



YOUNG PEOPLE ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: TOWARD A NEW NORMAL

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OVERVIEW

Adolescents and young people are the direct line to hugely diverse realities on the ground. They have a deep, intimate understanding of their own needs, as well as of the challenges that they and their peers face in accessing high-quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services. Young people also have first-hand experience with how they and their peers use these resources to make informed choices and decisions about their sexuality. When they are central to the development of related policies, programs, and services, all stakeholders do a better job of identifying and executing effective adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (AYSRHR) solutions. As a result, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

AYSRHR initiatives with and by young people are proliferating around the world. They are creative and encouraging, but also fragmented and poorly documented. In an effort to better understand the state of the field, the Youth Investment, Engagement, and Leadership Development (YIELD) project findings offer a stakeholder-led identification of promising practices, a description of multi-level impacts, and recommendations for the future.

Promising practices

The following lessons emerged from field research – including interviews and discussion groups with informants from around the world, most of whom are either prominent youth leaders or adults working with young people. Taken together, these core lessons offer guidance for further action and investment in YIELD for AYSRHR.

- Engaging a diverse cross-section of young people as participants and leaders in AYSRHR requires **intentional recruitment** across the diversity of youth identity groups and sociocultural contexts.
- Unlocking young people's potential as AYSRHR contributors necessitates actively **building their capabilities and assets** by using appropriate methodologies and approaches.
- A **supportive and equitable environment** is necessary to ensure that young people's contributions to improving AYSRHR are included and acted upon.
- **Connections among youth participants and adult decision makers** are fundamental drivers of change.
- Additional resources, stronger cross-stakeholder

partnerships, and emerging research tools can help **document impact**.

Evidence of impact

Informants described a wide range of positive, multi-level impacts resulting from YIELD for AYSRHR activities. Actively engaging young people in AYSRHR builds their capabilities and promotes their personal and professional development. Youth participation and leadership in AYSRHR efforts contribute to stronger organizations and more responsive policies, programs, and services. Furthermore, the activities of young advocates for AYSRHR – at the community level and beyond – build civil society and contribute to the power and impact of social and political movements. Informants are less certain of the impacts that youth participation and leadership have on health measures, such as adolescent pregnancy rates or HIV and STI transmission, as causal mechanisms of this kind are methodologically difficult to isolate and measure. However, the evidence that we do have – in the form of documented linkages between youth participation and relevant intermediary indicators – establishes correlation, if not yet causation.

Core recommendations for future action

YIELD findings – and the promising opportunities articulated by informants – suggest that funders explore moving forward in three critical directions to leverage investments made to date. This would involve:

- Supporting a **systems-based approach** to mainstreaming youth participation;
- **Coordinating stakeholders** to facilitate agenda-setting, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration; and
- **Acting as catalysts** for expanding and supporting youth-led and youth-centered initiatives in ways that allow them to have lasting, multi-level impact.

These actions will help bring together a currently disconnected and uncoordinated body of work in the spirit of greater efficiency and effectiveness in AYSRHR policies, programs, services, and research. This, in turn, will contribute to improved health and social outcomes for adolescents and young people.

INTRODUCTION

“We know the status quo is not serving us – and we have the drive and creativity to change it. We just need the power and resources to deliver.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

Background

The largest cohort of young people in human history is coming of age. And they are engaged, connected, and committed to ensuring opportunities for themselves, their communities, and their countries. The decisions they make with regard to their own sexual and reproductive health constitute potential tipping points of social and economic opportunity – from the individual to the global level. If young people are able to access the comprehensive information and services they need to make informed decisions – in environments that support those decisions – they will prosper, along with the families and communities around them. Unfortunately, too many of the world’s adolescents and youth still cannot make their own informed sexual and reproductive health decisions, and poor outcomes undermine their ability to realize their rights and reach their potential. The situation remains particularly acute for girls and young women, as well as for other disenfranchised youth populations.

Nonetheless, positive change is afoot. The development of the Sustainable Development Goals¹ and supporting initiatives related to the sexual and reproductive health of young people have resulted in the unprecedented mobilization of youth at all levels.² Young people have become vibrant contributors to the very guidelines that impact them the most, and persuasive advocates for the goals that most require their energy and creativity to help achieve. The global community increasingly recognizes the unique value of involving young people in the design and implementation of AYSRHR solutions.³ And, indeed, it is hard to imagine a better way of ensuring that related laws, policies, programs, and services are contextually responsive and appropriate than to directly involve the end-users. Not only is youth participation in development decision-making acknowledged as a universal human right, but the field is seeing positive benefits at multiple levels: for young people, for the institutions with which they work, and for the policies and programs that they help to influence.

