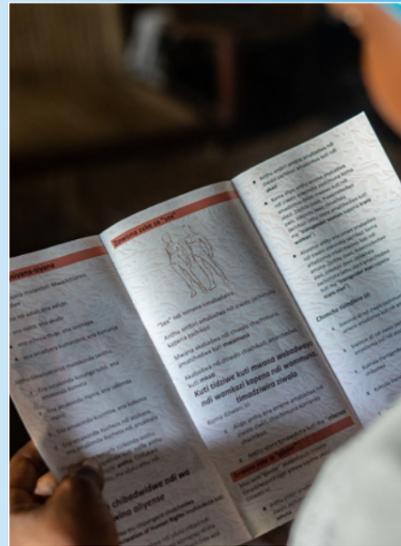
Religious and community leaders, and parents, often hold negative attitudes towards young people's SRHR, which can drive young people away from accessing services they need, for fear of being stigmatized. Securing their support for youth SRHR is essential and the Malawi GUSO alliance has been doing just that.

Since 2018, the Malawi GUSO alliance has engaged community leaders and parents in Mangochi and Chikwawa on SRHR, youth-friendly health services (YFHS) and meaningful youth participation (MYP) to make them aware of the importance of young people accessing SRH services. Dialogue sessions are organised to dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding SRHR, YFHS and MYP. **Having understood the importance of youth SRHR, parents and community and religious leaders set out to make other community stakeholders aware of the importance of youth-friendly health services.** In some communities, religious leaders also established youth groups in their churches to offer platforms to discuss SRHR related issues. This helped remove stigma around young people's SRHR.



IMPROVING LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

Although national standards for youth friendly health service provision exist, young people still face barriers. For example, young people have to go to the same clinics as adults to receive antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), and so many young people deliberately avoid services and do not adhere to treatment. Using awareness campaigns in the community, the Malawi GUSO Alliance, together with peer educators, facilitators and volunteers, advocated for ARVs to be available through youth-friendly corners in health centers; areas specifically targeted to young people's SRHR. Partners also trained youth-friendly health service providers and supported facilities to renovate youth-friendly corners. **Young people living with HIV can now receive therapy in youth friendly corners. They have also become engaged in improving the lives of other young people through youth clubs and as SRHR advocates.**



YOUNG PEOPLE SECURE KEY POSITIONS IN COMMUNITIES TO BE IN CONTROL OF THEIR SRHR

To make sure that young people are meaningfully engaged in advocating for their SRHR, the Malawi advocacy strategy prioritises young people's participation in designing and implementing activities to improve their SRHR.

For example, in Chikwawa, partners **empower young people to voice and claim their rights.** They train them on meaningful youth participation, youth leadership and social accountability, and on organizing community-based activities such as youth forums, youth camps, and campaigns. **Through this support, young people have found their voice;** in 2019, one of the youth groups in Chimwala formally registered to become a youth-led organisation. This has helped to ensure young people are at the centre of advocacy for their SRHR.

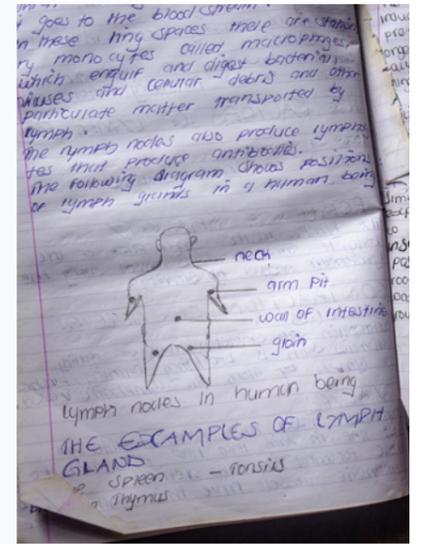


ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHT TO SAFE ABORTION

Access to abortion in Malawi is restricted, however, unsafe abortion is a major cause of maternal death and Malawi's maternal mortality ratio is one of the highest in the world. The Malawi GUSO Alliance advocates for Parliament to pass the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, which will make abortion laws in Malawi less restrictive than they are now.

