YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS IN THE GET UP SPEAK OUT PROGRAMME BY THE SRHR ALLIANCE UGANDA

GET UP
SPEAK
OUT for youth rights

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AN OPERATIONS RESEARCH 2019

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ACRONYMS

ASK	Access, Services, and Knowledge
CEHURD	Centre for Health Human Rights & Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FLEP	Family Life Education Programme
GUSO	Get Up Speak Out
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MYP	Meaningful Youth Participation
NAFOPHANU	National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS Networks in Uganda
NL/UK	Netherlands/United Kingdom
NPC	National Programme Coordinator
NSC	National Steering Committee
OR	Operations Research
RAHU	Reach A Hand Uganda
RD	Restless Development
RHU	Reproductive Health Uganda
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STF	Straight Talk Foundation
UFBR	Unite for Body Rights
UNYPA	Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS
YAC	Youth Advisory Committee
YCC	Youth Country Coordinator
YLC	Youth-Led Collaborations
YLO	Youth-Led Organisations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 and an improvement of existing environments.

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 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 the 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.[1] Therefore, the idea within GUSO was to bring together under a joint agenda young people workin g with the different partner organisations and existing youth networks and enable them to mobilize 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.

Previous ORs on 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

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

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 meaningful youth participation 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 exactly a youth movement 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. In the remainder of the report, youth-led collaborations will be referred to as YLC.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this operational 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 YLC, 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 YLC.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Main research question:

How is the strategy of youth-led collaborations applied within the GUSO programme and how do youth-led collaborations 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?

   – What kinds of youth-led collaborations are country alliances reporting under output indicator 2b?
   – Who is involved in the implementation? What is the role of young people in general and The role of the YCC?
   – 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?
   – What structural processes are in place for youth-led collaborations (to make sure that they do not disappear after GUSO programmes end)?
   – What are country alliances doing to make sure that youth-led collaborations are inclusive / involving young people from different walks of life?
   – What mechanisms are put in place by country alliances to measure the effect ofthe 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?

   – What is the effect of this strategy on the young people / YLOs involved in it?
   – What is the effect of this strategy on the collaborations within the programme partner organisations / alliances?
   – What is the effect of this strategy on building solidarity for SRHR among young people?
   – What is the effect of this strategy on SRHR interventions for end beneficiaries?

3. What are common obstacles in fostering youth-led collaborations on SRHR within the GUSO programme?

4. What distinct (missed) opportunities do country alliances have in nurturing youth-led col laborations on SRHR?

METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative operational research (OR) aimed at generating evidence-based knowledge of interventions, strategies or tools for youth-led collaborations that could enhance the performance, quality, effectiveness or cover of youth collaborations. The research was led by an international consultant, in collaboration with a team of four young co-researchers (two female and two male) trained by the SRHR Alliance Uganda. These young co-researchers constitute the Alliance research team and were previously involved in the endline evaluation activities of GUSO outcome 2. They came from four different partner organisations and were also involved in GUSO as peer educators, peer buddies and/or members of the Youth Advisory Committee.

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 Programme/Project Officers and Programmes Coordinators from Alliance partner organisations, some National Steering Committee members, service providers and youth attendants, the National Programme Coordinator (NPC), the Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) and the research team members. There were a total of 23 interviews / group interviews held with 25 respondents. FGD respondents included the members of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), peer educators and peer buddies. A total of six mixed-gender FGDs were conducted, with 26 female and 36 male respondents.

The OR focused on the Jinja and Iganga districts at the recommendation of the NPC and YCC. All eight partner organisations were covered, i.e. Centre for Health Human Rights & Development (CEHURD), Family Life Education Programme (FLEP), National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU), Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU), Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), Restless Development (RD), Straight Talk Foundation (STF) and Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS (UNYPA).

The data collection took place from 9-19 September 2019. Respondents were mobilised by the YCC, in collaboration with the four research team members. Respondents were reimbursed for travel expenses for the interview or FGD.

The **analysis** was done based on the research question and the sub-questions, 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 and written up by the lead consultant.

FINDINGS

The youth-led collaborations taking place under the SRHR Alliance Uganda are varied and innovative. One of the reasons that Uganda was chosen for the OR was that it was the first country alliance to establish a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) which has a role at different decision-making levels of the Alliance. The intention was to capture the learnings from this experience and document the good practises for other alliances to learn from. The YAC and other forms of youth-led collaborations are described in this section, along with their effects and the obstacles they faced.

HOW THE STRATEGY OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS IS BEING IMPLEMENTED

Some of the kinds of youth-led collaborations implemented under the Uganda SRHR Alliance, other than the Youth Advisory Committee, include integrated outreach activities, special events led by young people, and joint advocacy or social accountability. In this section, we explain these structures and activities, including who is involved and how. Specific examples from different locations that we were told about are also described, and some examples of good practise are provided in boxes. The section starts off with some background on how the alliance in Uganda thought about and gave shape to the YLC.

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 they are about young people working together to achieve a common goal. Some respondents mentioned young people from different organisations coming together, but most seemed to mean young people in general. This indicates that the strategy is now better understood, though the aspect of building young people's capacity for leadership was less emphasised in these definitions provided to us. The only respondent who did emphasise this was the NPC: *"Youth driven collaboration, it is the ability of the young people to identify opportunity for partnerships – initiate those partnerships and get the desired result. The most important thing is that it has to be youth driven and youth led in terms of implementation"*.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the strategy of youth-led collaborations, as envisioned in its original form of youth movement building, was intended to strengthen MYP and YAP. In practise, we observed that the focus on youth-led collaborations, including the attempts to define it at the NL/UK level and the country alliance level, resulted in GUSO staff viewing youth-led collaborations as one of the main means to achieving MYP.

One of the first things done to operationalise youth-led collaborations was to put the Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) in place. The YCC believed that there was a need for a structure of youth representation and the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was put in place. While it was unclear exactly where the idea of the YAC came from, some of our respondents indicated that it may have emerged from the example of RHU's YAM (Youth Action Movement) and ideas from the YCC. The YAC was established by asking each partner organisation to nominate two young people, from different districts, based on their work and contributions to GUSO. These 16 young people then met and elected eight of them (one from each partner) to form the national YAC. From these eight, the Chairperson and General Secretary were elected to represent young people on the National Steering Committee (NSC), along with a Vice Chairperson. The NSC is the main decision-making body for the country alliance, consisting of all the Executive Directors of the partner organisations. The budget allocation for outcome 2 is given to the YCC to plan for, in collaboration with the YAC. This is at the Alliance level.

The YAC were provided with a written Terms of Reference (see Appendix 2), which established clear roles and responsibilities within the council and the procedures for selecting members. The two YAC members on the NSC have voting rights equal to those of all other NSC members. They are expected to bring ideas and concerns from young people on the ground to the NSC, where they can be discussed, and to participate in overall decision making for the programme. The national YAC members also sit with the Technical Team (comprised of the Programme Officers / Coordinators from each partner) for programme planning and review. Thus, a structure for meaningful youth engagement and leadership has been established at the Alliance level.

UNYPA send its YAC member to represent the organisation at several national and international fora, thus making youth leadership visible.