Young people are emerging as participants and leaders in

AYSRHR efforts all around the world. These youth-led and youth-driven initiatives are diverse, exciting, and relatively new – as well as disconnected, poorly documented, and inadequately evaluated. Despite the surge of recent work in this area, questions remain – both about how best to engage young people in AYSRHR decision-making and about what results to expect from their engagement. The YIELD project was born out of the recognition that cultivating youth participation and leadership in AYSRHR is more of an art than a science: no single approach or strategy ensures effective youth participation or guarantees that participation will improve outcomes at different levels. That said, the field’s recent efforts in this area have resulted in the accumulation of valuable experiences and insights. This knowledge deserves to be shared and built upon in the interest of facilitating greater efficiency and effectiveness in future AYSRHR efforts.

In order to plumb this reservoir of learning, the YIELD project team gathered and synthesized information from an array of sources, as described in the methodology section below. The following synthesis report of YIELD project findings includes operational definitions of key terms; graphic models to describe both the project focus and how findings are reported; key learning and related implications for the field across central themes; and, finally, conclusions and recommendations for how to maximize results in future YIELD for AYSRHR investments.

Definitions

For purposes of the YIELD project, the term “youth” refers to young people between the ages of 15-29. This age range was determined by the ages of the young people currently being reached by the vast majority of programs that we explored. We use the terms “youth” and “young people” interchangeably throughout the report.

Of course, any definition of “youth” is intrinsically inadequate, as the experience of adolescence and young adulthood is as varied and diverse as young people themselves. This experience is conditioned by power, as well as by dynamics related to gender, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and other shapers of personal identity. In addition, the process of moving from childhood to adulthood is profoundly influenced by the cultural, so-

cial, and political contexts in which people live and grow.⁴ These diversities of experience must be “designed for” as policies, programs, and services are crafted to respond to youth needs. As the *who* and the *where* are exceptionally heterogeneous, so must be the *what* and the *how*.

For this project, we use an integration of the World Bank⁵ and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID)⁶ definitions of “participation” to broadly encompass YIELD activities. We define youth participation in AYSRHR as “processes through which young people realize their rights by influencing and sharing control over AYSRHR initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.” This definition is inclusive of all ways that young people are engaged – and so able to influence and contribute to AYSRHR processes, outcomes, and impacts, from the local to the global level.

There is no standard definition for “adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health.” For the purposes of the YIELD project, we define it as “the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of adolescents and young people, achieved through universal access to high-quality, comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly services (including those devoted to counseling, contraception, safe abortion, maternity care, and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted infections), under conditions that fully respect privacy, confidentiality, and human rights.” This is a capacious definition, the fulfillment

of which allows young people to engage in informed and respectful sexual relationships, as well as mutually-consenting, healthy, and positive sexual experiences.

We define the “AYSRHR ecosystem” as “the complex, interdependent network of stakeholders and initiatives working on AYSRHR issues across sectors, from the local to the global level.” This includes policy, program, service-delivery, and research-related activities at the community, sub-national, national, regional, and international levels.

Project Focus

Based on Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation⁷, Wong’s TYPE Pyramid⁸, and DFID’s Three Lens Approach to Youth Participation⁹, we adapted the following figure to describe the focus of the YIELD project (see Figure 1 below). This figure illustrates how some young people emerge, out of the universe of beneficiaries of AYSRHR efforts for young people, as collaborators and partners in AYSRHR initiatives with adults. Others, may move on to play leadership and initiator roles in AYSRHR activities that are youth-led, or driven by young people themselves. Of course, the ways that young people are engaged do not necessarily follow a linear trajectory over time; in fact, many young contributors play multiple roles simultaneously. The YIELD project focuses on the participatory roles of young people as **partners and leaders**.