In 2018, two big media groups (Timveni and Times) interviewed the Alliance on the Termination of Pregnancy Bill and distributed the story via radio, television and print media. Large audiences were reached with information about the issues surrounding safe abortion and the Bill. The Alliance also sensitized 60 health workers in Mangochi about the Bill. **These health workers have now joined their voices to the cause, advocating for the abortion law reform.**

Also, a youth-led drama group called 'Theatre for Development' create awareness and support for the Bill at the community level. This group visits local communities and uses theatre to spread this important message. Through these kinds of efforts and successes the Alliance can continue building support and eventually convince Parliament to adopt the Bill.



SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE ALLIANCE

In 2017, the Alliance took important steps to meaningfully engage young people. The Alliance established 'District Youth Movements' to connect to youth leaders on the ground. They raise awareness on SRHR, represent GUSO at district levels, report issues in the districts as they emerge, and mobilise other young people. The Youth Country Coordinator is their voice in Alliance decision making bodies, linking the programme to the needs and voices of youth on the ground. **A strong youth movement is created!**

To further link the youth movements to GUSO, the Alliance adopted a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) structure, an innovation brought from the Uganda Alliance. The council consists of staff, interns and peer educators from the partner organisations below the age of 25. They monitor the youth movement activities and mentor the members. These structures will continue beyond the programme as the Alliance's commitment to meaningful youth participation.



The Malawi GUSO Alliance advocates for Parliament to pass the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, which will make abortion laws in Malawi less restrictive than they are now.

Anastasia Msusa - CAVWOC

Healthcare is a right!"

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



"GUSO roots are deep, there is no need to fear the wind"

Kelton Bolokonya, NSC Chair

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Malawi SRHR Alliance has formally registered with the government and plans to continue working together long beyond GUSO. They have already secured funding for small projects and aim to have bigger programmes covering 28 districts in Malawi. They see themselves becoming a thought leader on SRHR in Malawi and a regional and global SRHR player!



GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights



"No matter how conservative the society you belong to may be, the right choice of words always does its magic."

Read Sana's story

PAKISTAN



MEET THE PAKISTANI SRHR ALLIANCE

Young people in Pakistan are empowered to access sexuality education (known as Life-Skills Based Education in Pakistan) and SRHR services through the work of the Pakistan SRHR 'Utho Bolo' Alliance. The Pakistani SRHR Alliance consists of 3 organisations that complement each other. The Utho Bolo Alliance advocates for supportive policies and legislation on youth empowerment and life-skills based education (LSBE) and fosters an environment that empowers young people to access sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and challenge gender norms. The Utho Bolo Alliance implements GUSO in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtoon Khaw.

Their youth-centred approach to SRHR makes them stand out from the crowd. Despite working in a conservative environment, the Alliance has advanced the SRHR of young people in Pakistan. They participate in various advocacy spaces, such as Technical Working Groups with government actors, including the LSBE task force and the Punjab Textbook Board, and are proud to have successfully advocated for the inclusion of LSBE in the educational curriculum.

Utho Bolo successfully engages religious and community leaders, and government officials, while joining hands with other SRHR organisations and alliances. The Alliance is well respected by government officials in Pakistan and their good reputation means the Alliance can achieve even greater impact. The South District Education Officer invited Alliance partners to begin work in schools in South Karachi, having learned about GUSO at an event celebrating World Aids Day in 2019. This was then extended to all six Karachi districts by the Assistant Director of Education in the government on Sindh. By May 2020, about 800 students had been reached with SRHR information in South Karachi.



Live free and fly like a bird, raise your voice and let it be heard

Winning motto of Pakistan by Muhammad Farooq Faheem

When I became a Peer Educator, I was unaware about my rights and how to exercise them, but during the training I got the chance to learn about youth rights.

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights

GUSO has the overall objective of improving young people's SRHR, through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing the uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.

243.916

Young people reached with SRHR information & education

35%

Young people meaningfully participating in decision-making processes

199.444

SRH services provided to young people

2,7 M

People reached by campaigns and (social) media

KEY LEARNINGS:

- A shared ambition and open culture helps achieve results, particularly in conservative settings.
- Recognition of life-skills based education as part of Academic Curriculum by the Supreme Court of Pakistan is a huge achievement for young people's SRHR.
- Collaboration between different youth-led groups strengthens their advocacy for young people's rights.
- Regular provision of life-skills based education is key to creating a safe environment for young people.
- Using youth-adult partnerships to engage young people ensures young people's needs and priorities are addressed in a comprehensive way.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code



"I was a quiet person who struggled with communication."