The eight young people not elected to the national YAC are known as District YAC members. They serve as both replacements for their colleagues, should they be unavailable for a meeting or training, and a link between young people working on the ground in their district and the YAC.

The YCC plays a management and support role for the YAC, preparing budgets and concept notes for proposed activities and providing technical assistance where required. The YAC members also have their own action plan, which they are expected to implement in collaboration with their Programme Officers (PO), though this tends to depend on the willingness of the PO to be collaborative and supportive. The POs were not always supportive and in some instances demonstrated negative attitudes towards enabling the YAC members to be part of decision making.

The RHU model for electing youth representatives to the YAC, as well as for the organisation's own Youth Action Movement (YAM), is a good practice worth highlighting and learning from. For the YAC, the peer educators in the GUSO sub-counties elect one representative to the District level. From these, one representative is elected to the National level. Since there are 2 GUSO Districts in RHU, these are the two who went to the YAC meeting and one of them got elected as the National YAC member while the other one is known as the District YAC member. This process ensures that all the peer educators engaged in GUSO are aware of the YAC and its role and get to choose their own representative to it freely and fairly.

Another type of youth-led collaboration implemented by the Alliance are **integrated outreach activities.** These take place when different partner organisations come together for a health outreach camps. The young people and service providers and/or staff from the different partners work together to mobilise clients and provide SRHR information and services in a complementary manner. This means, for example, that young peer educators from Straight Talk Foundation, Restless Development or Reach A Hand Uganda will go out into the community to mobilise young people while the young peer buddies or peer service providers from UNYPA, FLEP and RHU will help provide information and services at the tents. This results in well-coordinated mobilisation and integrated service delivery. However, in practise, the staff of the partner organisations still tend to make most of the decisions for these activities, while young people's roles are largely centred around implementation. There is one specific example, Bugiri District, where young people lead the planning and implementation of these integrated outreach activities on their own. This became possible because the project officers from the partner organisations located in Bugiri decided to meet and discuss the modalities of youth-led collaborations, as it was initially unclear who would own the data/clients reached if young people from different partners worked together. The project officers agreed that for a given activity, the organisation providing the resources would be the one to report the data. Thus, the young people got the go-ahead to work together and organise integrated activities. Similarly, in the Iganga, young people mentioned that there was "collaboration between peer educators in the community and those in the hospitals. We refer young people to the health facilities where peer educators are attached, especially in government hospitals". They also said, *"we have to work together because we are giving the same information, like referring to services, health education, health talks and mobilisation"* and spoke about the specific merits of working with young people from different organisations due to their specialities, *"It's very hard for someone who is [HIV] negative to counsel someone with positive results, so we decided to bring in the young people from UNYPA who have positive results to counsel"*.

Another example is from Masese, where there was an integrated outreach activity planned and the young people from different organisations were to work together. On the day of the camp, they found that there were clients from different age groups awaiting information and services. Due to the different age groups, it would have been difficult to address the clients' concerns and need for information and services all together. So the young peer educators from the different partner organisations took the initiative to get together, agreed to divide the clients up into different age groups, and allocated the groups amongst themselves.

In addition, the Alliance has handed the reins for organising joint events (such as the Alliance Week or the youth bonanza) and the observation of important days (International Youth Day or International Women's Day, for example) over to the YAC under the leadership of the YCC. This is viewed as another form of youth-led collaboration. The Alliance Week occurs once a year, in a different district each time; all partners come together and conduct weeklong activities related to SRHR, and young people are meant to be leading it. However, the budgeting was in fact done by a planning team comprised of staff from partner organisations, the YCC and just rather than with all the YAC members. As a result, young people felt that their roles were limited to implementation; other than the YCC, only one other young person was engaged in the decision-making process. In other words, the planning was not in fact youth-led.

The advocacy strategy of the Alliance is to put young people at the forefront. In some districts, young people have taken on the mantle of **joint advocacy** within communities, along with civic leaders and local health authorities. There were several examples of young people from different partner organisations **teaming up for social accountability** or demanding action to address young people's SRH needs. One such example is from Bugembe, where the maternity hospital's youth-friendly corner was relocated to a shared office that afforded no privacy to the young people accessing it. In response, the young peer educators from RAHU and FLEP – who were involved in providing SRHR information and services to communities served by that hospital – got together with the youth chairperson of the local sub-county and the head of youth-friendly services. The group then met with the head of department and asked for a better location for the youth corner. This meeting resulted in the head of the department agreeing to allocate a space for the construction of a brand new youth corner as long as funds were raised by the relevant district officials. At the time of writing this report, the young people were in the process of targeting district officials and the mayor to lobby for construction to start.

NAFOPHANU has engaged its peer buddies to provide data that can be presented at the meetings of the Consortium of Advocates on Access to Treatment (CAT). The young peer buddies give data on service delivery gaps, including stockouts, to the District Coordinators, who use the information to ensure commodity security and ARV access.

One more example is from Naluwerere, where a health centre at level two was upgraded to level three due to the advocacy done by the young people trained in community advocacy and social accountability. These young people observed that there were a number of young sex workers in the area who did not have access to adequate services, as a health centre at level two has only two service providers. Due to the advocacy of GUSO peer educators, in collaboration with the civic youth leaders in the community, it has now been upgraded to a level three health centre with eight health providers, allowing it to provide more comprehensive SRHR services.

A final example comes from Mayuge, where young community health advocates who had received training in advocacy and human rights decided to take it upon themselves to reach out to religious leaders on the topic of SRHR. They identified these religious leaders and one of the major obstacles facing the community; they then tackled the obstacle by opening a dialogue with the religious leaders after Friday prayers at the mosque. This was initiated entirely by the young people themselves.

These examples, however, are ad hoc rather than part of any written strategy of the partners or the Alliance. As such, they tend to depend on the willingness of the decision-makers to include young people and/or allow them to take the lead.

FLEP has taken the initiative to bring such meaningful youth participation and youth leadership to government structures. They have lobbied with the local health centres to include young people in the Health Unit Management Committee (HUMC) and succeeded.

"In public health centres it wasn't easy to adopt but we managed to have an activity on [youth-led] social accountability where we had FGDs with the young people at the health centres and found that they were not using the health facilities, as they didn't find any youth representation at the facility. So this finding was taken to the DHO and it was taken up."

The **Alliance research team** is another youth-led collaboration, in which young people from different partner organisations have been brought together and trained on research. This team was then involved in the endline evaluation for GUSO, as well as this OR The team is composed of peer educators / buddies and YAC members.

STRUCTURAL PROCESSES IN PLACE FOR YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS

The YAC and the YCC are now part of the structure of the Alliance and are reflected in its Strategic Plan 2019-2023 as part of the organogram. Therefore, the YAC and YCC will continue with the Alliance even beyond GUSO. Some partners for example, Straight Talk Foundation and FLEP, have adopted the principle of young people's involvement in decision-making structures of the organisation by having young people on their boards for the first time. They will remain there beyond the life of the programme, as they are now part of the organisational governance structure. However, other aspects of the youth-led collaborations currently being implemented are more ad hoc, unstructured (e.g. the integrated outreach or joint events, explained below), and dependent on programme funding. It is therefore unclear if these will continue beyond GUSO as there is no particular strategy for ensuring the funding.

