

**GET UP  
SPEAK  
OUT** for youth rights

# YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS IN THE GET UP SPEAK OUT PROJECT BY THE MALAWI SRHR ALLIANCE

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# ACRONYMS

ADC	Area Development Committee
ASK	Access, Services, and Knowledge
CAWOC	Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children
CHRR	Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
COWLHA	Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS
CYECE	Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education
DYO	District Youth Office / District Youth Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPAM	Family Planning Association of Malawi
GUSO	Get Up Speak Out
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MoYDS	Ministry of Youth Development and Sports
MYP	Meaningful Youth Participation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NL/UK	Netherlands/United Kingdom
NPC	National Programme Coordinator
NPTC	National Programme Technical Committee
NSC	National Steering Committee
OR	Operations Research
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TA	Traditional Authority
UFBR	Unite for Body Rights
VDC	Village Development Committee
YAC	Youth Advisory Council
YAP	Youth-Adult Partnership
YCBDA	Young CommunityBased Distribution Agent
YCC	Youth Country Coordinator
YLO	Youth-led Organisations
YONECO	Youth Net and Counselling

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**The research team was led by Arushi Singh, who worked with the GUSO Youth Country Coordinator (YCC), Happiness Makwinja, and the three young co-researchers hired by the Malawi SRHR Alliance – John Kumwenda, Dingswayo Moyo and Faith Nkhata. Valuable technical input was provided by Rosalijn Both, Researcher GUSO, from the Netherlands.**

**All the respondents were very helpful and generous with their time and knowledge, and their assistance enabled the research team gain insights on how meaningful youth participation, youth leadership and youth-led collaborations were being implemented.**

# INTRODUCTION

**Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) is a five-year programme (2016-2020) developed by a consortium consisting of Rutgers, Aidsfonds, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, Dance4life, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Simavi. The programme is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the SRHR Partnership Fund.**

The GUSO programme addresses the following problem: “Young people do not claim their sexual rights and their right to participation because of restrictions at community, societal, institutional and political levels. This hinders their access to comprehensive SRHR education and services that match their needs and ability to make their own informed SRHR decisions”. The GUSO consortium addresses this problem in seven countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Uganda. The change that is envisioned is that all young people, especially girls and young women, are empowered to realise their SRHR in societies that take a positive stance towards young people’s sexuality.

Using a multi-component approach lends a unique added value, as a multitude of factors influence young people’s SRHR. The theory of change describes five interrelated outcomes that contribute towards the long-term objective. These interrelated outcomes are:

- 1) Strengthened in-country SRHR alliances.
- 2) The empowerment of young people to voice their rights.
- 3) An increase in the access to and utilization of SRHR information/education.
- 4) An increase in the access to and utilization of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.
- 5) The creation of a supportive environment for SRHR.

The five outcomes, in combination with five core principles, are related to the strategies of the programme. These strategies focus, for example, on capacity building, evidence-based advocacy, provision of SRHR education and information, building youth-adult partnerships and establishing social accountability mechanisms. GUSO’s Theory of Change builds on the earlier successes and experiences of the Access, Services, and Knowledge (ASK) (2013-2015) and Unite for Body Rights (UFBR) (2011–2015) programmes.

**Operational research** (OR) has been identified as an integral part of the activities in the GUSO programme. The aim is to enhance the performance of the programme, improve outcomes, assess feasibility of new strategies and/or assess or improve the programme Theory of Change.

For **outcome area 2**, specific strategies include structural engagement with and the empowerment of young people so that they may voice their rights, through strengthening their capacities and ensuring that they are meaningfully involved in all aspects of the programme through youth-adult partnerships. The GUSO programme document envisions that young people will be encouraged, capacitated and empowered to act as youth advocates at local, national and international levels, ensuring they can create a critical mass to advocate for and voice their SRHR. Major positive changes cannot be effected without building collective power, which can mobilise a political force for change<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the idea within GUSO was to bring together under a joint agenda young people working with the different partner organisations and existing youth networks and enable them to mobilise and engage in collective actions and activities, particularly those related to building public opinion and advocating for SRHR. In addition, the partner organisations and youth networks they are affiliated with would be strengthened. This kind of movement building was also tied to outcome area 1, under which the sustainability of the country alliances was to be strengthened by bolstering their collaboration within the alliance.

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1. Batliwala, S (2012) *Changing their world: Concepts and practices of women’s movements* (2nd Edition), AWID: Toronto

Previous operations research on meaningful youth participation (MYP) had revealed that there were several young people working on the ground as volunteers, peer educators, etc. for each of the partner organisations in each of the country alliances. While some partners had good systems and structures of youth representation within their organisation, others did not; nor did the alliance as a whole. To ensure that all young people working under the same alliance could have a more unified voice within the alliance and their own organisations, it was agreed that these young people need to be brought together and empowered to work together as a constituency and demand their SRHR, not only from governments and communities, but also the partner organisations and the country alliances.

This kind of movement building, especially between young people who were involved with partner organisations at ground level but were not aware of each other's roles in the programme, was intended to strengthen MYP by ensuring that young people within the country alliance had a collective voice. It was also envisioned that this would enable better youth-adult partnerships not just at the level of the partner organisations, but also that of the country alliances.

In practise, this was envisioned as a youth movement comprised of young people working together towards a shared goal: creating change towards better SRHR. It was intended to foster youth movements by supporting young people involved in GUSO to organise themselves and work together effectively.

This operational research report is focused on the youth movement building strategy implemented by GUSO country alliances under outcome area 2. In Quarter 4 of 2018, it was decided to change the term youth movement building to youth-led collaborations. This was because youth movement building was a challenge for the country alliances. It was not clear to everyone working in GUSO what a youth movement exactly was, how one could be built and what it should do. The GUSO mid-term report of July 2018 showed that the work of youth movement building remained behind in most of the GUSO countries and not much progress under this strategy was being made.

Discussions at different levels within GUSO subsequently led to a redefining of the strategy of youth movement building. It was decided to change the strategy of 'networking and movement building' to 'youth-led collaborations'. Also, on the intermediate outcome level it was decided to change 'young people work together' to 'networks of empowered young people'. It was felt that this change would lead to an improved understanding of the intended outcome for Youth Movement Building and would provide better direction for action in this area. This change was presented in the GUSO work plan for 2019-2020.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this operations research was to examine how country alliances were implementing the newly defined strategy of youth-led collaborations, identify good practises that could be shared across different alliances and programmes, and note what lessons could be learnt for future iterations of the strategy. Two countries, Uganda and Malawi, were therefore chosen, based on their reported progress and good practises according to outcome area 2. The intention was to examine and document these countries' progress and shared learnings.

Uganda was selected because many countries were already learning from the Youth Advisory Committee established by the Uganda Alliance. Malawi was selected because they are implementing different kinds of youth-led collaborations, including working with existing government structures, thus providing an opportunity to learn about sustainability. Because of their somewhat different approaches, the choice of these countries enables learning about a variety of youth-led collaborations.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

### Main research question:

How is the strategy of youth-led collaborations applied within the GUSO programme and how does the YLC work to positively contribute to the development, implementation and delivery of SRHR interventions through the GUSO programme?