"the right choice of words always work their magic."

SANA'S STORY

Sana's story is about a girl who faced problems when she entered puberty because of a gap in communication with her parents.

"Being part of a conservative society, I believed that I should never ask questions about puberty or sexual health issues - not only in childhood but also in later life. Becoming part of GUSO changed my views for good. If we do not talk about things at the right time then what is the point of sharing information at all?"

Pakistan is the 5th most populated country in the world with more than 220 million people. It is a very conservative society when it comes to discussing sexuality and the issues related to it – but there are people, like Sana, who are working to change that.

Sana is a youth advocate of SRHR and a peer educator Life-Skills-Based Education for the region of Lahore, Punjab. She completed her first GUSO training in 2017, when she first applied for volunteer work. Having grown up in a middle-class orthodox family, she had to deal with not only a lack of basic knowledge about the natural cycle of womanhood and body changes but also awareness of hygiene as well.

"When I entered womanhood there was no one to guide me about the changes my body would face. My elder sister was just one and a half years older than me and as unaware as I was, but my mother told her to guide me rather than doing it herself. Eventually, I learned everything through experience on my own, which took years. This had a big

impact on me and made me wonder how many other girls faced the same issues and problems I faced at that time?"

Sana felt the need to contribute to youth awareness programs because of her own experience.

"It motivated me to be part of the GUSO project and to become a peer educator. I teach young girls about the natural processes and changes every girl faces in her life so they don't have to go through the difficult process of self-learning that I did."

In the beginning, she had her struggles:

"When I joined GUSO, I was a quiet person who struggled with communication. Speaking in front of people made me very nervous."

Sana started to work on developing her confidence and building her communication skills. She says:

"I am a gender studies student and my subject requires me to speak out about the problems of both genders and of women specifically, but my peers are still very shy and conservative. This worries me, but it also magnifies my motivation. No matter how conservative the society you belong to may be, the right choice of words always does its magic."

After the GUSO training and her volunteer work Sana felt the urge to share her knowledge with other girls. She always believes:

"If it's not me then who?"

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

REACHING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LIFE SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION

Securing support for quality life skills-based education (LSBE) in schools is a key priority of the Alliance. They have been leading efforts to mainstream LSBE in schools in Punjab province.

The Alliance leads the Task Force of civil society organisations which advocates for LSBE in Punjab. After attracting the interest of the Punjab Department of Education, approval was given to develop an LSBE curriculum. The Alliance provided technical input to develop the LSBE manual as members of the Technical Committee set up by the Punjab Department of Education. The curriculum is currently being reviewed by the Punjab Department of Education and is currently used in a limited number of schools. The Alliance and their partners continue to advocate for approval from the Department of Education and for the curriculum to be expanded to more schools. **The Alliance's message is spreading to other areas; other provincial governments in Pakistan are now showing interest to implement the same LSBE curriculum, with the potential to reach thousands of Pakistan's youth.**



BRINGING YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARD

The Alliance has been implementing the dance4life model to empower young people about their SRHR. After implementing for some time, they felt it was time to get feedback from the young people who are the beneficiaries of the activity.

Partners developed a feedback form to better understand participants' experiences. This helped highlight not only what was working well but also what was not, providing the opportunity to learn and improve their approach.

In the feedback forms, some students highlighted that when the facilitators read stories out loud, they sometimes lacked emotion and so the story wasn't very engaging. From this they learnt that facilitators needed to bring stories to life with emotions and facial expressions.

By engaging young people to give feedback and reflect on what they have learned, partners better understood their impact and learned how to improve their approach. It has also allowed young people to show how much they enjoy and support the activities.



BRIDGING THE GAP: A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ADOLESCENT SRH SERVICES

In rural communities in Pakistan, there are many barriers which prevent young people from accessing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Young people's SRH is still taboo and young people seeking services face stigma at school, in their community and in the health centres themselves. Health centres are often busy and young people have to wait for long periods sitting among adults, many of whom they know, adding to their fear of judgement and disapproval. Consequently, many young people are unlikely to seek services or adhere to treatments.