MECHANISMS TO MEASURE THE EFFECTS OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS

It is unclear how the success of the YAC structure is being measured, because not all the young respondents knew or understood the YAC. Since the purpose of the YAC members is to represent the young people working on the ground, it is important for these young people to know about the existence of this structure for their representation, have some investment in electing its members and be able to access these members to raise their concerns or ideas.

INCLUSIVENESS OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS

In terms of diversity and the inclusion of the marginalised or under-served young people involved in the programme, due to UNYPA being one of the partners, young people living with HIV are well involved. In addition, the communities reached through GUSO include different religions, so the peer educators recruited from within these communities, ensure some diversity. While at the beginning of GUSO there was an intent to include people living with disabilities, this was not adequately followed through on and several respondents brought up the importance of focusing on this group in the future.

THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS

Both young people and the staff members we spoke to reported that youth-led collaborations have had **a positive effect** on young people. The young respondents explained that they had gained more knowledge from collaborating with young people from other organisations, reporting, *"I am informed and now I have a lot of knowledge about SRHR"*. This supplemented what they had learnt from their own organisation as they could learn specific skills from the other young people; for example, being taught how to do an HIV test by a UNYPA peer buddy or learning from an FLEP peer educator how to engage with religious leaders. Working together also helped them achieve larger outputs like reaching more clients, providing more integrated information and services and having smoother referrals to health services – this is exemplified at the end of this sub-section.

The YAC members specifically have gained **leadership skills**; they have also increased their capacities **for advocacy**, report writing, public speaking and networking. This has been achieved through a combination of training, on the job work and mentorship. One YAC member explains it this way: *"As YAC, the Alliance really empowered us with knowledge on meaningful youth participation, rights-based approaches and gender transformative approaches, so really, in terms of capacity building, it was a lot. I gained knowledge, networking and when you're working together tasks become easier"*.

The trust that the organisation places in the YAC's abilities also gives them the confidence and motivation to be better engaged. For example, one YAC member told us, *"I am more engaged at partner level than I was before. Back then it would be like, until you are called for an activity [you don't engage], but now when they are planning, they are saying, 'oh there is a YAC and we should engage them'. She can go and lead an activity in a far-flung district as the organisation believes she has the ability"*.

Even personally and within their communities, engagement and leadership within the programme has enabled young people **to gain social worth and achieve personal growth.** Through the work that the young people have been doing with their organisations, they have gained credibility and respect or importance in their communities – they are seen as knowledgeable and someone to turn to for help. This sense has been enhanced through being seen as part of the Alliance and/or part of the GUSO programme, as several different young people identify with it and can recognise fellow activists – one wearing a GUSO T-shirt, for example, even that person is from a different organisation. As one YAC member told us, *"I am a person who couldn't separate from alcohol, and any money I earned went to the bar, but now I changed and many friends of mine are changing too and refraining from alcohol thanks to the Alliance. Now I wear my Alliance t-shirt and everyone is like 'eeeeiiii' and waiting to hear from me"*. Another said, *"I used to desire being like the VHT in the community, where someone comes and asks you to give them some condoms. It feels good when you have the condoms"*. Another young respondent felt that, *"people listen to me more and I am visible in my community"*, while one more believed that *"Alliance has branded me in the community such that I assume a lot of respect and audience"*. Another commented, *"Confidence is part of it, but above all, the knowledge I have gained. The schools I studied in and the church said the information given in sexuality education is bad for children, so I grew up without the knowledge. But since I joined GUSO the knowledge has grown"*.

The staff members also pointed out how working together and seeing their peers achieve goals motivated young people further, reporting that *"they come into the Alliance and see other young people doing good things so are challenged to improve themselves. They have also been able to get options to grow and sell themselves and reflect on who they are without the organisation"*. Another respondent said, *"It builds their leadership skills and capacity around delivering programmes. Report writing, confidence to speak. The opportunity to work together empowers them"*. One respondent explained the confidence gained in young people's ability to deliver, *"It has been a learning ground for them. We have people who were not able to stand and talk. Now they have been empowered. Their capacity has been built. Sometimes we get calls that we are having a session somewhere – I don't get worried as I know they will give the right information. They have been capacitated with the information"*.

Some young people had also **gained the opportunity to be seen and recognised for their skills and expertise outside of the Alliance.** According to one respondent,, *"MYP in terms of exposure has really empowered young people, even outside the Alliance and within. For example, my young people have been taken up by the government and attached to different government facilities and other NGOs due to their empowerment. When these young people meet others during youth led activities, they get to meet other people who see their skills and they get opportunities to collaborate or work outside the Alliance"*. Another respondent said, *"They have gained a lot of experiences. Some are called basaawo [doctors]]. They also get opportunities from other orgs who need help"*.

RAHU and Restless Development have a continuous cohort of young people coming in as they recruit from within the new crop of youth in the target age range. This policy ensures that more young people are trained by those who are already in place and those ageing out can have a mentorship role and pass on the reins to younger ones.

In addition, some staff positions in Restless Development are first opened up to the young volunteers / peer educators in the organisation before they are advertised externally. Several of the staff in RHU and RAHU previously worked as youth volunteers.

Meeting other young people engaged in the same programme but from different organisations and places helped motivate young people to do more. the fact that so many more young people were also working towards the same goals and objectives built a sense of solidarity. One young person said, *"when we are carrying out outreach in the community, I can't do*

all the activity alone, so with other young people we work together in planning, and when we are working together it makes it easier for us to coordinate activities"; Similarly, another responded, *"Before we could not be together, but after we got together and started working together there is some easiness. When we started working together and came to agree and combine activities now things are moving on easy".*

Some personal relationships were also built, leading to the sense that the young people could rely on each other, e.g. an STF peer educator obtaining condoms from an RHU peer educator. As one STF peer educator put it, *"If a youth calls me and he is in need of condoms I know RHU is the place, so I call him and tell him where".* Another young respondent said, *"young people from STF don't do HIV testing, but they take them to the [UNYPA] peer buddy and they work on them".*

At the same time, however, some of the young respondents were not aware of the GUSO outcome areas and vision of the Alliance. This hampered their creativity and their ability to contribute meaningfully to youth-led collaborations. Many times, the solidarity only manifested itself when there was a joint activity to conduct and it then diminished afterwards, with young people not staying in touch or initiating other activities together. Young people recognise the need for this solidarity, as demonstrated by this young respondent: *"it's hard for one person to advocate for something, but if all of us come together and ask for the same thing we can get it because they can listen to a bigger number".* However, they have not been able to adequately demonstrate this solidarity due to a) their own lack of initiative; but also b) the lack of support from adults in their own organisations, who often want to control what the young people do.

As a result of the GUSO programme and its outcome area 2, as well as the value seen in having young people on board through the YAC, **partner organisations** such as FLEP and STF **have now got young people on their boards,** where earlier they did not. Other partners, such as RHU, have established YACs not only for GUSO, but for their other programmes as well. CEHURD started working with younger people than it had been doing, including under 25s internship programmes.