Figure 1. Types of Youth Engagement

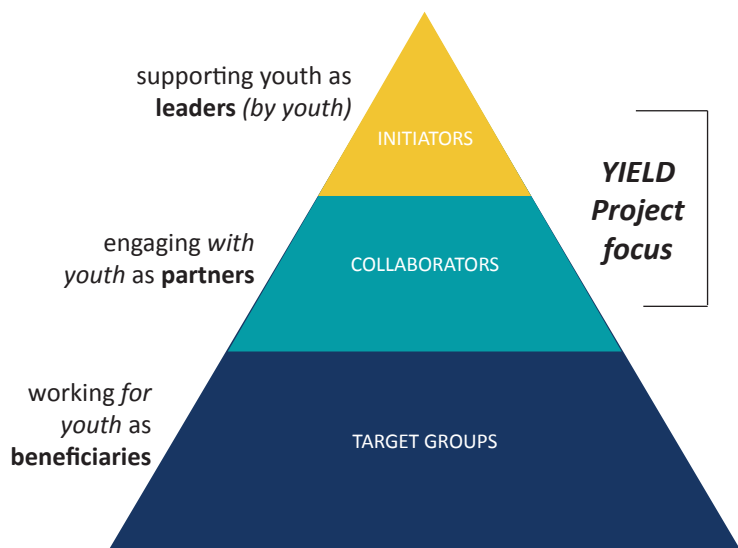


Figure 1 Notes:

- Levels of engagement are not mutually exclusive, and youth participation and leadership activities often combine all levels.
- Youth engagement is dynamic: depending on context and intervention, one level may be more appropriate or attract heightened focus.
- Different levels may be used with different sub-groups of adolescents and youth within the same intervention.
- It may appear that youth participation is only about engaging young people as partners or leaders, but participation necessarily develops from a broad, foundational base.
- For youth to be effective partners and leaders, they need skills (capabilities) and opportunities to apply them (agency).
- Youth partners and leaders are inherently beneficiaries as well.¹⁰

As we analyzed the contributions of project stakeholders, we came to further appreciate the diversity and complexity of work happening under the “YIELD umbrella.” YIELD programming and activities vary across the *who*, the *what*, the *where*, and the *how*: All efforts are designed to meet the needs of specific youth populations or to address specific AYSRHR issues. Interventions also occur at the policy, program, and service levels. How programs engage young people as participants depends on the specific purpose of the intervention, as well as on the particularities of the social, cultural, and political contexts in which it is taking place.

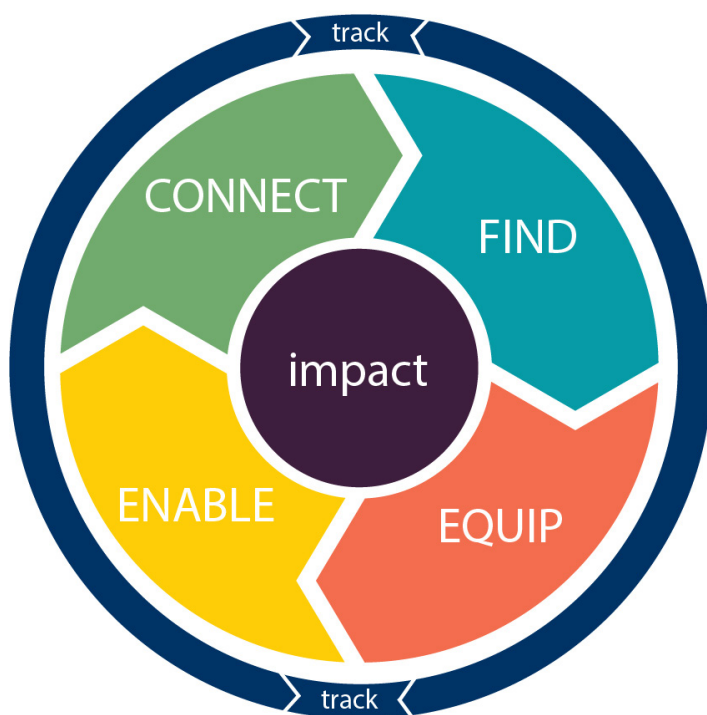
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the complexity of the data gathered by YIELD investigators mirrors the complexity of these diverse interventions. The Youth Participation Process Map

(see Figure 2 below) organizes this data by simplifying the extremely diverse range of approaches currently underway across the ecosystem of AYSRHR efforts. The common thematic elements – **FIND**, **EQUIP**, **ENABLE**, **CONNECT**, and **TRACK** – are highlighted and defined in Figure 2.

It is important to note that young people themselves are not just the receivers of these elements, but are also playing valuable participatory roles in their delivery.

When these elements come together in support of young people’s participation, virtuous cycles are created. These cycles contribute to positive change across the AYSRHR ecosystem, as evidenced in the **IMPACT** section of this report.