### Sub-questions

1. How are the countries within the GUSO programme implementing the strategy of youth-led collaborations?
  - i. What kinds of youth-led collaborations are country alliances reporting under output indicator 2b?
  - ii. Who is involved in the implementation? What is the role of young people in general and the YCC?
  - iii. What are the methodologies used to implement this strategy and what was the process partners/alliances went through to arrive at the current implementation methodology in use – how was it conceptualised?
  - iv. What structural processes are in place for youth-led collaborations to make sure that they do not disappear after GUSO programmes end)?
  - v. What are country alliances doing to make sure that youth-led collaborations are inclusive / involving young people from different walks of life?
  - vi. What mechanisms are put in place by country alliances to measure the effect of the youth-led collaborations?
2. How do Youth Led Collaborations work to positively influence the development, implementation and delivery of SRHR interventions through the GUSO programme?
  - i. What is the effect of this strategy on the young people/YLOs involved in it?
  - ii. What is the effect of this strategy on the collaborations within the programme/ partner organisations/alliances?
  - iii. What is the effect of this strategy on building solidarity for the SRHR of young people?
  - iv. What is the effect of this strategy on SRHR interventions for end beneficiaries?
3. What are common obstacles to fostering youth led collaborations on SRHR within the GUSO program?
4. What distinct (missed) opportunities do country alliances have in nurturing youth led collaborations on SRHR?

# METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative operations research (OR) aimed at generating evidence-based knowledge on interventions, strategies or tools for youth-led collaborations that could enhance the performance, quality, effectiveness or cover of youth-led collaborations. The research was led by an international consultant, in collaboration with a team of four young co-researchers (2 female and 2 male), trained by the Malawi SRHR Alliance. Three of these young co-researchers are part of the Alliance research team and were previously involved in the endline evaluation activities of GUSO outcome 2. They had been recruited externally for these activities, i.e. not from within GUSO. The fourth young co-researcher was the Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) for GUSO.

The data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), for which guides were developed based on the research question and sub-questions (see Appendix 1). Interview respondents included project officers, district government officials, Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members and the National Programme Coordinator (NPC). There were a total of 14 interviews / group interviews held with 17 respondents. FGD respondents included youth movement members and youth club members. A total of six mixed-gender FGDs were conducted; there were 22 female and 40 male respondents.

The OR focused on the Mangochi and Chikwawa districts, which are the GUSO implementation districts in Malawi. All 6 partner organisations were covered, i.e. Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE) and Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA).

The data collection took place from 21-29 October 2019. Respondents were mobilised by the project officers. Respondents were reimbursed for travel expenses for the interview or FGD.

The research team defined some key concepts before the data collection to ensure that there was a common understanding of what they were looking for. This was done because the research team members were new to GUSO. The research team came up with the following definitions for key concepts:

**Solidarity: a strong relationship among young people which demonstrates unity and togetherness to claim their sexual and reproductive health and rights**

**Youth-adult partnership: this is when young people work hand in hand with adults to achieve a common goal through sharing equal responsibilities and power**

**Youth leadership: when young people are at the forefront of decision-making processes as well as the implementation**

**Meaningful youth participation: purposeful involvement of young people in programmes at all stages, i.e. planning, decision making, budgeting, monitoring & evaluating, implementation, etc, while ensuring that young people fully understand their involvement and their roles**

**Youth-led collaborations: networks of young people and/or other stakeholders working together to achieve a common goal and being led by young people themselves**

The **analysis** was done based on the research question and the sub-questions, as well as key concepts defined above, through an iterative process of discussion of the data collected each day among the research team. Each interview and/or FGD was discussed at the end of the day and research team members' observations, opinions and interpretations of responses were noted to inform the final analysis. At the end of the data collection period, an overall discussion with the research team resulted in the development of a PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations that was shared with the NPC and at a planning meeting of the Alliance.



This report presents the final analysis, informed by the interview and FGD notes and research team discussions, written up by the lead consultant

One **limitation** of this research was that the young co-researchers – with the exception of the YCC – were external to the programme. That is, they were hired from outside and had not been selected from among the young people who were engaged in the GUSO programme in some way. This meant that, while the young co-researchers had good research skills, they lacked some key insights on the programme, its functioning and its effects on young people, which for people in their position would normally have come from the programme itself. They also needed extra guidance on the key principles of the programme, such as a rights-based and gender transformative approach and meaningful youth participation.

# FINDINGS

The youth-led collaborations taking place under the Malawi SRHR Alliance are unique in that they are focused on building capacities of existing, government-established youth clubs and youth networks. These youth clubs are part of the government structure for youth development and come under the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports.

## CONTEXT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI

The tiers of governance in Malawi start at village level. Several villages form one Traditional Authority (TA), and several TAs form a District. Up to the TA level, there is a system of traditional chiefs who head the village and the TA itself. These are hereditary positions, and they function through Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Area Development Committees (ADCs), which are also meant to include elected members. At the District level there is an elected leadership and the TA Chiefs are also represented in the District Executive Committee, chaired by the District Commissioner.

At the village level, there are government-established youth clubs, typically of 30-35 members each. At the level of the TA, there are youth networks that consist of two representatives from each youth club. Finally, at the district level, there is a District Youth Network Committee with two representatives from each TA network – usually the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. This District Youth Network Committee works together with the District Youth Office. This Office administers the activities of the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports and coordinates all youth-related NGO programmes in the District. Any work to be undertaken with young people needs to go through the District Youth Office and the District Youth Officer, who puts the relevant youth networks and youth clubs in touch with the programme or NGO. For example, if an organisation wants to select some young people to train as peer educators, it would need to go through the youth club of the target area to identify them. It is important to note that, according to the National Youth Policy of 2013, the Malawi government's definition of young people is those aged 10-35 Alliance partner organisations therefore need to specify age criteria (i.e. below 25 years of age), when seeking young people for trainings, meetings, etc.

As outlined in the Malawi National Youth Policy 2013, the Ministry of Youth Development and Sport's own programmes are focused on four themes: i) youth health, ii) economic empowerment, iii) functional literacy and iv) youth participation and leadership; youth clubs and youth networks fall under the youth participation and leadership programme. Part of this programme's mandate is also to include young people in the Village Development Committees and Area Development Committees.

The youth clubs work on their own – recruiting members from the village, raising their own funds and conducting their own awareness-raising activities in their communities. Due to the government structures in place, some sense of what might be called a youth movement, solidarity among young people or youth collaboration already existed prior to the start of the GUSO programme. Since then, the GUSO programme has provided much-needed capacity building and training on SRHR to these young people, who then continue to carry out awareness-building activities on their own, incorporating the enhanced knowledge and skills they have gained from the partners.

This section elaborates on this and other ways that the Malawi SRHR Alliance has operationalised the youth-led collaborations strategy. Specific examples from different locations, which we were told about, are also described, along with some good practise examples in the boxes.

## HOW THE STRATEGY OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS IS BEING IMPLEMENTED

The 'strategy' of YLC has been implemented in Malawi based on a brief guiding document and other technical support provided by the NL/UK Alliance. There is no written strategy for how it is to be implemented, so this was decided through deliberation among members of the National Programme Technical Committee and the National Steering Committee, based on input from the NL/UK Alliance.