While in some districts, partners are working together to achieve outcomes 3 and 4 due to the youth-led collaborations strategy being operationalised, this is not so in other districts. Where the partners are working together, they share the same office space, enabling POs to meet and plan together. In the other location, the offices are not on the same premises, resulting in a lack of collaborative planning between POs.

The Alliance has achieved **greater visibility** among communities because of the young people who make it know that they view themselves as part of the Alliance as well as branding on items that the young people on the ground use to carry out their day-to-day activities, such as t-shirts, hoodies and notebooks.

As a whole, the **GUSO programme** has been able to **reach greater numbers of young people** and expand its coverage of areas in which information and services are provided. This is thanks to integrated outreach activities, young people being able to refer their peers to other young people stationed in the health facilities or youth centres and joint advocacy or social accountability work

This was highlighted by several respondents. According to one, *"youth-led collaborations influence demand of services and availability of services and when you look at our vision of the Alliance, the youth-led collaborations provide us the roadmap to achieve our aims as an Alliance".* Another respondent said, *"an integrated outreach health camp for 3 days gave us a huge output and we reached many young people".* Young people themselves told us, *"young people hesitated to access services, but due to sensitisation they can now go to a health centre and access services without hesitation. They believe we are confidential enough that they can share anything with us. We created youth friendly spaces where young people can access SRHR services, e.g. the youth corner in the health facility".* Another one said, *"the doctor came and thanked our organisation, because during those days youth feared to go for testing. But now they come in big numbers and get HIV testing".*

This implies that youth-led collaborations have significantly contributed to the achievement of the overall goal of enhancing young people's access to SRHR information and services. Larger numbers of young people are reached because the youth-led collaborations result in synergised work on the ground. Referrals are smoother because young people who provide SRHR information and/or CSE from one partner can provide the name of another young person who is at the facility from another partner and will help young clients in accessing services.

COMMON OBSTACLES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The biggest obstacle to youth leadership and youth-led collaborations remains the attitude of some adults who are either not accepting of youth leadership or not supportive of young people being part of decision-making processes. This lack of supportiveness results in young people not having enough information to either take leadership or come up with ideas for collaboration with other young people within or outside of GUSO. However, there are a number of supportive adults, as seen by the following responses, which we received when we asked staff members about the added value of the YAC and youth-led collaborations and ways to improve both initiatives: *"We need young people to be thinking for young people"*, for example, and *"Young people can decide for themselves what they want to do and where they want to participate"*. One staff member told us,, "we need to ensure young people are given what is necessary to implement programmes. If they have a plan, it means they have identified a problem. If the partners have their budgets approved by the NL/UK, why do young people have to go through presenting to the Technical Team and then the NSC, why can't they have their budgets approved by the NL/UK as well?" Yet another pointed out the need for more meaningful and youth-centred engagement, saying, *"We need to engage young people more during the budget and planning process, so the end product is young people-focused and this gives them a feeling of being part of it"*.

One respondent spoke about the resistance he faced from fellow adults when it came to being transparent with young people. *"[Adults] thought there was some information about partners that should not be passed onto the young people. I felt that was wrong and insisted that they stay in the room"*. Similarly, another adult explained how they encourage young people, *"I have encouraged young people by giving them chances by delegating to them the work I'm given. I've given them different tasks to teach them how to write reports, for example. It is all about trusting young people"*. Those staff members who themselves were still young, or who had been associated with the organisation or the Alliance since were, were typically more supportive.

Nevertheless, there are a few adults who limit the growth of the young people around them, control their actions and ability to reach out to other young people, and don't believe that they can be trusted with decision-making when it comes to budgets. Staff members who spoke about this said, *"some of them don't really believe that young people have a role to play in discussing the programme for the organisation. They will start asking 'Who told you to do that activity? 'Why didn't you ask us? You need to know your place in the organisation'"*. Another said, *"We need to continue building the capacity of organisational leaders as there are so many who think young people are not responsible and those that have not embraced MYP"*.

Young people are primarily engaged at the implementation level; they do not always get a seat at the planning table. The strategy on youth-led collaborations is meant to improve youth leadership and without meaningful youth participation and youth-adult partnerships, youth leadership is difficult to put in place. Young people highlighted this for us, with one explaining, *"we don't know why we are not included. The POs decide for us. They are judgemental and it's really challenging when they think we can't bring ideas to the table"*. Another said, *"We do not have good relationships with our POs and PCs. They don't trust us and we don't trust them. It is highly disrespectful to young people"*. Young people were very clear about their need to be involved in budgeting and planning. One asked, *"if there is MYP as the core value and budgeting is by adults, then why are they saying they are doing MYP? I want us to look at MYP, especially outcome area 2 – adults making the budget. They should include the peer educators and the peer buddies. When we sit in those meetings we will enforce what we need. The young people working on the ground won't be disappointed"*. According to another, *"there is no point conducting an activity without you telling me your targets and there is no turnout.*

We really need to sit together and plan together. I really want to own what I do. It's being part of the team. I would work harder and be motivated if we sit with the planning team".

Some reflected their lack of trust in the adults due to the lack of transparency. One said, *"I think not involving us in planning is done intentionally. These people know we are the ones in the community, but they don't involve us in planning. It is not good to plan for an activity in the community when you are not living in that community. The reason is that they don't want us to know about finances".* Yet another added, *"we map in the communities, find out the issues of young people, write projects, sit with POs and find ways how to solve the issues. Sixty per cent of the work is done by the young volunteers, but with the budgeting stuff we are not involved".*

Young people's frustration was evident: *"Adults trust their fellow adults more than the young people. If you question something they will say, [they] go back to your PO and discuss more on why you don't know about this. Then you feel like a fool because they are not believing you".*

There tends to be a lack of transparency and clear communication between young people themselves as well. Sometimes adults or young people in power, e.g. YAC members or peer leaders, do not realise the importance of discussing decisions with the young peer educators, peer buddies and other young people working on the ground. Explaining processes and decisions, how they were made and why; being open about budgets and how they have been allocated and talking through concerns and ideas brought forward by young people to explain feasibility or not are important for young people to feel included, involved and respected. When this does not happen, they believe that their opinions have not been listened to and they feel demotivated. One young person commented that, *"When you are not informed, you don't have the interest in something".* Another said, *"We are the people on the ground and know who needs what…They might say we're coming with HIV testing on such and such day, but we'll say no, they need more services on something else instead".*

The young respondents were very keen to emphasise the lack of clear communication from adults as hindering their ability to contribute fully to the programme: *"I think it's very hard for the young people to be involved in planning. But if we were given a chance to plan, we can identify where the services are needed. The time they need us is when they need mobilisation. We are the people down there and know where what will work better, so if they got us on the table, we would be able to say for such and such service, go to such and such a place as the clients are there. We talk to our PO, but still things don't move".* In addition, they felt frustrated with the lack of recognition for their work and their importance to the programme: *"Adults don't give us feedback, whether positive or negative – we keep waiting every time we raise our issues. These are issues from the ground. 'We are told you young people are becoming money-minded.We are going to sack you' – as if we are employed! How are you going to sack volunteers?!"*

The young respondents were also keen to have more information for better collaborations. One commented that *"before being allocated they should let us know the different organisations in the places we are going to work who are under the same umbrella, because I didn't know FLEP was also in the same area until they came there for an activity and wanted young people to work with".* Similarly, others said, *"there's a reason there is a work plan, so if these line managers are in touch then the peer educators should also be in touch. The main reason for collaborations is for communities to gain"* and *"young people should be able to meet beforehand and discuss what they are going to do. Such planning meetings happen within the organisations already, so why not between organisations and young people?"*

Some of the young respondents we spoke to were vocal about adults not treating them well, and that they lacked an avenue for the redress of grievances. Restless Development has a confidential email address on its website which can be used for grievance redressal. Anyone with a complaint to make, including young people, can do so anonymously and without fear of repercussion through this email address, secure in the knowledge that the complaint will be investigated.