Figure 2. Youth Participation Process Map



FIND: Identify and engage young people, in all their diversity, as participants in AYSRHR efforts across the ecosystem;

EQUIP: Provide training to build youth knowledge, skills, and capabilities;

ENABLE: Foster supportive environments that allow young people to exercise their agency and become genuine contributors to AYSRHR efforts;

CONNECT: Create both pipelines and pathways for young participants to enter the YIELD cycle, as well as engage in repeated cycles in order to age “up” rather than age “out” of the field; and

TRACK: Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation strategies that document the results of youth participation at different levels.

METHODOLOGY

Activities under the YIELD project were conducted from May 2017-May 2018. A small, complementary team of external consultants implemented the project.

Components

Steering Committee consultations: To launch the project, an initial round of group and individual consultations was undertaken with members of the project Steering Committee from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Summit Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the consultations was to identify priority issues and questions to be addressed through the project – as well as to identify relevant stakeholders and background materials to include.

Literature review: An initial review of published literature provided foundational information for the project. The team started by reviewing a selection of recent, relevant articles, followed by articles, reports, tools, and related documents identified through systematic key word searches in PubMed, Google, and Google Scholar. This was supplemented by source material from the websites of youth-led and youth-serving organizations, as well as from institutions and programs working on AYSRHR and youth. Search terms included *youth participation*, *youth engagement*, *youth involvement*, *youth leadership*, *youth-adult partnership*, *reproductive health*, and *sexual health*. The priority time frame for the search was limited to 2000-2017. Despite the large amount of published literature on various forms of youth engagement in SRHR, few materials focused exclusively or specifically on youth participation in AYSRHR, as defined by the project. This further strengthened the rationale for undertaking primary data collection.

Program scan: Using information derived from consultations, the desk review, and personal networks, the project team developed an initial list of potential programs and stakeholders to engage across categories. Once interviewed, stakeholders also recommended other potential programs and individuals to include; this enabled the use of a snowball methodology. Prior to each interview, a program summary was developed as background for the discussion.

Advisory Group: As an additional resource to the project, an Advisory Group was formed with experienced current and former AYSRHR youth leaders from around the world.

Efforts were made to ensure a balanced diversity of age, gender, technical expertise, and geographic context. The group included advisors from Belize, Guatemala, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Based on interest and expertise, project advisors were paired in inter-generational technical teams comprised of a current and a former youth leader. Teams focused on AYSRHR advocacy, services, research, and youth organizing, respectively. The roles of project advisors included providing input on the selection of key informants, reviewing information collection tools, leading coordination of in-country youth-leader discussion groups, and providing feedback on both preliminary findings and the synthesis report.

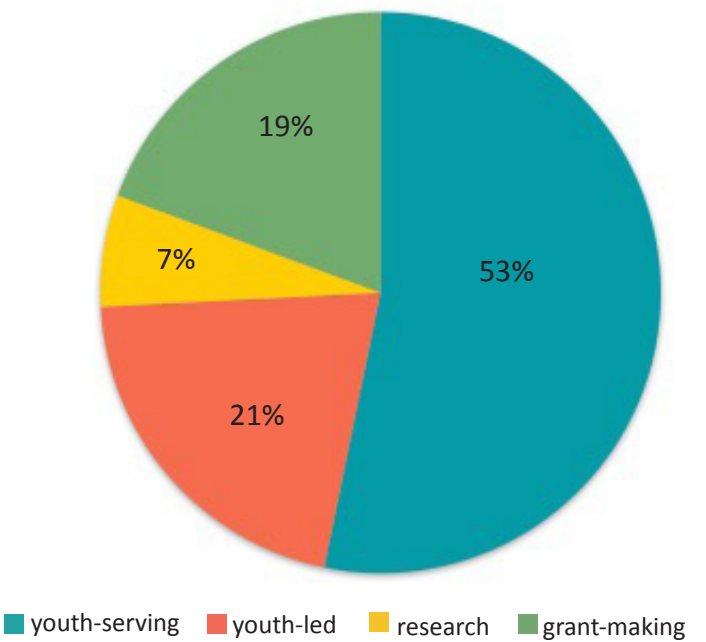
Key informant interviews: Given the dearth of published literature on the subject, the central focus of the project was on gathering and synthesizing relevant information from key informants who work directly on issues related to youth participation and leadership in AYSRHR. There were five key-informant stakeholder groups: young leaders; youth-led organizations and networks; youth-serving organizations; evaluators and researchers; and funders, including (but not limited to) members of the project Steering Committee. Distinct discussion guides were developed for each informant group. Interviews were undertaken and recorded in either English or Spanish, via Skype; they were also documented in English using detailed notes taken during and after the conversations. Interviews were not transcribed verbatim. In total, 98 individuals, representing 72 institutions, were interviewed. Some informants were interviewed both as current or former youth leaders and as spokespersons for the organizations and programming that they manage. Brief descriptions of the organizations and programs explored through the project are included in the Appendix (pg. 55).