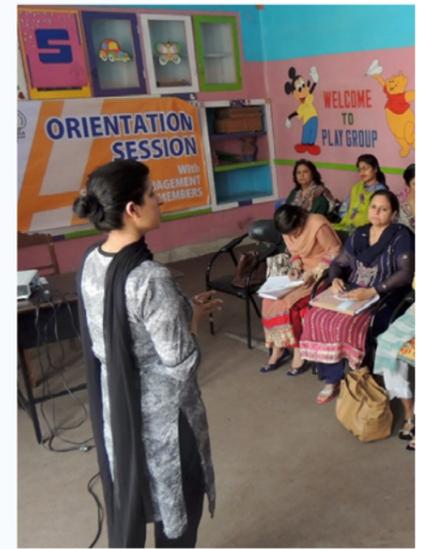
Reaching young people presents an opportunity to positively influence healthy behaviours.



The Alliance devised Youth Wellbeing Camps to meet the SRH needs of adolescents:

a designated, confidential and safe space that provides fast-track integrated SRH services for adolescents, including counselling, psychosocial services and referrals.

The Alliance, peer educators and service providers jointly identified the youth-friendly services that were needed. Community members were closely engaged to increase their understanding of the importance of youth-friendly SRH services, generate support for the activities and reduce stigma. Youth-only spaces were created with an information area, waiting room and consultation room to maintain confidentiality for young people away from adults.



HOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT?

Meaningful Youth Participation is at the heart of how the Utho Bolo Alliance works. The Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) supervises all initiatives towards Meaningful Youth Participation and controls the budget for activities. One activity pioneered by the YCC was the National Youth Forum in 2018 for young people to engage, share their successes and work together to address the SRHR needs of young people in Pakistan.

The Alliance also cultivates young people's professional skills through intern opportunities at each of the partner organisations and emphasizes representation within the Alliance and partner governance structures. The partners also support their own networks of youth advocates and endeavour to bring them together as one community for change so young people can be at the centre of demanding their SRHR.



"We have powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power towards a good end"

Syeda Najaf Zahra

“We can’t stay silent about the things that actually matter. Our work, our potential and our passion taught us to Get up speak out”
Hafiz Usman Siddiq

GET UP SPEAK OUT
for youth rights



GET UP SPEAK OUT
for youth rights

Utho Bolo’s campaign on SRHR played an indispensable role for a very critical area, sensitizing youth, adolescents and teachers on issues that are considered as tabooed

Baela Raza Jamil
– CEO ITA

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Working together helps the Alliance advance young people’s SRHR in a challenging context. They are proud of their successes so far and plan to continue beyond 2020. The Alliance hopes to attract other like-minded organisations from across the country to become part of the Alliance and join their efforts to advance young people’s SRHR.



“My dream is to enrol in a nursing course.”
Read Assinah’s Story



UGANDA



MEET THE UGANDA SRHR ALLIANCE

The Uganda SRHR Alliance is driven to ensure that all young people have access to high quality, youth friendly, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services within a supportive environment. Their dream is for all young people, women, key populations, and people living with a disability to exercise their SRHR without impediment and free from violence.

The Uganda SRHR Alliance works in the districts of Iganga, Bugiri, Mayuge and Jinja, with a particular focus on challenging negative gender cultural norms and beliefs, and combating sexual and gender based violence. They encourage young people to become champions of their SRHR, fostering collective, youth-led action to call for a positive social and political environment.

The Alliance values synergies both within the Alliance as well as with other like-minded organisations at grassroots, national and international levels. The Alliance has engaged duty bearers and SRHR actors at national, sub-national and community levels to influence the policy and social environments to improve access to SRHR information and services, partnering with NGOs, research institutions, religious institutions, private sector and the media to push the SRHR agenda. In the last 5 years, the Alliance sought to better understand successful strategies for youth-led collaborations and dealing with opposition, economic empowerment approaches to SRHR and the impact of Covid-19 on young people's SRHR.

In Uganda, GUSO was complemented by the Flex Fund project from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 2018 and 2019, the project established a network of over 900 community health entrepreneurs offering young people SRHR and HIV information and services to meet their needs, while empowering the entrepreneurs to generate an income.



Standing out and unlocking your ability!