Though the YAC structure represents a good practise, it hasn't yet been translated to the partner organisational level, where programme staff tend to first plan and then inform young people rather than work together with them to plan and budget. There is also adult-led decision making, where young people propose an idea which then gets approved or rejected

by the adults, often with no attempt to arrive at mutual agreement or consensus on what is possible. This leads to a sense of frustration among young people, who are in touch with realities on the ground and know what is feasible or not in a particular community or location. One young respondent explained, *"it's like having a wife – you buy food, but after your wife cooks it, you don't even eat the food. The adults gain, but not the young people"*.

Even some adults agreed with this perspective. They emphasised, *"We are still planning for people – sitting in rooms and planning for them… how about we go into the community and sit with the young people and ask them what they want… bring all the young people from the field into one room and ask what they want to do and they work on the planning and budgeting together. So that they tell you what they want you to finance"*.

Thus, a couple of issues that came up over and over again are the fact that (i) young people are not being adequately involved in planning, and (ii) there is not enough transparency on budgets to enable the young people to contribute meaningfully to planning and collaborations.

Apart from this, **lack of budget allocations** means that YAC members find it difficult to engage with young people at the community-level. Therefore, it is not easy to bring up issues from their perspective at the national YAC meeting and YAC planning sessions, as there is little opportunity for engagement without budgets to enable travel, or conduct trickle-down trainings.

Young people also face unrealistic expectations from the community for remuneration in the form of travel reimbursement or food in exchange for coming to events. These demands cause a problem for young people doing the work of mobilising. As one puts it, *"you are wearing the organisation t-shirt and some young people want to know how they will benefit from the programme. They want money; They want to squeeze you"*. Another young respondent said, *"before you even introduce yourself, young people want to know if there is food. And if there isn't food, then they don't want to come"*. Similarly, *"some children have their own problems and they come to us to help them with money. Someone can come to you and tell you 'I didn't have supper'. So you have to touch your pocket and give them some money so they can take their [ART] medicine"*.

Often, peer educators attached to a partner organisation are expected to prioritise that organisation over others or even over the Alliance as a whole. For example, if a young person is engaged in a joint activity on behalf of the Alliance, but is needed for some work back at their own partner organisation, the staff expect them to drop the Alliance work and prioritise organisational work. This leads to a lack of solidarity among young people from different partners, as they feel the need to 'represent' their organisation rather than young people as a whole.

Despite the obstacles posed by adults, it is important to acknowledge that it is a 'two-way street, i.e. while there are some adults who are not creating an enabling environment for youth-led collaborations, there are also some young people who are not taking up the space created for them,. Or, if they do take the space, they do not see the need to share it with other young people. Therefore, there is a need to enhance understanding among both adults and young people of an inclusive, democratic and empathetic model of leadership that is based on sharing power and building capacities. This model of leadership should seek to transform hierarchies and power structures, including gender and age, aim at building solidarity, value collaboration over competition and recognise and appreciate the different contributions people make.

OPPORTUNITY FOR NURTURING YOUTH-LED COLLABORATIONS

Finally, some respondents discussed a particular aspect of youth collaborations: the need to encourage collaboration outside of the Alliance. *"The opportunity the Alliance is missing out is that youth-led collaboration has been inwards – we are working with young people from the partners. But the collaborations could move outwards, to look at other youth-led or youth-serving organisations. So we could consider how to move away from just the young people within GUSO and also take into account other young people in the country – discuss with them what is happening and get them to be part of our agenda. Amongst the young*

people – yes, they want to do it – they have proposed it. Partners have also been doing it. But some partners don't look at it as collaboration, but as competition. So they are not willing to work with other organisations". In fact, collaboration across programmes, i.e. GUSO with the Right Here Right Now (RHRN) programme, READY, PITCH, etc., was also mentioned as an opportunity for enhancing youth-led collaborations.

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 within and outside the project, the partner organisations and the Alliance. This has been achieved to varying degrees in different places.

The strategy of youth-led collaborations was also intended to build young people's leadership, thereby enhancing meaningful youth participation (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 achievements 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 strategy.

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 or advocate for young people's SRHR in their countries.

It is clear that the move to change the strategy from youth movement building to youth-led collaborations was a good one. It has led to a clearer understanding of the strategy and to the implementation of very concrete, potentially sustainable YLC. For Uganda, the key youth-led collaboration is the YAC. Several other GUSO alliances have already adopted the YAC structure, and the idea of having a YAC could be attractive to many other programmes outside of GUSO as well. The strategy of youth-led collaborations has also provided alliances with a very practical way to enhance MYP, but the study also found that the YLC strategy is conflated with meaningful youth participation and not all respondents were able to distinguish the two.

Beyond the YAC, the youth-led collaborations strategy is being implemented in a manner that is more ad hoc than structured or deliberate. The YCC and the YAC members are receiving a lot of the input and exposure, while other young people are still being left out of decision-making at different levels. It is important to reflect on the fact that merely putting structures for representation such as the YCC and the YAC into place, is not enough to achieve youth-adult partnership and meaningful youth engagement. Eventually, those holding power still need to give some of it up and share it with the young people for whom the space and the structure has been created to engage meaningfully. In fact, there are other forms of youth-led collaborations that seem promising and worth investing more into, such as the research team, integrated outreach and the youth-led social accountability. Some of the key successes of the youth-led collaborations implemented by the Uganda Alliance include reaching more young people, better referrals and better understanding and application of MYP.

Connected to this, something to explore further is whether a capacity for trust building is only inherent in individual personalities or if programmes can build this aspect into their design.

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 YAC AND YCC AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE GROUND

The **National YAC member and the District YAC member from each partner should be proactive in engaging, sharing with, and learning** from one another. This would also ensure that young people from different partners and from different districts feel heard. Since young people other than the YAC members have less of a platform for interacting with their peers, the National and District YAC members should make efforts to share information and strategise on how to collaborate with other partners at ground level. One of the ways to do this is for young people from different partners on the ground to meet at the health centres during youth days.

The **YAC members need to strengthen solidarity amongst themselves** by engaging with each other socially and relaxing with each other outside of work. In addition, to build their own leadership skills and get support for their activities, they should identify MYP champions among the adults and reach out to them to learn and gain mentorship.