We asked the GUSO staff members among our respondents (who were a mix of adults and some young people) about their understanding of youth-led collaborations. The common response was that it is young people coming together to achieve a common goal. This indicates an understanding of young people's collaboration, but not necessarily of the leadership aspect of young people. While some staff members did appreciate the importance of youth leadership, the attitude towards young people's participation remained mostly top-down (this is elaborated on in the section dealing with common obstacles and areas for improvement).

Youth clubs – the main form of youth-led collaborations under the GUSO Alliance in Malawi – work on their own in **leading awareness-raising activities** in their communities. Due to the GUSO intervention, youth clubs have been initiating and leading open day and community dialogues on SRHR with traditional and religious leaders and health service providers. Some youth clubs also collaborate with others to conduct exchange and learning visits for SRHR awareness, sports tournaments and other such activities. These on-ground activities are led by the young people in the youth clubs and most of them are conducted through resources raised by the youth club. Some youth clubs are more enterprising than others and have their own farms, gardens or livestock, while others also raise funds from the members or approach the District Youth Office (DYO). Thus, the DYO enables and facilitates access of partners to the youth clubs and monitors their activities. The partner organisations and GUSO 'legitimise' the work of the young people on the ground by providing training and capacity building to selected young people in each club. Some young people and district officials report that this capacity building has given the young people some credibility among their peers and communities.

Trainings provided to the youth club members include advocacy and budget monitoring, meaningful youth participation and social accountability for SRHR. Through these trainings, the youth club members are more aware of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), diverse sexual orientations, the need for youth-friendly services and ways to hold authorities accountable for these issues. Both the youth club members and project officers gave us instances of youth club members taking up SGBV cases by helping survivors and reporting to the police and lobbying with health providers and traditional leaders to enhance access to youth-friendly services. Partner organisations have all taken responsibility for providing trainings based on their own areas of focus and key competencies.

**A week before the OR was conducted, five youth clubs from five villages that CYECE was working with in Mangochi District, had come together for a 5-day awareness-raising and advocacy activity. This was a comprehensive dialogue with the community members, health service providers, law enforcement authorities and traditional leaders. While it is difficult for a youth club to approach their TA Chief by themselves, it becomes easier when other youth clubs from other villages have joined up with them. Thus, the five youth clubs spent one day per village, holding dialogues with the TA Chiefs to apprise them of the SRHR issues facing young people and meeting with service providers at the health facilities to ask them what commitments they would be willing to make in regard to youth-friendly services. These commitments were then posted on the wall of the service provider's offices, and similar commitments to youth SRHR were obtained from other government authorities. The entire activity was led by the young people, and funded by GUSO. through CYECE.**

**YONECO's training on 'theatre for development' enables more youth-led collaborations as it provides the youth club members with a tool for more effectively working together to raise awareness.**

**In Chikwawa, COWLHA and CAVWOC merge their budgets for open days (days in the community where awareness-raising activities and dialogues on youth SRHR are held) and do them together, enabling the youth clubs associated with each partner to work together.**

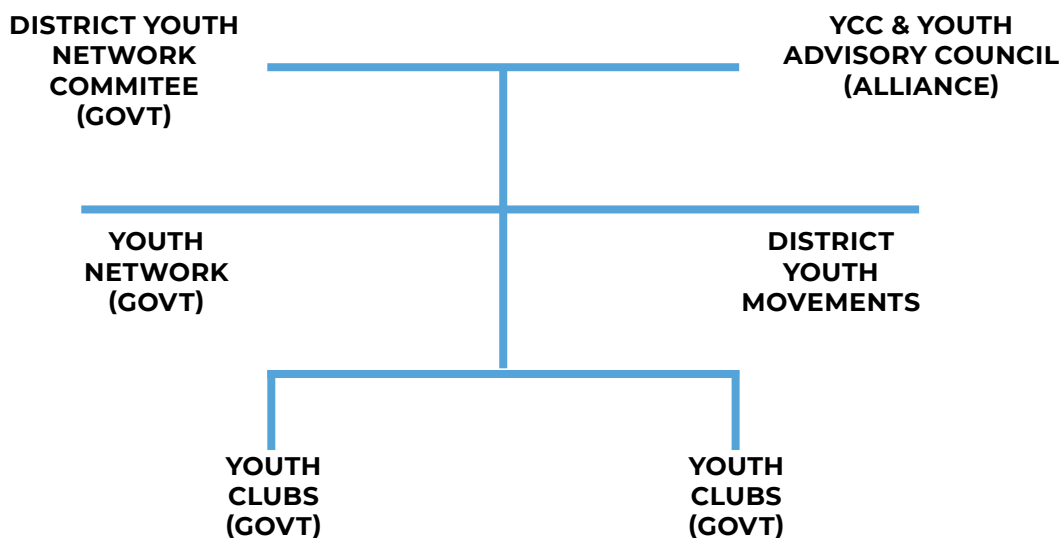
In an effort to be more deliberate in implementing the strategy for youth-led collaborations, the Alliance established **'District Youth Movements'** in 2017. While the YCC was meant to be the face of young people in the GUSO programme and bring their issues up for discussion and decision-making, there was no platform through which she could engage with young people on the ground. This is why the Alliance decided to come up with a structure that would enable the YCC to better engage with young leaders on the ground. They developed a Terms of Reference for the District Youth Movements.

The District Youth Movements are composed of five representatives from each of the organisations working in a district (see Terms of Reference in Annex 2). Therefore, each district has 20 youth movement members as there are four partners per district where GUSO is being implemented. Youth movement members are from youth clubs; they have already been working on SRHR with the 6 partners and have developed leadership skills through this work. These youth movement members are meant to report on their activities to the YCC. However, the YCC – who was part of this research team – was too new in her role to have received any reports yet. As such, the YCC role is envisioned as providing technical assistance and ideas, monitoring the work of the youth movement members through visits, and being their voice at the National Steering Committee (NSC) and the National Programme Technical Committee (NPTC). The Alliance facilitates some ad hoc meetings of the youth movement members, but there is no dedicated budget allocation for them to meet regularly or implement their action plan.

**The youth clubs associated with CYECE, COWLHA and CAVWOC were asked to choose the five members for the youth movement themselves, rather than being selected by the staff.**

As there were no budget allocations for the YCC to visit the districts, interact with the youth movement members and understand their work on the ground, a gap was felt. Therefore, after a learning visit to Uganda to understand the Youth Advisory Committee, the Malawi Alliance decided to adopt a **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** structure. This YAC was created to be the link between the youth movement members and the YCC. It is comprised of staff, interns and peer educators from the partner organisations (one person from each partner) who are below 25 years of age. Some of these YAC members have been involved in GUSO while others have been engaged in other work at the organisation. Some of the YAC members are based in Lilongwe and a few are based in the GUSO implementation districts. They are meant to meet quarterly, monitor the activities of the youth movement and mentor the youth movement members. At the time of this OR, the YAC were awaiting approval of the budget that would enable them to action this. It is not yet known how the YAC members who are staff – and therefore have other responsibilities – will be able to deliver on their YAC obligations.