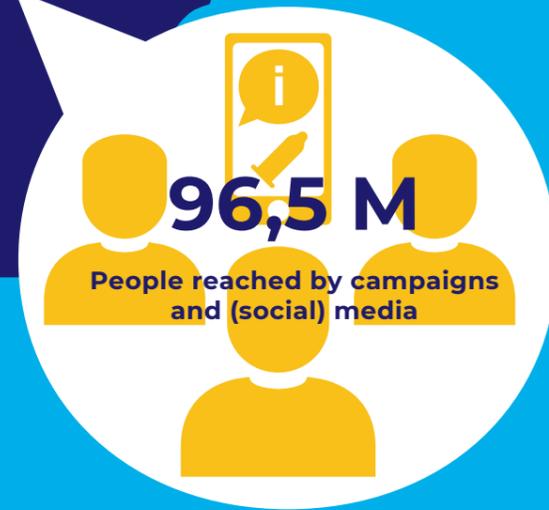
Winning motto of Uganda by Oscar Ewaa



I'm living with HIV, but now I can be open about it and I'm able to do many things.

GET UP SPEAK OUT for youth rights

GUSO has the overall objective of improving young people's SRHR, through the provision of SRHR information and education, increasing the uptake of quality and youth-friendly SRH services and creating an enabling and supportive environment.



KEY LEARNINGS:

- The SRHR Alliance Uganda grew from a loose coalition to a fully registered entity with a functional Secretariat. This has set the benchmark for many other Alliances to look up and learn from.
- Uganda's innovative model of the Youth Advisory Council has now been adopted by all other like-minded Alliances working on family planning and SRHR for young people. This promising practice could be attractive to many other programmes outside of GUSO.
- Youth-led collaborations help young people learn from each other, gain leadership skills and achieve personal growth.
- Addressing opposition to SRHR and adolescent health among religious leaders using an inter-faith approach has helped reduce resistance to Sexuality Education. Inter-faith dialogue is used as a platform to bring together over 100 religious leaders from 10 different faith groups.



To read more about research and learnings from the Alliance scan this QR code



“I will continue providing this support to my community.”

“This job has increased my responsibility over my own health.”

ASSINAH'S STORY

Assinah, 24, lives with her mother and daughter in Uganda's Bugiri district. She became a health educator as a result of experiencing her grandmother contracting HIV. Her job is to promote the use of contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies and the transmission of STIs, including HIV which is highly prevalent in the district.

“Thanks to my job, I'm well known and have many friends in the community.”

A local council leader introduced Assinah to the GUSO Flexi Project of Get Up Speak Out. Through her involvement in the project, Assinah has built a sustainable relationship with the community and this, in turn, has enabled her to support her family by selling roast chickens from her kiosk.

Assinah was attracted to the fact that she would be selling medicine and other health products in her own community. At first, the community was not receptive and was doubtful of her work. They lacked confidence in her skills. But now, after using her products, they are welcoming and come to her consultations.

“Before I started working as a Health Entrepreneur, it was very hard for young people in the community to get information on sexual and reproductive health. Currently, I may distribute injectable contraceptives up to three times a week. It's great. The women in the community see less side effects compared to other methods. It is also what I use myself.”

Young people in the community have responded well to Assinah's work. They always ask a lot of questions. Often young people want to make sure they can trust given information. Through the distribution of condoms, I can really help prevent HIV among the young people in my community. It also makes me feel responsible. With the information I have given them I play my part in their life and the decisions they make.

“This job has also increased my responsibility over my own health. With my new empowerment, I cannot afford to contract an STI or get an unintended pregnancy. I will continue providing this support to my community. My dream is to enrol in a nursing course when I have earned enough money.”

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

RELIGIOUS LEADERS BECOME KEY ALLIES IN ADVANCING YOUTH SRHR

Religious beliefs, traditions and teachings present significant opposition to SRHR in Uganda, particularly for young people. These views have been felt in the resistance towards sexuality education for young people.

Recognising the power of religious groups, particularly in relation to control over schools and clinics, the Alliance resolved to work with, rather than against, them. Religious leaders were engaged at the district and local levels by inviting them to attend public meetings on SRHR issues, providing training and engaging youth and adult church leaders to become SRHR champions, speaking out publicly on key issues.

This targeted engagement has led to greater acceptance and active involvement of religious leaders in the Alliance's work. The Alliance has succeeded in making religious leaders at the community level understand the urgency of this issue for the young people they see every day.



DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS DIRECT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO INTEGRATE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN THEIR SCHOOL TIME TABLES

Sexuality education in Uganda remains a controversial topic, meeting resistance from many head teachers, particularly in primary schools, who fear that it would encourage sex from an early age. This makes the Alliance's success in advocating for sexuality education to be provided in schools all the more worth celebrating.