Finally, the **detailed budgeting for Outcome Area 2 should be done by the YCC and YAC together**, building the YAC members' capacities and avoiding the YCC becoming overburdened.

FOR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Partner organisations need to **create more opportunities or spaces for the YAC to engage with the other young people on the ground** and the different districts by allocating budgets or including their YAC member in ongoing monitoring or capacity-building activities.

They should also **adopt inclusive and fair structures for young people to select/elect their own YAC** members, ensuring that different districts are represented and that the YAC members are accountable to all the young people they are representing.

The **POs / line managers** who interact directly with their organisational YAC **have a role to play in mentoring** the members in developing their skills – e.g. public speaking, report writing, budgeting, etc. – and create opportunities for them to practise these. There is also a role for the adults and the YAC members to play in **encouraging young people to interact and forge alliances with other young people from the different partners.** POs or other project in-charges from partner organisations at the District level should meet and **harmonise their activity plans and data reporting,** along with young people, allowing the latter to take initiative and organise integrated outreach, joint dialogues, or other information and service delivery on a day-to-day basis.

Partner budget ceilings and details should be shared with and explained to the organisational YAC members to enable their meaningful contribution to planning and budgeting. Alongside this, the POs should provide clear, honest and transparent communication. They should also give constructive feedback on the plans and initiatives proposed by young people, in order to motivate, encourage and enable them to achieve their goals or vision. Financial disbursements to young people should be less bureaucratic, especially when they need to be reimbursed for money spent on conducting programme activities.

The **orientation or foundation training that young people get on joining a partner should include information on the Alliance.** Currently, not all young people are aware of the Alliance structure and the YAC, YCC, etc. The Alliance should develop a brief or training sessions that partner organisations can provide along with their own orientation. Young people need to learn about the role of the partner organisation in the Alliance and the role of young people within both the Alliance and the partner organisation. This would help enhance Outcome Area 1 as well.

It may also be worth **combining resources and providing a harmonised training module,** since many partners, e.g. RAHU and RD, hire new cohorts of young people at the same time during the year,. Such combined trainings would provide the young people with the opportunity and understanding for collaborating right from the beginning.

Finally, **youth-led collaborations should also be looked for outside of GUSO**. If both the GUSO and young people build the SRHR capacity of other youth groups at the sub-county level rather than working with them only on one-off activities, further partnerships should be possible.

FOR THE SRHR ALLIANCE UGANDA

There were several recommendations for the Alliance which are quite practical. These are listed below and can be prioritised and acted upon as time and budget permits.

For meaningful youth participation, better youth-adult partnerships and the enhancement of youth leadership:

- Create opportunities for enabling the NSC to go to the 'young people's spaces' and, in order to get a better understanding of their skills and leadership, interact with them in the spaces where they are taking leadership on the ground.
- Provide more capacity to adults, including the NSC, to recognize the importance of youth-led collaboration, especially as that relates to creating space for young people and enabling them to occupy that space.
- Simplify and make youth-friendly versions of documents like the Alliance Strategic Plan, reports presented at NSC and Technical Team meetings, policies on safeguarding/gender/bullying and harassment and disseminate them among all young people
- Establish a confidential grievance redressal system for young people (for example, like RD has done through its website) and ensure that all young people are aware of it
- Examine ways to plan and budget with young people rather than planning, budgeting and thinking for young people. For example, going into a district and engaging with all the young people there to plan and budget for the district in collaboration with all partners working there. Young people need not just deal with the effect of a decision, but to understand why programme decisions are changed and how they can deliver these messages to the community or other young people without losing trust and credibility. Therefore, they need to be involved in the discussions where these decisions are being made
- Planning teams for 'youth-led activities' like the Alliance Week should be populated and led by young people, with selected adults supporting them through the process. More opportunities, like the Alliance Week, should be created for exchange between young people and learning between districts and partners
- When young people are involved in specifically defined activities that require their dedicated time and effort, e.g. research, they should receive a nominal stipend because they are putting in the same kind of work and effort as salaried adults
- Organisations should institute policies that make allowances/per diems equitable and transparent across staff and volunteers, in the interest of being seen to be serious about MYP and being youth-centred. (For example, like the Alliance standard rates for all)
- Identify and link up with opportunities outside of the Alliance that will enable young people to engage in income generation, livelihood building, furthering studies through scholarships, etc. The Alliance could also develop a mentorship programme where young people from the Alliance are seconded / given internships at other organisations to enable their career growth.

Training / capacity building:

- *Guide* young people through proposal development and responses to calls for applications from donors/funds specifically for youth-led initiatives (e.g. Robert Carr Fund, AmplifyChange, FRIDA Fund, etc.)
- Train young people on facilitation skills through a training of trainers, so that they are able to trickle down the training to other young people.
- Find ways to involve and train select young people in different aspects of the Alliance work; for example, just as an alliance research team has been established, look at other avenues like communications, resource mobilisation, etc.
- Showcase human interest stories from the project by training young people in

PhotoVoice and other communications.
- Adults need to sign up to be mentors and the list should be shared among the YAC and the other young people so they know who to approach

Finally, the GUSO partners should think about engaging young people not only within GUSO but also in other programmes such as RHRN, PITCH, READY, etc. together with whom a common advocacy agenda can be developed and implemented.

FOR THE NL/UK ALLIANCE

In order to be more effective, the Outcome 2 Working Group at the NL/UK Alliance should have YCCs on it, as currently the group is discussing strategies to be implemented in countries they are not so familiar with. In fact, young people should also be included in the proposal design team meaningfully, not just in a token manner.

It may be worth having a session or module on youth-led collaborations alongside the MYP manual.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW AND FGD GUIDES

Interview guide for young people:

1. Tell us how you have been involved in the GUSO programme / SRHR Alliance.
   - *How did you get engaged with GUSO?*
   - *Please tell us about your main tasks and responsibilities. Are they formalised? Do you have a task description or ToR?*

2. Tell us how the role you have been playing has contributed to the achievement of the GUSO programme objectives to date.

3. How have you been working with other young people towards a shared goal within the GUSO programme / SRHR Alliance?
   - *How did you arrive at a shared goal?*
   - *What have you been doing to achieve it?*
   - *How easy or difficult has it been? Why?*

4. How did you begin working with other young people?
   - *What enabled this collaboration?*
   - *Is this a structured process, i.e. even if you movement 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 it work?*
   - *Who takes decisions?*

5. Why have you been 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 organisations ?
   - *Feel stronger / safer / louder / more acceptable / more effective/ more credible – or not?*

OR

What is different about working on SRHR alongside other young people versus not working together?

1. How can this be done better, i.e. enabling young people to work together, take leadership/ ownership and 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. Please describe how the role of the YAC members has contributed to the achievement of GUSO programme objectives to date.

4. Please describe what you believe is the added value of having young YAC members as part of the SRHR Alliance? (probe for: added value of having youth representation on the steering committee)

5. Do you believe that young people from different organisations coming together as YAC members adds value to the programme? Please explain why or why not.

   – *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?*

6. What motivates you to work in the SRHR Alliance as a YAC member?

7. What factors are responsible for the success of the YAC? (probe for: support from NPC/YCC, support from own organisation, young people's commitment, etc.)