**The YAC members from both FPAM and CAVWOC are young people who actually work on the ground as peer educators and peer leaders. They are therefore more likely to be conversant with young people’s issues on the ground, the challenges they face and the context that they work in.**



Working with existing government structures like the youth clubs, the youth networks, the District Youth Network Committees and the District Youth Office has ensured that unnecessary parallel and resources-consuming structures have not been established. The Alliance has made efforts to streamline representation, from these ground-level young people up to Alliance level decision-making, by establishing the District Youth Movements and the Youth Advisory Council to work in conjunction with the YCC. However, it is difficult to comment on the effectiveness of these separate structures since budget allocations have not been made for them to function as per their ToRs and action plans.

One limitation of working only with the young people in the youth clubs is that the programme cannot reach those who are marginalised within the community and not members of a youth club. On the other hand, the partners have made an effort to include some young people from marginalised communities into the youth clubs, such as those who identify as LGBT, young people living with HIV, and, to a limited extent, girls and young women.

## **STRUCTURAL PROCESSES IN PLACE FOR YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS**

In terms of sustainability, the youth clubs and their work will continue, since these are pre-existing structures within the communities that fund their activities, and the young people involved have received the capacity required from GUSO. The young people themselves have invested a lot in collaborations, including funds raised through income-generation activities, and some youth movement members expressed their interest in continuing their work and collaborations beyond GUSO. Similarly, the YAC has been established for the Alliance as a whole, not just for GUSO, and will continue beyond the programme. The YAC members fulfil their roles voluntarily, over and above their other roles within the partner organisations. The Alliance also plans to use the structure of the District Youth Movement for other projects that it implements.

## **MECHANISMS TO MEASURE THE EFFECTS OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS**

The mechanisms for measuring the effects of youth-led collaborations include several operations research that have been carried out, as well as anecdotal evidence on change in communities' attitudes towards SRHR. The staff we spoke to also cited increased visibility of young people and the GUSO programme in the community, while young people reported a reduction in teenage pregnancies and child marriages, as well as an increase in girls going back to school within their communities. It was unclear whether there were any formal measures in place other than the GUSO M&E framework.

## **INCLUSIVENESS OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS**

In some ways, diversity and inclusion have been well taken care of by the Malawi SRHR Alliance, while other groups have found it difficult to do the same. Due to the emphasis by CHRR, the youth movement members include young people of diverse sexual orientation, while COWLHA's work in bringing together networks of young people living with HIV has meant they are also represented in the youth clubs and among the youth movement members. One of the staff members told us, *"LGBT were discriminated [against] and no one would accept them but now they have about 6 people from the LGBTI community who are freely able to walk around and state they are homosexual. The youth clubs fight for the rights of LGBTI – they may not have one person in the club who is gay but are able to fight for the rights of those who are"*.

These organisations have been working with their targeted communities from the beginning. In fact, they were established with the purpose of working with these groups, with which several staff members also identify themselves. Thus, having CHRR on the Alliance meant that their cohorts of young people with diverse sexual orientation could be included in the programme, and having COWLHA in the Alliance meant that their cohort of people living with HIV could be included. Different religions are also represented amongst the youth clubs and youth movement members.

**Youth clubs associated with CHRR visit young people in prisons to discuss SRHR and empower and motivate these young people. This ensures that even underserved young people like those in prisons receive some SRHR information and knowledge.**

On the other hand, it has been difficult to get girls fully involved in the SRHR awareness-raising work and the youth movement due to cultural barriers and parental control. Parents tend to dismiss SRHR as 'bad' and are reluctant to send their daughters to the youth clubs. This was especially the case in Mangochi, but some inroads on girls' leadership had been made in Chikwawa, especially through the effort of CAVWOC. Additionally, in Chikwawa the District Youth Officer (DYO) took the initiative to restructure the youth clubs, as many of the members and leaders were over the target age. The DYO deliberately decided to require that youth club leadership be from among 18-25 year olds, since several civil society partners wanted to work with young people 25 years and below, irrespective of the Malawi government's definition of youth as those up to age 35. They also aimed to have a gender balance in the youth club leadership as well as some diversity in level of education.

Several youth clubs also involve young people living with disabilities, especially working to support these young people in living comfortably within the community.

## THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS

There has been a **positive effect of youth-led collaborations on young people** due to their increased knowledge on SRHR. They have also gained from **mutual sharing and learning with young people within and across youth clubs** willing to share their knowledge and skills with each other. Some have also gained public speaking skills and leadership skills have been built to some extent. For example, those young people who are in the Village Development Committees, Area Development Committees or the District Youth Technical Committee have benefited from the capacity building received through GUSO and are better able to contribute meaningfully to these committees.

The staff reinforced to us the **confidence gained by the young people** and the results of that: *“youth are now able to organise stakeholders in the community to sensitise them in SRHR; youth are empowered in such a way that they are able to mobilise elders and talk to them on SRHR issues like rape, child marriages, etc.”. Another said, “young people have gained confidence. It was hard in the past for them to speak up. We can call 1,000 people and they can speak publicly about the programme like one of the officers. They have also gained knowledge on SRHR since they are able to articulate issues on SRHR and can even share this knowledge with their fellow peers”. Similarly, “it has increased the confidence among the youth as they are now taking roles and have voice on different aspects. They can speak even to the chiefs, for example. One time they organised a campaign and spoke to the chief about not being happy how things are being done in the community. Youth-led collaborations have led young people to learn how to approach people in big positions, even in health facilities”.*

Another of the key positive effects is that the **young people have gained the ability to recognise SRHR gaps and act or advocate on them**. For example, they have lobbied for a youth-friendly health services corner and reported GBV cases to the police. Some of them have also successfully lobbied to get chiefs to put in place by-laws regulating cultural practises around SRHR. In one instance, youth club members lobbied for a clinic for under five year olds to be established in their community as young mothers had to travel great distances to access health services for their children.

The young people themselves mentioned that working together on GUSO activities **had given them a sense of purpose**, a reason to wake up in the morning and do something. They feel excited and proud of their work and want to be seen as role models, reporting, *“people in the village notice me; they come to me for sexual advice / condoms”*. They also said, *“we are passionate about our work and we love to see every youth empowered through knowing their rights” and “when people have problems in the village concerning sex they come to us. The village relies on us and this motivates us to continue doing the work”*. Another said, *“GUSO has changed my life as now I know that youth have a right to work in development activities in the community and also [assume] roles”*.

## BUILDING SOLIDARITY FOR SRHR AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Some level of **solidarity** already existed among the youth club members and networks. They had the ability to work together, raise their voices together and raise funds for activities. For example, there is one Traditional Authority youth network where all youth club members who go for trainings or meetings give ten percent of the meeting allowances they receive to the youth network fund. GUSO provided the youth club members with the technical know-how on SRHR, which enables other young people to trust peer educators and Young Community-Based Distribution Agents (YCBDAs) for SRHR information and services. In addition, they understand the impact of working together. As a couple of staff from partner organisations said, *“Youth have learnt that unity is power. They have learnt that working together you achieve more. They are also able to go and access SRH services now”* and *“MYP enables the youth to speak out but the collaboration allows them to share ideas and impart knowledge to others in the collaboration. MYP allowed them to be part of the Area Development Committee [the TAs and chiefs discuss the development of the committee] but in the collaboration they share talents and ideas”*. Even a government official agreed with this, observing that *“young people’s interaction with community leaders has improved. Once I was on a monitoring visit and I saw how they have engaged the local leaders and demand for SRH. Parents said that we didn’t want to talk about SRH as it was taboo, but because of the young people we realise it is important. The young people in the Area Development Committee also help include SRH in development”*. One of the youth respondents said, *“when we link up with our friends from other areas, we benefit from sharing information and being exposed to new ideas and we are also able to teach them some of the things we know”*.