The Alliance targeted school administrators, parents, teachers and head teachers to make them aware of the importance of sexuality education. Young people were mobilized to gather data about the SRHR issues that affect them in school, and on the rate of teenage pregnancy, HIV and sexual and gender based violence cases in their communities. **Young people presented their concerns and demands to school administrators and their district government leaders.** The fact that schools did not allocate time or budget for sexuality education in their time tables was raised to the district government by the Alliance.

The result was that **district governments directed school administrations to allocate time and funding for sexuality education.** This meant that 65 primary schools in Jinja, Bugiri, Mayuge, and Iganga, and 38 secondary schools in Bugiri and Iganga districts incorporated sexuality education in their academic time tables for 2017 till 2019. A huge win for youth SRHR!



Y+ BEAUTY PAGEANT

In Uganda, where 7.2% of the population is living with HIV, fighting stigma is as much a priority as improving treatment for people living with HIV. The Alliance uses a unique model of Y+ Beauty pageants to tackle stigma and discrimination and support young people living with HIV to become advocates for their rights.

This annual, national campaign promotes beauty from within: Mr and Miss Y+ are crowned for their knowledge about HIV and AIDS and their vision for reducing stigma in their communities. **Young people are supported to become advocates and help increase acceptance and understanding of young people living with HIV**



in Ugandan society. The contest is attended by representatives from government, parliament, and religious and community leaders, who are encouraged to make commitments to reducing HIV related stigma and advancing young people's SRHR.

Y+ ambassadors become advocates in their communities. They advocate for the rights of young people living with HIV by engaging the stakeholders and champion access and utilization of SRHR services by young people living with HIV. **This annual contest has created more than 700 Y+ ambassadors that support their peers and advocate for change.**

The Y+ model turns stigma into pride to promote inclusiveness and acceptability of HIV+ persons in society. In this way, the Alliance enables these young people living with HIV to become champions for their rights.



HOW WERE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED?

The Alliance fosters youth-led collaborations as a means to help young people speak with a unified and stronger voice within the Alliance, their organisations, and their communities.

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is a group of empowered youth volunteers that advise on and guide youth priorities, and raise the views of young people to the Alliance. The YAC is composed of eight people - one representative from each partner. The Chairperson and General Secretary participate in the Alliance Steering Committee, the main decision-making body, **bringing youth voices and perspectives to steer the Alliance and GUSO programme.**

The Alliance also uses integrated outreach activities. The young people, service providers and Alliance staff work together to mobilise youth clients and provide SRHR information and services. This results in well-coordinated mobilisation and integrated service delivery. **The Alliance advocacy strategy puts young people at the forefront.** Some young people have taken on joint advocacy within communities, along with civic leaders and local health authorities. Others use social accountability and demand action to address young people's SRH needs. Alliance advocacy is supported by a youth-led research team.

Young people and Alliance staff see youth-led collaborations as beneficial. **Young people have gained more knowledge from collaborating with young people from other organisations.** The YAC members have gained **leadership skills and increased their capacities for advocacy, public speaking and networking.** Their participation in GUSO has enabled young people to gain **social worth and achieve personal growth.**



GET UP SPEAK OUT

for youth rights

“With GUSO, we started to realise a change in the perception towards Sexuality education among parents and teachers.”

Naggita Grace



“The Alliance build a strong niche and vast experience in delivering youth-friendly SRHR information and services to young people at grass-roots levels.” Ms. Stella Kentutsi - NGB Chair

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Uganda Alliance has grand ambitions for the future! They plan to build partnerships with like-minded partners, networks and alliances and build momentum for SRHR in Uganda. They will continue to conduct research, building on their learning mindset to position the Alliance as a centre of excellence and innovation on SRHR. Having already secured funding from diverse donors, they are confident they can turn their ambitions into reality!





GET UP SPEAK OUT

for
youth
rights

“The power of GUSO as SRHR programme is based on improving the lives of millions of young people by working with strong partners and alliances and a key role for young people”

Ton Coenen - Executive Director Rutgers



“GUSO is meaningful youth participation at all levels: from the YCCs running programmes to peer-educators in their communities. We see young people working together all over and strengthening each other to achieve amazing results!”

Jannemiek Evelo

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