8. 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/community, participation in other social or citizenship domains, development of knowledge and skills / leadership / advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment, etc.)*

9. What changes, if any, have YAC members made at the level of the community/beneficiaries? (ask for concrete changes; they can be small ones, but ask for concrete stories)

10. 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?

11. What can be done better / improved in the way that the structure of the YAC is currently being implemented?

12. 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 ADULTS (NSC MEMBERS, POS WITH EXTRA QUESTIONS FOR NPC & YCC):

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 Uganda.
   – *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 level/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 Uganda are you most proud of and why?

5. In your view, what is the added value of youth-led collaborations (young people from different organisations working together) when compared to meaningful youth participation within your own organisation?

6. How are you measuring the effects/achievements of 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 / organisation's 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 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? (note: This may have been answered under Q1 already)*

10. Is this particular part of the programme sustainable, i.e. do you think the young people will continue to work together after GUSO? (the YAC and other youth-led collaborations). Which ones will continue? 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, is needed or would be useful to strengthen the strategy of youth-led collaborations within the GUSO programme? From whom should this support come?

EXTRA QUESTIONS FOR NPC & YCC:

13. How are partner organisations within the SRHR Alliance working together to come up with efficient youth-led collaborations?

14. Please describe your role in developing/coordination of the strategy of youth-led collaborations?

15. Considering the lack of clarity around this strategy that has been there from the start, would you recommend that a strategy of youth-led collaborations be taken up in other, similar SRHR programmes as well? Why or why not?

16. Looking back, what do you feel about the level of support you have received from the NL/UK consortium for implementing this strategy? What should be done differently next time and why?

17. What distinct (missed) opportunities does the country alliance have in nurturing youth led collaborations on SRHR?

FGD GUIDE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE:

1. Tell us how long you have been involved in the GUSO programme.
   − *How you got engaged with GUSO in the first place*
   − *What you have been doing/achieving*

2. How have you been working with other young people towards a shared goal?
   − *How did you arrive at a shared goal?*
   − *What have you been doing to achieve it?*
   − *How easy or difficult has it been? Why?*

3. How did you begin working with 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. Why have you been 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?*

5. What are your thoughts about working on SRHR alongside other young people coming from different organisations?
   − Feel stronger / safer / louder / more acceptable / more effective – or not? Please explain.

OR

What is different about working on SRHR alongside other young people versus not working together?

6. How can this be done better, i.e. enabling young people to work together, take leadership/ownership and achieve things in collaboration?

APPENDIX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR YAC

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YAC) UNDER THE GET UP SPEAK OUT (GUSO) PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance Uganda is a consortium of like-minded organisations formed on the basis of a multi-component approach and comparative advantage with regard to the different components of SRHR programming. The current membership of the Alliance comprises of: Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU), Straight Talk Foundation (STF), Family Life Education Programme (FLEP), Centre for Human Rights & Development (CEHURD), Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS (UNYPA), Restless Development (RD) and National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU). The Alliance is currently implementing the Get Up Speak Out for youth rights and needs programme in the four districts of Jinja, Mayuge, Iganga and Bugiri. The programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the consortium of United Kingdom/Netherlands-based funding organisations, including SIMAVI, Rutgers, AIDS Fonds, Dance4life and Choice for youth rights and sexuality, as well as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the Secretariat in the Netherlands.

BACKGROUND TO ESTABLISHING THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YAC)

The GUSO programme strives for a world in which all young people fully enjoy their SRHR in productive, equal and healthy societies. When young people stay healthy and realise their SRHR, they are able to lead productive lives and access economic opportunities. The long-term objective of the GUSO, therefore, is **to empower all young people, especially girls and young women, to realise their SRHR in societies that are positive towards young people's sexuality.**

The majority of young people in Uganda experience their sexuality in a context of stigma, discrimination and violence; they have difficulty accessing and utilizing youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, including contraceptives and condoms, as well as accessing correct, scientifically-proven and consistent comprehensive SRHR information. While young people have the fundamental right to (co-) decide on issues that affect their lives, there is often little or no room given for them to express their opinions and feelings. Their voices are heard only at crisis points, rather than being included, as a matter of course, in those societal institutions that shape their everyday lives. This situation seriously limits young people's ability to be a part of conversations that determine their future, hence the creation of the Youth Advisory Committee. The YAC is a platform for young people to provide leadership, express their views and opinions, learn from each other and empower their peers to make informed choices about consequential matters like sex, sexuality and relationships.

One of the core principles under the Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) programme is Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP). It is on this basis that the consortium constituted the Youth Advisory Committee – a group of empowered youth volunteers who will play an important role in advising, guiding and fronting youth affairs and presenting the views of young people during GUSO programme implementation.

Under the current structure of the Sexual and reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) alliance, the YAC represents the voices and needs of young people at the levels of both the individual organisations and the National Steering Committee.

This Terms of Reference therefore stipulates the purpose of the YAC as well as their specific roles and responsibilities, accountability lines and requirements.

CONSTITUTING THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are the key considerations for constituting the YAC;

1. The Youth Advisory Committee shall be a council of eight (8) diverse volunteers/young persons aged 18-24 years who will guide the leadership for the youth constituency of the Alliance, as well as representation of young people in planning, coordination and implementation of activities within the GUSO programme and the Alliance as a whole. The YAC plays an advisory role to the Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) and all of the country alliance members to ensure meaningful youth participation in the GUSO programme.

2. The YAC shall be comprised of young people from each partner organisation, and together with the Youth Country Coordinator, they shall be champions for the meaningful involvement and participation of young people in the GUSO program.

3. The YAC will foster and promote meaningful youth participation in GUSO programming, implementation and monitoring. It will also offer advice on processes of youth engagement and identify best practises for youth-friendly programming. Members will additionally provide linking and learning opportunities for their peers at district, national, regional and international levels.

4. In line with the GUSO objective to empower all young people, especially girls and young women, to realise their SRHR in societies that are positive towards young people's sexuality, the YAC composition shall be at least one third female.

5. Positions on the YAC are strictly voluntary. No salary is paid to YAC members.

6. Members of the YAC shall serve a term of two (2) years and every member can serve on the committee for at most twice consecutive terms.

COMPOSITION OF YAC MEMBERS

The YAC shall consist of the following positions:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. General Secretary
4. Member
5. Member
6. Member
7. Member
8. Member

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YAC MEMBERS

PRESIDENT

Charged with providing leadership and direction to the **committee**, the **President** is responsible for ensuring that the **committee** maintains utmost discipline and fulfils its **responsibilities**. Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

– Chair committee meetings ensuring that they are run efficiently and effectively;
– Represent the YAC and other young people on the National Steering Committee;
– Regularly focus the committee's attention on matters of governance that relate to its own structure, role and relationship;
– Work with the committee to ensure that youth activities are implemented; and
– Serve as a spokesperson for the YAC and fellow peers on different platforms.