On the other hand, some young people feel that they are representatives of organisation or another and do not want to collaborate with each other to share resources. For example, in Chikwawa, respondents mentioned that if a YCBDA of one organisation ran out of condoms and asked for a supply from a YCBDA of another organisation, they might be refused because they are from different organisations. This may stem from monitoring and reporting needs. However, it limits young people’s collaboration with each other for the greater good of the community. In fact, one staff member recommended, *“As NGOs we should not call the youth by NGO names, e.g. youth from COWLHA, youth from CHRR, etc., as this creates margins. If we stop doing this the youth will be more united”*. The training provided – to YCBDAs, for example – will sometimes differ from one organisation to another in aspects such as number of days or topics covered. This will result in YCBDAs of one organisation feeling they are better trained than those of another, again creating a divide between the young people on the ground.

The **partners and the Alliance have gained** a better understanding of MYP and the attitudes within the organisations towards young people are slowly becoming more positive. One adult respondent believed that the strategy of youth-led collaborations has helped people work on MYP more effectively, mentioning that *“Youth-led collaborations provide a wider area or space for young people to share information and learn from each other, and be supported and mentored by experts in the field. Compared to MYP, which wasn’t really embraced before. It was considered the responsibility only of CYECE and not by everyone.”* Similarly, another adult respondent conflated youth-led collaboration with meaningful youth participation, *“Previously in such events young people were just asked to open with a prayer, but now they have an open day and young people do everything and the organisation just chips in to help them. Now we understand what youth-led collaborations are, unlike in the past when we were claiming that we were involving young people but we weren’t really”*.

The **value of young people and their leadership is being seen amongst the staff who deal with young people directly**. This is less so amongst top management, as is evident from the lack of budget allocations for youth-led collaborations. The partners have also learnt from each other how to best involve young people; FPAM, for example, learnt this from CYECE, which has been leading the Alliance on MYP. In addition, partners are beginning to include young people or younger staff at different decision-making levels.

One staff member also spoke about learning more from the young people about the communities they come from, *“As organisations we have learnt from the youth about cultural issues happening in their respective communities. For example, girls are being locked indoors during menstruation – two weeks – without going to school. This was affecting their education. We gained some ideas on how to plan and implement youth activities”*.

For the **GUSO programme**, youth-led collaborations have **inspired innovative methods of implementation**, for example, holding soccer matches for awareness raising or organising SRHR-themed variety shows. In terms of the end beneficiaries of the GUSO programme, as mentioned earlier, respondents have told us that in the past young girls would get pregnant before finishing school, but this has now reduced. In fact, in some cases those who drop out are eventually able to go back to school. Young people's lobbying for youth-friendly health services and their knowledge of where to report a denial of services – due to a **better understanding of human right** –, has led to better access to youth-friendly services. Those facing SGBV within the communities know that they can get help from youth club members in reporting it to the police and taking any other necessary steps, etc. And the YCBDAs have facilitated **better access to condoms and contraceptives**.

In addition, the young people who were engaged at the community level through government policies on youth representation in Village and Area Development Committees have been able to contribute more meaningfully. As expressed by a district stakeholder, *“[The GUSO partner organisation] focuses on economic empowerment and youth participation and allows the youth to speak out so that now the youth are represented in the ADC and VDC. Youth in [one area] organised advocacy campaigns that involved the traditional leaders. There was a chief who was saying if girls wanted to access family planning services, they should get his permission. So the youth liaised with him to change his perception and managed to change it”*.

The **visibility of the programme has also increased**, as mentioned by several staff members.

## COMMON OBSTACLES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The main obstacle to youth-led collaborations is limited budget allocations for the YCC to engage with the youth clubs and youth networks, for the youth movement members to be able to meet and strategise regularly and for the YAC to kick off their activities. This is due to a limited budget available for joint activities of the Malawi SRHR Alliance and a lack of prioritisation by the National Steering Committee. For example, faced with having to choose a budget allocation for outcome area 1 versus outcome area 2, the NSC has prioritised allocation for outcome area 1. In addition, several staff members spoke about the fact that the idea of the youth movement or youth-led collaborations came after GUSO had already started and the budgets were already allocated for other activities.

The study found instances of a top-down approach to youth-led collaborations. Some partners are doing better than others, but the overall approach to the youth clubs is a paternalistic one, rather than one that appreciates their potential for leadership and ownership over their own SRHR issues and solutions. For example, the Chairperson of the Mangochi youth movement was selected by the staff of partner organisations rather than enabling the youth movement members themselves choose their chair. The reason given for this was the need for speed and efficiency so that the new YCC was not overwhelmed by her duties of managing and interfacing with the youth movement. However, it is an indicator of the control that the staff have over the youth movement and the fact that the youth movement members themselves do not yet have enough ownership over the structure. In fact, one of the youth movement members said, *“most of the time we are just informed on future activities but not really involved in the planning of these activities or why they are happening”*.

Another example of the top-down approach is the establishment of the YAC and selection of its members. The decision of who the YAC members should be was made at the level of the National Programme Technical Committee (NPTC) and the National Steering Committee (NSC), without consultation with the young people on the ground – despite the fact that the purpose of the YAC is to be a link between the young people on the ground and the YCC. The YAC members were chosen by the management of the partner organisations based primarily on their age (i.e. under 25). However, the fact that many of them are staff members of the partners means that their commitment to representing the voice of the young people on the ground is debatable. They may also have limited time to dedicate to this task. While most of the youth movement members had not yet heard of the YAC, when it was explained to them, one said, *“there should be a 50/50 split in the YAC between members of the youth movement and the organisations' staff so we both have representation and we can help*



*each other better”; according to another, “we need more youth movement members in YAC so they can better represent our community and better address the problems we face at community level”.*

Along with this top-down approach is one that instrumentalises the youth clubs rather than establishing a symbiotic relationship with them. This means that the partners get their work done through these pre-existing youth clubs but are not necessarily available to support the youth clubs in return when required. There was an example from Mangochi of a youth club that needed help in registering a case of GBV with the police case on behalf of the person who experienced it. They called the project officer of the partner organisation they were working under, who promised to come down into the community to help and then failed to do so. There is inadequate communication from some partners to the youth clubs in Mangochi. For example, there are hardly any supportive visits despite the young people taking leadership and conducting several events. There is also limited and delayed information sharing about the project and its activities with the youth movement members, resulting in them becoming disillusioned with the programme. One young respondent told us, *“we need a two-way relationship where, if we need the organisation, they should come, and if the organisation needs us we are also available. But usually the organisations remember us when they need us”.*

There is the issue of geographical distance, especially in Mangochi, which makes it a challenge for the youth movement members to be able to meet each other without spending a lot of time and money. In Chikwawa, it is slightly easier for the youth movement members to meet, as the partner organisations overlap in the TAs – as a result, the youth movement members from these partners also overlap. In Mangochi however, the TAs are divided by partner; one TA, therefore, will only have the youth movement members of one partner.