Country-level youth-leader discussion groups: In an effort to gather information specifically from young leaders working at the sub-national level, in-country discussion groups were undertaken in Guatemala, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United States. A distinct youth-leader discussion guide was drafted and contextually modified for use with each group. To address access barriers, including language and technology, the youth-leader discussion groups were co-organized and implemented with local partners from the Advisory Group; this allowed the project team to leverage the Advisory Group's contextual expertise, infrastructure, and networks.

Ongoing review of gray literature: As stakeholders were engaged, the project team sought to identify and obtain relevant unpublished documentation related to youth participation and leadership in SRHR. These documents were also reviewed as additional inputs to the project.

Integrated analysis and synthesis of project findings: Primary information gathered through the project was coded and analyzed using Dedoose, a collaborative web-based software that facilitates qualitative and mixed-methods data management and analysis. The first step in this analysis was the development of a comprehensive codebook. The creation of 55 codes, organized into nine thematic categories, allowed the project team to classify large quantities of qualitative data into meaningful and relevant themes. Using Dedoose, the codes were then systematically applied to the transcripts from all informant interviews. Several times throughout this process, the project team conferred to review transcript material, fine-tune code definitions, and verify that material from the transcripts was being coded in a consistent and uniform way. When the coding process was complete, the data was analyzed thematically, beginning with the code co-occurrences identified by Dedoose. Descriptor data – including quantitative information on YIELD informants, as well as descriptive information on represented organizations – was also systematically mined for relevant parallels with the coded qualitative data.

Figure 3. Breakdown of Informants by Respondent Category



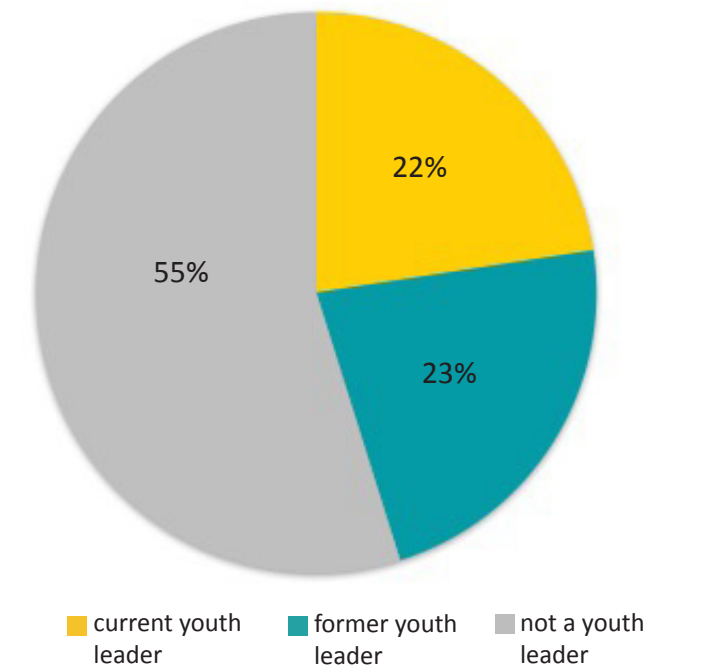
Limitations

The YIELD project was not designed to be a systematic study of youth participation in ASYRHR. Rather, the project permitted the exploration of central questions among an opportunistic sample of key informants and discussants (i.e. those identified through the described project components, who both agreed to participate and had availability within the information-gathering window). As such, the informant sample is not balanced or saturated in terms of informant type, age, gender, identity group, or geographic focus. In this sense, YIELD findings offer a real-time snapshot of the state of the field, rather than generalizable results. Nonetheless, there is great value in beginning to synthesize this vast body of learning, as it offers a strong foundation upon which to build the next generation of investment in this critical area.

Description of Sample

The following graphics show the breakdown of informants by respondent category, as well as by their status as current or former youth leaders (see Figures 3 and 4, respectively).