Desirable attributes
The President should:

– Have a good understanding of Uganda's SRHR context especially in relation to adolescent health and sexuality of young people;
– have a deep understanding and appreciation of meaningful youth participation;
– be sensitive to the feelings of members by being impartial and objective;
– be approachable;
– be well informed of the SRHR Alliance vision, mission and objectives; and
– be a fluent and competent public speaker.
– **The Vice President** supports the President in ensuring effective functionality of the committee and he/ she steps in for the President in his/ her absence.

GENERAL SECRETARY

The Secretary is the primary administrative officer of the committee and provides the link between the committee and other Alliance functional working groups. The Secretary should be a good communicator, maintain confidentiality on relevant matters and have the ability to delegate tasks and supervise others. Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

– Work with the President and YCC to prepare meeting agendas, minutes and other documents required for the meeting;
– Maintain and ensure effective management of committee records;
– Ensure the distribution of information to members, including minutes, activity reports and other documents;
– Represent the YAC and other young people on the National Steering Committee; and
– Receive and share with all members communications to and from the committee.

YAC MEMBERS

The following are the general responsibilities of all YAC members:
– To provide leadership to the young people working within the programme
– To encourage meaningful youth engagement and participation by Alliance partners at all levels of the program
– To take the lead in youth-led monitoring of the quality of GUSO activities and initiatives.
– To ensure effective partnerships with relevant youth-serving organisations in the country programme
– Receive plans of action from the young people in the line partner organisations and lead and monitor their implementation; the specific contribution of the YAC shall be to advise on implementation of the plans of action
– Serve as a spokesperson for youth on different platforms
– To ensure timely preparation of youth input in Alliance meetings and reports and ensure that documentation meets meaningful youth participation standards and donor requirements for approval and progression of the initiative.

- To participate in meetings related to coordination, planning and implementation of activities with the different line partner organisations and with the Secretariat
- Participate in high-level stakeholder meetings; The Chairperson and General Secretary of the YAC shall participate in the National Steering Committee meetings and all members of the committee shall participate in the Project Coordinators' meetings as well the routine meetings with the youth working groups
- Participate in all Alliance joint activities and those planned at partner level
- Advise the Secretariat on the planning, development, integration and implementation of government policies and programs concerning young people

PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING MEMBERS OF YAC

1. Outgoing YAC members shall spearhead the process at partner level; together with GUSO project coordinators and youth volunteers, outgoing members shall identify and democratically select two youth volunteers, one male and one female. Every partner shall then submit the names of the nominees to be put forward in the election process.

2. The selected sixteen (16) young people will then meet to vote; the election will be conducted by the YCC, a neutral party with no voting rights. The eight (8) members of the YAC shall be elected solely by the young people themselves.

3. Every partner organisation must be represented on the Committee; the committee will therefore be a mixture of representatives from the different partners in the consortium.

REQUIREMENTS TO BE A YAC MEMBER

The following are some of the attributes required of a young person who wishes to become a YAC member:

- A commitment to human rights issues and the meaningful participation of young people
- Fluent spoken and written English
- Able to work on own initiative; flexible, able to work in a team and possessing a good sense of humor
- Experience working in the GUSO programme
- Experience working with Alliance member organizations and partners
- Experience working with social media for SRHR advocacy
- Knowledge of the SRHR Alliance vision, mission and objectives is an added advantage

SKILLS
- Interpersonal skills; able to develop and sustain good relationships internally and externally
- Time management skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with other committee members
- Competency as a public speaker
- Effective communication skills

ACCOUNTABILITY
- The YAC is impartial and works in a youth-adult partnership with the Secretariat. The YAC is hierarchically coordinated and accountable to the YCC. The YAC is also accountable to the Technical Team members and the National Steering Committee.
- For daily management issues the YAC members can turn to their direct supervisor who is project coordinator of the organisation.
- The YAC shall meet on a quarterly basis to discuss a range of relevant topics, share progress reports on how young people are working in the different organisations as well as monitoring and evaluating youth- related policies and legislation which affect young people.
- The YAC shall present a quarterly report of activities conducted to be shared with

the GUSO. functional working groups, e.g. Technical Team members and the National Steering Committee
– The YAC will not interfere in the programme content, as this is the responsibility of the consortium members and the country alliance partners. However, the YAC will guide the process of implementing the meaningful involvement of young staff/volunteers in GUSO.

BENEFITS OF BEING ON THE YAC

– The YAC enables young people to advise Alliance partners on important issues affecting young people.
– The YAC is an empowerment initiative that builds young people's esteem, confidence, skills and knowledge of SRHR issues at community, national, regional and international levels.
– The YAC also gives young people an opportunity to advise on, plan and participate in fun, safe youth events.
– Meanwhile, YAC members develop valuable leadership and management skills, and make new friends from all over the county, all while gaining exposure to the SRHR environment.

"Being a member of YAC is no joke – it's a commitment. But the rewards are amazing!"

APPENDIX 3: YOUTH INVOLVEMENT STRUCTURES IN ALLIANCE

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT / LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES OF SRHR ALLIANCE UGANDA PARTNERS

The 8 partner organisations are a combination of youth-led and youth-serving organisations with diverse structures for young people's involvement and leadership. Following is a summary of these structures per organisation:

Centre for Health Human Rights & Development (CEHURD) has an internship programme where young people are recruited and treated as equal to regular staff members in all respects (apart from not receiving a salary). They are trained on the job and receive mentorship from the adult staff members. CEHURD has recently begun to engage with young people on the ground and recruited and trained young people as community health advocates.

Family Life Education Program (FLEP) has young peer educators who are involved in delivering SRHR information and counselling services. There are two young people on the board, though it is unclear whether these young people are recruited from among the peer counsellors or elsewhere.

National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU) is a federation of several networks and organisations of people living with HIV, which includes the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS (UNYPA). This network constitutes the youth engagement part of NAFOPHANU, with a young person on their governance board as well.

Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU) is a youth-led organisation with young people as staff members as well as peer educators (who receive a JD). The peer educators are volunteers and serve until age 25, after which they can remain as mentors to other young people. Each new peer educator serves in schools for a year, while recruiting and training another young person. Thereafter, they move on to community-based work through youth corners. Thus, there is an ongoing cycle of recruitment and training, as well as mentorship by older young people. There are two young people on the board, who are peer educators themselves.

Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU) has young volunteers who can take on several different roles, e.g. peer educators, peer mentors, and data clerks. Some long-serving young people also get recruited into project staff positions. The youth volunteers have a leadership structure called the Youth Action Movement (YAM), where they elect their representatives who sit on the governing board of the organisation at all levels.

Restless Development (RD) is a youth-led organisation, though senior management is not always within the age bracket for young people. It also has peer educators who are recruited, trained and then deployed to a certain community for a year (they sign a contract to carry out their peer education duties in this area for a year and are given a JD).

Straight Talk Foundation (STF) works with established and registered youth groups at the community level and recruits peer educators from among these. They also have a young person on their board, though it is unclear whether this young person is/was a peer educator or otherwise involved with STF's activities on the ground.

Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS (UNYPA) is a youth-led organisation with young people as staff members, including the Executive Director. Young peer buddies are recruited, trained and attached to a hospital, where they are expected to enable young people to access HIV-related services easily and provide support to health service providers in providing youth-friendly services.