Young people also face barriers in their work due to cultural norms, harmful traditions and gender roles and expectations. Cultural norms dictate that chiefs make important decisions and that young people must be respectful of elders, which inhibits free interaction between young people and the chiefs and makes it difficult for the young people to demand that their rights to be upheld. In fact, some young people spoke about chiefs asking them for an ‘allowance’ in exchange for mobilising people for awareness-raising activities, or asking them to share some of the allowances they received for going to a meeting or training. Harmful traditions around SRHR, like sexual initiation ceremonies, are difficult to change and result in negative consequences for young people, especially girls. Gender roles and expectations prevent the engagement of girls; they also prevent girls from taking on leadership positions. For example, one staff member told us how *“last week I went for a meeting and a girl wanted to pray and everyone was booing her, saying she can’t pray. This culture makes the girls fail to voice out – it hinders girls”.*

**In Malawi, women are expected to be submissive while men are dominant. So CAVWOC trained more girls to take up leadership positions. They trained girls in karate so they could learn perseverance and stand up for themselves. This would help to empower them so they could speak out about their challenges. They have also had a sports bonanza for girls so that girls could learn to work as a team and achieve goals together. When a girl scores a goal, it gives her motivation. They introduced girl’s football to challenge gender stereotypes. Now boys have realised that girls also need to take leadership positions and become Chairpersons or Vice Chairpersons.**

# CONCLUSION

The purpose of youth-led collaborations (and of the original strategy of youth movement building) was to create a sense of solidarity among the different young people involved in the project, enabling them to have a bigger voice both within and outside of the project, the partner organisations and the Alliance. In fact, in Malawi the young people who are part of GUSO are also part of a larger government-led movement, along with the youth clubs and youth networks. Thus, since the concept of movement building already exists for these young people, GUSO's strategic input has been and should continue to be to enable these young people's leadership within their communities by helping them to engage with police (in cases of GBV), community leaders (chiefs, religious leaders, etc.) and government officials

The strategy of youth-led collaborations is also intended to build young people's capacity for leadership, thereby enhancing MYP. MYP is an integral part of the programme and of the alliances' values. Learning from the previous iterations of the alliances' programmes, i.e. the ASK and UFBR, it was necessary to find a space for all the different young people working towards the shared goal of the alliances to come together, learn from each other, be motivated by each other's achievement, and feel a sense of belonging not only to their own organisation but also to a larger movement of young people working on SRHR. This was the logic behind the youth movement building / youth-led collaborations.

Continuing to build this sense of solidarity and togetherness is necessary in future iterations of the alliances' work, to ensure that young people feel stronger together, achieve synergies and reach out beyond the alliance to achieve common SRHR goals and/or advocate for young people's SRHR in their countries. However, this needs to be accompanied by a strong sense of youth-adult partnership. Those holding power still need to give some of it up and share it with the young people for whom the space and structure for meaningful engagement have been created.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides some recommendations for improving the implementation of the youth-led collaborations strategy, including some areas on MYP and YAP, which, when strengthened, would enhance youth leadership and movement building. Some of these recommendations came from our respondents, while others are from the research team, based on their findings and analysis.

### FOR THE PARTNERS:

- The partners should demonstrate more interest in the youth clubs by doing more supportive visits and working towards better communication with them. This was an issue in Mangochi especially, where youth respondents shared that they were not getting enough support from some of the partner organisations.
- Another area of focus should be strengthening young people's links with community/traditional/religious leaders and police, so that once the project phases out, the links remain strong and the young people retain the legitimacy that has been provided to them through GUSO.
- This includes making more efforts to also address parents' concerns through more youth-parent dialogues led by young people and supported by the staff from partner organisations.
- In addition, due to the fact that most of the young people being reached are out of school, efforts should be made to link youth clubs with existing initiatives for economic empowerment (e.g. under the DYO), vocational skills training, income-generating activities by other organisations, etc. Economic skills may be a catalyst for the young people to fully participate in the SRHR programme.
- Another area where partners can demonstrate support is by discussing the barriers posed by the chiefs (i.e. their asking for allowances) with the DYO / other relevant government officials so that some action can be taken to discourage this behaviour.

- To ensure that young people on the ground feel more solidarity with each other and collaborate to achieve common goals, partners on the ground should pool training budgets and train young people together – joint YCBDA training, for example. They also need more training on leadership, advocacy and social accountability skills for youth movement members; CSE for peer educators and YCBDAs and publicspeaking, conflict resolution and economic empowerment for young people in general.
- It is important to maintain transparency in the selection of young people for meetings or trainings. Ideally, this selection should be done by the youth club members themselves, after the partner organisations have provided them with full information on what is expected of the attendees, the criteria for selection and its rationale and what kind of support will be provided to attendees so that the youth clubs are able to select the right person for the right task.
- Partners still need to increase and improve their understanding and implementation of MYP and youth-adult partnership, and ensure that the age criteria for GUSO are met when working with the young people in youth clubs and networks.

#### **FOR THE MALAWI SRHR ALLIANCE**

- During the time remaining to GUSO, if adequate budget allocation is made for the District Youth Movement and YAC action plan, then young people may feel motivated and interested in continuing the work, making YAC as well as the YCC better able to provide technical support to them.
- In addition, it would be good to pair each of the YAC members from a particular partner with one youth movement member from that same partner, allowing better mentorship and connection with the young people on the ground.
- The Alliance could harmonise the branded products provided to young people across the Alliance, i.e. instead of some partners providing bags and others providing t-shirts, pool resources and create Alliance branded products that can be used by the young peer educators, YCBDAs, youth movement members, etc. who are working on the ground. This will help their sense of solidarity, provide greater visibility to the Alliance and give more motivation to the young people as they will be easily identified and their work legitimised.
- Think about using an asset-based approach for future programmes, i.e. assess the assets the young people already possess and use human-centred design tools to arrive at the best strategy for their implementation.

#### **FOR THE NL/UK ALLIANCE**

- Donors should reflect on how reporting and results-based financing should change to better reflect collaborative work on the ground that benefits the community, rather than only thinking about where their money is going and what it is specifically achieving.
- In terms of diversity and inclusion, country alliances should include civil society organisations or community-based ones that are led by or specifically reaching people from marginalised and under-served groups. This ensures that the alliance as a whole receives sensitisation to the needs and requirements of these groups and that the groups are included in the programme.

# APPENDIX 1:

## YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AT MALAWI SRHR PARTNERS

### Youth involvement / leadership structures of Malawi SRHR Alliance partners

**The 6 partner organisations are youth-serving organisations with diverse structures for young people's involvement and leadership. Following is a summary of these structures per organisation:**

**Centre for Alternatives for Victimised Women and Children (CAVWOC)** is an SGBV focused organisation, head office based in Blantyre, and implements GUSO only in Chikwawa. They have a number of trained peer educators on the ground and two young volunteer peer educators who are based at the district office and participate in meetings for planning, etc.

**Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)** is focused on sexual minorities, head office based in Lilongwe, and implements GUSO in both districts. They are the main lead on advocacy for safe abortion in Malawi and also work in schools and prisons. They have several trained peer educators on the ground some of whom identify themselves as LGBTQI.

**Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA)** is focused on people living with HIV, head office based in Lilongwe, and implements GUSO only in Chikwawa. They have established support groups for young people living with HIV in areas where these did not exist. They have several trained peer educators on the ground whom are living with HIV.

**Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE)** is focused on MYP, head office based in Lilongwe and is the host for the Alliance. They implement GUSO in both districts. They have several staff who are young.

**Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM)** is an SRHR service provider, secretariat based in Lilongwe, and with clinics in Mangochi, where it implements GUSO. Their Youth Action Movement consists of their youth volunteers, including peer educators, within a leadership structure that is also part of the organisation's governance. They also have Young Community Based Distribution Agents (YCBDAs), who provide contraceptives within their communities, and young people who are involved in outreach activities.

**Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)** is focused on youth empowerment, head office based in Zomba, and implement GUSO only in Mangochi. They have a national radio and lead on national advocacy on SGBV for which they have hotlines and phone-in programmes.

# APPENDIX 2:

## INTERVIEW AND FGD GUIDES

### INTERVIEW / FGD GUIDE FOR YOUTH MOVEMENT MEMBERS / YOUNG PEOPLE:

1. Tell us how you got involved in the GUSO programme/SRHR Alliance.
  - How did you get engaged with GUSO? Since when have you been involved?
  - How did the Youth Movement / Youth Club that you are a member of come about?
  - Please tell us about your main tasks and responsibilities. Are they formalised? Do you have a task description or ToR?
  
2. What other youth are involved when you perform activities for GUSO?
  - Probe for youth from other organisations, other districts, other networks, etc.
  
3. How did you begin working with these other young people?
  - What enabled this collaboration?
  - Is this a structured process, i.e. even if you move on, will other young people still be able to work together in a similar manner?
  - If yes, what is the structure? If no, how does the process work?
  - Who takes decisions?
  
4. How have you been working with these other young people towards a shared goal within the GUSO programme / SRHR Alliance?
  - As a Youth Movement / Youth Club, which objectives are you prioritizing and how did this come about?
  - Do these objectives resonate with the priorities/realities of young people's lives in this community? Why or why not?
    - If no, what topics do you feel you should work on more?
    - How did you arrive at a shared goal?
    - What have you been doing to achieve it?
    - Has your capacity to work together been increased ?
      - If yes, how? If no, why not?
      - Has your capacity to work on the topics we just discussed been increased?
      - If yes, how? If no, why not?
      - How easy or difficult has it been? Why?
  
5. Why were you interested in this work / these activities?
  - What do you get out of them?
  - What has changed (positive/negative) for you since you started doing these activities?
  
6. What are your thoughts about working on SRHR alongside other young people coming from different organizations?
  - Do you feel stronger / safer / louder / more acceptable / more effective / more credible? Why or why not? Is this good or bad?
  
7. Tell us how your work has helped achieve the GUSO programme objectives.
  - Give an example.
  
8. How can this be done better, i.e. enabling young people to work together, take leadership/ ownership or achieve things in collaboration?

**INTERVIEW/GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR YAC MEMBERS:**

1. Please tell us how you became a YAC member in the GUSO programme/SRHR Alliance. Were you asked or did someone approach you? If the latter, who? How did it go?
2. Please tell us about your main tasks and responsibilities as a YAC member? Are they formalised in a task description or ToR?
3. Do you believe that young people coming together from different organizations as YAC members adds value to the programme / the SRHR Alliance / the NSC? If so, please explain why.
  - What is the added value of YAC members being from different (partner) organisations?
  - Can you describe some of the challenges of working together with young people from different organisations? Some of the successes?
4. What motivates you to work in the SRHR Alliance as a YAC member?
5. What factors are responsible for the success of the YAC? (probe for: support from NPC/YCC, support from own organization, young people's commitment, etc)
6. What changed for you after becoming a YAC member, if anything? (e.g. changes in self-esteem, decision-making ability, relationship with adults at home/school/ in community, participation in other social or civic domains, development of knowledge and skills / leadership development / advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment, etc.)
7. What changes have YAC members made at the level of the community/beneficiaries, if any? (ask for concrete changes, they can be small ones but ask for concrete stories)
8. What types of changes, if any, have you noticed in SRHR Alliance staff and other adults' attitudes towards youth participation since the YAC has been established?
9. Please describe how the role of the YAC members has contributed / will contribute to the achievement of the GUSO programme objectives. Give examples.
10. What can be done better / improved in the way that the structure of the YAC is currently being implemented?
11. If similar programmes in other countries would like to implement a YAC, what is the top advice/tips you would give them on how to go about it?

**INTERVIEW/GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROGRAMME OFFICERS / STAFF OF PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:**

1. What is your understanding of youth-led collaborations? Please tell us in your own words.
2. What has been happening with regard to output indicator 2b (collaborations between young people from different organisations/networks) in the GUSO programme in Malawi?
  - How did you approach this strategy from the beginning of GUSO up until the present (from when it was called Youth Movement Building up until it was changed into Youth Led Collaborations)?
  - What kinds of activities have you been implementing under this indicator at Alliance / Partner Organisation level?
  - What have you been doing to encourage collaborations between young people from the different partner organisations?
3. How did you arrive at this way of doing things for output indicator 2b?
  - How did you identify opportunities for collaboration between young people?
  - How did you set goals for this collaboration?
  - What kind of technical support did you receive from the SRHR Alliance / The NL/UK Consortium?

4. Which of the youth-led collaborations within the SRHR Alliance in Malawi are you most proud of and why?
5. In your view, what is the added value of youth-led collaborations (young people from different organizations working together) when compared to meaningful youth participation within your own organization?
6. How are you measuring the effects/achievements of the youth-led collaborations?
7. What do you think the young people have gained from working together? (development of knowledge and skills / leadership skills / advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment, etc.)
8. What do you think the programme / your organisation/ the SRHR Alliance has gained through implementing this strategy?
  - What has changed since you started implementing this strategy, with regard to the organisation's way of working / attitude towards youth involvement
  - In your view, how do the youth-led collaborations contribute to the overall objectives of the GUSO programme?
  - What positive effects, if any, did the youth-led collaborations have for the SRHR of the end beneficiaries? (ask for concrete/tangible examples of results/ changes)
9. What has been the most challenging part of enabling youth-led collaborations that are meaningful/effective?
  - Have you been able to ensure that diverse young people are involved? If yes, who and how? If no, why not?
10. Is this particular part of the programme sustainable, i.e. do you think the young people will continue to work together after GUSO? Why/how?
  - Have the YAC or other youth-led collaborations been integrated into your organisational/alliance strategies?
  - Is there a link between outcome 2 and outcome 1 (building strong and sustainable alliances)?
11. What can be done to improve the way that youth-led collaborations are currently being implemented?
12. What kind of support, if any, would be needed/useful to strengthen the strategy of youth-led collaborations within the GUSO programme? From whom should this support come?