Figure 4. Breakdown of Informants by Status as Current or Former Youth Leaders



Cross-cutting Themes

As the project team analyzed YIELD data, we identified a number of cross-cutting themes, or themes that had relevance across many domains of findings. References to cross-cutting themes are identified in boxes where they emerge throughout the report. Cross-cutting themes include:

Gender: Over the course of our conversations with YIELD informants, it became clear that the motivations, experiences, and benefits of youth participation in AYSRHR are not the same for females and males. Gender differentials extended from strategies for recruitment to YIELD program influences on future professional trajectories. As such, these differences have important implications for the design, implementation, and evaluation of YIELD for AYSRHR activities. Differentiated strategies to help ensure equitable participation and opportunities for all youth warrant further exploration and targeted adaptation.

Technology: The use of mobile and digital technologies is increasing across many areas of YIELD programming. Informants described clear benefits, as well as ongoing challenges, which are documented throughout this report. Certainly, however, the speed with which access is improving – and technology is advancing – offers expanding opportunities to strengthen young people’s roles in AYSRHR efforts.

Relationships: Young people are capable of making unique and valuable contributions to AYSRHR, but they cannot optimize their participation alone. Examples of how relationships across stakeholder groups – including between young people, practitioners, decision-makers, researchers, and funders – currently function are referenced throughout the report. This report also makes recommendations as to how these relationships need to shift in order to support more equitable and inclusive approaches to youth participation.

Acronyms

AYSRHR

Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

LGBTI

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex

SRHR

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

YIELD

Youth Investment, Engagement, and Leadership Development

LEARNING AND IMPLICATIONS

The following sections of the report synthesize relevant learning and implications for the field, distilled from the methodology outlined in the preceding section. Project findings are presented following the categories found in the process map seen in Figure 2, and are also repeated below with the corresponding section colors for easy navigation:





FIND

IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE, IN ALL THEIR DIVERSITY, AS PARTICIPANTS IN AYSRHR EFFORTS ACROSS THE ECOSYSTEM

Engaging a diverse cross-section of young people as participants in AYSRHR requires intentional recruitment across the diversity of youth identity groups and sociocultural contexts.

YIELD informants were almost unanimous in calling for the field to become significantly more inclusive, in terms of which adolescents and youth are afforded opportunities to participate in AYSRHR decision-making. The following learning and experiences inform this position:

The potential for meaningful youth participation exists everywhere. There are latent sources of AYSRHR expertise in every community – no matter how rural, vulnerable, or small. These are the adolescents and young people who, by virtue of their lived experiences, have the most intimate knowledge of their own needs, as well as of the challenges that they face in meeting them. Their raised voices therefore constitute the most authentic, and most powerful, form of advocacy.

Young people want to be engaged and contribute. Young people are experts in their own lives – and, as such, have unique insights into the daily realities of their peers. Many of them have personal experiences with exclusion, stigma, and violence, or have themselves struggled under the twin burdens of poor health education and inadequate care. Still others are motivated by a desire to improve their communities, connect with like-minded peers, or disrupt what they see as broken, unworkable systems. This passion – and the special brand of enthusiasm, resourcefulness, creativity, and power that comes with it – is one of the major assets young people bring to AYSRHR problem solving.

“As a transgender male in my country, I experienced discrimination of all kinds throughout my adolescence, including being outed on social media. This caused me to spiral through periods of depression, substance abuse, and social withdrawal. I wondered: How many other people experience the same thing and do not know where to turn? To reclaim my rights and build a supportive community, I founded the Light Association to fill this important gap.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

“I am a survivor of sexual violence. It is still very hard to say that in our country because it carries so much stigma. But based on my own experience, I know how common it is. And I feel like I have a special and important role in addressing gender inequality as the root cause of so many health and social problems among girls and young women like myself.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Philippines)

Demand-led recruitment is the current norm. The predominant engagement of more urban, educated, and well-supported young people is common in youth participation and leadership initiatives, particularly at the global level. The field invests heavily in a relatively small number of global champions, allowing for the same individuals to participate in multiple programs. While many of these young people leave their local contexts for promising opportunities to influence efforts at the national or international level (making brain drain an issue), we spoke with several young people who, despite their increasing visibility on the global stage, have continued to advocate for and serve local needs. The credit for their escalating impacts goes, first and foremost, to the young leaders themselves – but also, in many ways, to organizations and institutions such as the United Nation’s

Population Fund, Women Deliver, International Women's Health Coalition, Global Health Corps, Rise Up, and Advocates for Youth, which play valuable roles in cultivating the talents and potential of young influencers in national and international arenas.

That said, informants also shared that these relatively small and elite cadres of young people are not always appropriately grounded in the realities and lived experiences of peers in their local communities, and can be ill-equipped to represent the diversity of needs among more underserved youth sub-groups. The literature cautions against deepening inequalities by targeting young leaders from visible, well-known groups, and calls for the intentional targeting of diverse young people to overcome inequalities in power relationships and gender dynamics.¹¹ The relative lack of diversity among youth influencers and contributors is likely limiting the effectiveness of national and global AYSRHR efforts. Also, as young people begin to operate primarily at the national and global levels – in the absence of active, sustained programming in the communities they leave behind, or feedback loops to connect different levels of programming and advocacy – AYSRHR efforts fail to benefit from coordinated and context-appropriate youth contributions.

This is not to say that “elite” youth leaders do not make crucial contributions to the field. They do. Informants felt

strongly that investments in young people who contribute and influence at the national and international levels should, without question, continue. Yet informants were almost unanimous in stressing the critical importance of making sustained local investments that intentionally target and engage more diverse sub-populations of young people, including: younger adolescents, rural youth, married young people, ethnic and sexual minorities. More marginalized populations are harder to access and can require heightened and ongoing support. Understanding and responding to high-need populations, though, builds local youth participation and leadership, while also contributing to more responsive AYSRHR interventions.

Engaging marginalized and vulnerable youth requires finding them where they are. The field has gained significant recruitment knowledge from recent generations of adolescent and youth participation programming, particularly with regard to adolescent girls and young women. Organizations seeking to engage and empower more underserved youth have learned to target specific groups – including those who share similar contexts (and are, for example, out of school, married, part of specific migrant or refugee populations, and/or engaged in high-risk work). Intentional recruitment strategies to find and engage these often-hidden sub-populations involve going to the places they are most likely to be found, and negotiating access to them through their gate-

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

GoJoven: Youth Leadership for Sexual and Reproductive Health is a sub-regional initiative in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico that explicitly operates in geographies where AYSRHR indicators are poor. As a key strategy, GoJoven works exclusively through local institutional partners, which are positioned to engage and support a diversity of young people at the grassroots level.

With each program cycle, GoJoven identifies and trains a new cohort of young leaders for SRHR, intentionally targeting those who come from different personal and professional backgrounds. By clustering cohorts in specific high-need areas, GoJoven saturates geographies with young fellows, who then receive funding and support to design and implement their own AYSRHR projects in local communities. Through concentrated cohort recruitment in targeted, sub-national geographies, the program aims to create tipping points of youth leadership and spur mobilization for sustained local change. Furthermore, by connecting current and past cohorts of fellows in ever-expanding national and regional networks, the program creates mechanisms for sustained coordination at different levels.

Program alumni actively participate in recruiting new cohorts of fellows through their own networks. These networks, when combined with those of local partner institutions, create deep and broad pipelines of new fellows from more isolated and underserved areas. In addition, alumni are often reengaged to participate in subsequent program cycles; the technical and professional skills of these alumni are then utilized to strengthen, sustain, and expand the program. This reinvestment of human capital is good for GoJoven, and also provides viable professional pathways for its alumni.

keepers. Likewise, programs that support youth from specific and intersectional identity groups, such as young people of color, religious minorities and/or LGBTI youth – must design outreach structures and programmatic conditions that allow the members of these groups to feel recognized and connected, as well as emotionally and physically safe. YIELD informants highlighted a number of strategies to successfully recruit diverse profiles of young people. Examples of effective approaches include mobilizing like-peer networks; creating physical and online communities, through which peer groups can connect safely; working through local organizations and community structures; and literally going door to door. Employing these approaches, while effective, requires the mobilization of trusted and credible local networks, in addition to sensitivity, time, and resources.

“To engage a diversity of young people, you need to get out of the capital and out of your comfort zone. The same youth leaders get all the opportunities. We intentionally go out into the middle of nowhere to find more local efforts where important change is and can be made. We fail a lot, but we have to keep trying.”

(female informant, global youth-serving org.)

YIELD programming currently engages mostly young adults. Many younger YIELD informants described relatively early participation in AYSRHR activities in their local communities – commonly starting around age 15, and in collaboration with an International Planned Parenthood Federation affiliate. Early exposure to AYSRHR efforts – e.g., campaigns, volunteer counseling services, or peer education programs – is often transformative, and can set young people on trajectories of increasing engagement and influence within the field.

Despite this, however, there are relatively few examples of YIELD programs that intentionally engage younger segments of adolescents (ages 10-14, or even 15-19). Most YIELD youth informants were between the ages of 20 and 30. There also appear to be limited connections between those working with older and younger groups of adolescents and youth.