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NPC:**

1. What is your understanding of youth-led collaborations? Please tell us in your own words.
2. Tell us what has been happening with regard to output indicator 2b (collaborations between young people from different organisations/networks) in the GUSO programme in Malawi.
  - How did you approach this strategy from the beginning of the GUSO programme up until the present? (from when it was called Youth Movement Building up until it was changed into Youth Led Collaborations)?
  - What kinds of activities have you been implementing under this indicator at Alliance \Partner Organisation level? How did the decision/idea come about to focus on Youth Movements and Youth Clubs?
  - What have you been doing to encourage collaborations between young people from the different partner organisations?
3. How are partner organisations within the SRHR Alliance working together to come up with efficient youth-led collaborations?
4. Please describe your role in the development/coordination of the strategy of youth-led collaborations?

5. Which of the youth-led collaborations within the SRHR Alliance in Malawi are you most proud of and why?
6. In your view, what is the added value of youth-led collaborations (young people from different organizations working together)? What has the Alliance / the programme gained through implementing this strategy?
7. How are you measuring the effects/achievements of the youth-led collaborations (Youth Movement / youth clubs)?
8. What do you think the young people have gained from working together? (development of knowledge and skills / leadership skills/ advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment, etc.)
9. What has been the most challenging part of enabling youth-led collaborations that are meaningful/effective?
  - Have you been able to ensure that diverse young people are involved? If yes, who, and how did you ensure this? If no, why not?
10. Is this particular part of the programme sustainable, i.e. do you think the young people will continue to work together after GUSO? Why/how?
  - Have the YAC or other youth-led collaborations been integrated into your organisational/alliance strategies?
  - Is there a link between outcome 2 and outcome 1 (building strong and sustainable alliances)?
11. What can be done to improve the way that youth-led collaborations are currently being implemented?
12. What distinct (missed) opportunities does the country alliance have in nurturing youth led collaborations on SRHR?
13. What kind of support, if any, would be needed/useful to strengthen the strategy of youth-led collaborations within the GUSO programme? From whom should this support come?
14. Would you recommend that youth-led collaborations be a strategy that is taken up in other, similar SRHR programmes as well? Why or why not?
15. Looking back, what do you feel about the level of support you have received from the NL/ UK consortium on implementing this strategy? What should be done differently next time and why?

**QUESTION GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS / DISTRICT PARTNERS:**

1. Since when have you been associated with the GUSO programme / SRHR Alliance? How did you become associated?
2. What has been your experience working with the young people from this programme?
  - What kinds of things have you worked on with them?
  - Has it been challenging/rewarding? How?
3. Is there anything that changed significantly because these young people were engaged? Give examples. (i.e. policy / programmatic direction / way of working / level of awareness / etc.)
4. What is your feeling/opinion about:
  - their leadership skills?
  - their advocacy skills?
  - how they work together as young people?
5. What do you think should be the role of young people in such programmes? Why?



6. From your perspective, did it add value for young people from different organisations it add value if young people from different organisations to work together / join forces to achieve a certain goal? Please explain.

7. Are there areas for improvement in the programme or the way that young people are engaged?

# APPENDIX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DISTRICT YOUTH MOVEMENTS & YAC

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DISTRICT YOUTH MOVEMENTS

- Represent GUSO at districts level
- Awareness-raising on SRHR
- Research and report emerging SRHR issues in districts
- Advocate for SRHR issues at districts level
- Prepare Youth Movement reports and submit them to YCC and alliance members
- Mobilise resources for SRHR programmes at district level
- Represent GUSO / Youth Development Committees in different districts Train/sensitise fellow youth on SRHR
- Promote Meaningful Youth Participation in development fora at district level

## TOR FOR THE MALAWI SRHR ALLIANCE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

### INTRODUCTION

The Malawi SRHR Alliance is a coalition of six local organizations that are jointly working together to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, women and marginalised groups in the country. The six organizations include the Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), Centre for Youth and Civic Education (CYECE), Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Youth Net and Counseling (YONECO), and the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA). The alliance exists to promote full attainment of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for all vulnerable women, men, boys and girls in Malawi through service delivery, lobbying and advocacy, empowerment, creation of an enabling environment, research, capacity building and collaboration and networking.

### BACKGROUND OF THE ALLIANCE

Young people from 10-24 years of age constitute over 65% of the Malawi population. Youth, especially young women, often face obstacles in accessing sexual health services and information, putting them at risk of early forced marriages, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections and HIV. The Malawi SRHR Alliance aims at empowering young people towards full attainment of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights.

Meaningful youth participation is a central strategy of the Malawi SRHR Alliance. Many of the alliance partners understand the importance of meaningful youth participation and have made commendable efforts and commitments towards the inclusion of MYP in their organizations. The formation of the Youth Advisory Council is a result of consultations with various stakeholders and steering committee members on the need for a youth body to enhance MYP in the alliance.

The Alliance is committed to working with the Youth Advisory council, whose main purpose is to guide, lead, advise and facilitate youth-related activities and youth engagement, from planning to implementation. The TORs are to be a guiding tool in giving an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Council.

### COMPOSITION

The Youth Advisory Council will comprise of six young people (ages 15-25) with the inclusion of the Youth Country Coordinator. The members of the council will be young people from each of the partner organizations. They will be youth leaders championing meaningful youth engagement in the alliance.

Each partner organisation will be required to give the name of a young person that will represent them within the Youth Advisory council. The young person must be one that is actively involved in implementation of the organisation's programmes.

Membership within the Youth Advisory Council is voluntary. There are no salaries attached to the positions. Members will each serve two-year terms.

## **PURPOSE OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Youth Advisory Council is set up with the purpose of enhancing Meaningful Youth Participation in the Alliance. The members will offer guidance and support and work closely with the YCC, Alliance Secretariat and partner organisations in relation to efficient and effective youth involvement. The council will not interfere with Alliance programme content or implementation.

1. President
2. Secretary

The positions will be filled using a democratic approach, with members voting among themselves to elect the council's leader.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Offer guidance and advice to the YCC, Alliance Secretariat and partner organizations in promoting MYP.
- Be a link between young people in the programme and the YCC.
- Provide necessary support in increasing visibility of the Alliance at both local and national levels.
- Offer mentorship services towards the development of young people in the alliance.
- Identify and pursue partnership opportunities with like-minded organisations.
- Support Alliance advocacy plans and initiatives.
- Together with the YCC, the council will facilitate development of work plans from the Alliance youth movement and monitor progress of the plans outlined.
- Compliment Alliance efforts in mobilizing resources.
- Monitor the incorporation of young people's voices and input in alliance activities.
- Facilitate efficient and effective youth-adult partnerships.
- Convene on a quarterly basis and provide progress reports to the YCC.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- Ability to cooperate and work in a team.
- Conversant with SRHR issues, specifically those affecting young people.
- Ability to communicate in English and Chichewa.
- Dedicated to advancing the mission of the alliance.
- Innovative and energetic.
- Able to easily use social media.
- Willingness to work on a volunteer basis.

## **SKILLS**

- Oral and written communication skills.
- Organisational skills.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Youth Advisory Council will work on a youth-adult partnership basis with the Alliance Secretariat. It is hierarchically accountable to the YCC.