“Being active and vocal on SRHR issues as a young female from a traditional community has helped me find my voice. I see different options for myself now and I am committed to making sure other young people have the same opportunities. My work [with the *Tu Decides* National Youth Network] has shaped my academic focus. I decided to study social communications to further strengthen my advocacy and mobilization skills.”

(young female informant, Bolivia)

“My experience working as a young volunteer changed the course of my career. I was working on a degree in economics with an interest in finance, but after leading the Rwanda Youth Action Movement, I became passionate about the importance of SRHR, particularly for girls and young women. So, I pursued a master’s degree in human rights and gender and have been working in the movement ever since.”

(female former youth leader, Rwanda)

Converting gatekeepers to allies is critical to broaden engagement. As noted above, reaching more vulnerable, marginalized young people often requires engaging their gatekeepers. Young people are surrounded by multiple family- and community-level gatekeepers, including parents, teachers, spouses, in-laws, and religious leaders. This is particularly true in the case of girls and young women. They often encounter enormous barriers to engagement, including limits to their autonomy, mobility, and time (secondary to the disproportionate domestic burdens that they shoulder). Hence, involving such populations in AYSRHR efforts requires not only targeted recruitment strategies, but also sustained, culturally sensitive efforts to gain the trust and support of the adults around them.

Building relationships of this kind can be arduous, but with appropriate, sustained insistence, gatekeepers typically respond favorably. Often the organizations that are in the best position to build and nurture these relationships are locally-based, and intimately connected with the communities that they serve. A number of organizations and initiatives – such as Planned Parenthood Global, Rise Up, GoJoven (see the Spotlighted Program box on pg. 13), and the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development – emphasize the value of working with and through such local “anchor organizations.” These organizations have the local connections, intelligence, and staying power to identify vulnerable young people where they are and engage them in contextually-appropriate ways.

Current youth participation strategies may be limited by restriction to the SRHR sector. Another strategy to expand the reach of AYSRHR efforts is to actively work outside of the SRHR sector. A number of YIELD informants are intentionally partnering with institutions and young people that address intersectional issues. Planned Parenthood’s “I Defy” campaign, for example, is motivated by the desire to connect with young people, both on- and off-line, through the issues that concern them most, including racism, xenophobia, homophobia, discrimination, and other forms of injustice. These issues then create bridges to SRHR efforts as young people learn how each dimension converges with others to impede human rights. Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity (URGE) also works at the intersection of reproduc-

tive rights, gender equity, and racial justice – recognizing how interrelated these issues are for the youth populations it serves. URGE has also found that an intersectional focus mobilizes more young people to contribute to AYSRHR.

“Of course we can activate young people who are with us [on abortion rights] – they are the low-hanging fruit. But that is always where SRHR strategy ends. Reaching youth on the issues they care about is where to start. It requires more steps. But we can and are bringing them in through varied entry points.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

Planned Parenthood Global also proactively seeks partnerships with youth-led and youth-centered organizations and initiatives outside of the SRHR sector. This, combined with

working at local levels, has allowed the institution to broaden its reach and develop more diverse and intersectional responses to SRHR problems. Similarly, Global Health Corps seeks fellows from a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences, and sectors – including journalism, engineering, architecture, and information technology – as a strategy to expand the health equity movement and bring new interdisciplinary talent and solutions to the field.

“I do not recruit people from the SRHR movement. We need fresh eyes, ears, brains, and functional expertise, which do not exist in our movement. I look at housing, labor, immigration rights and draw new talent from there.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings for future efforts are as follows:

- Use intentional, targeted recruitment strategies, powered by local knowledge and commitment, to engage a diverse cross-section of young people, prioritizing the most underserved.
- Engage gatekeepers by making them stakeholders committed to the individual-, family-, and community-level benefits of youth participation.
- Begin YIELD programming at younger ages, and actively link programs that engage younger adolescents as feeders to existing YIELD programs.
- Expand programming partnerships beyond the SRHR sector to activate a broader cross-section of young advocates.
- Document results and share details about what is working to engage and sustain diverse youth participation with the broader field.



EQUIP

PROVIDE TRAINING TO BUILD YOUTH
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND CAPABILITIES

Unlocking young people's potential as AYSRHR contributors requires building their capabilities.

The deepest learning around young people's participation in AYSRHR efforts is on how best to equip them. Nearly all of the programs and organizations that we explored through the YIELD project use formal training as a strategy to build young people's capabilities. Training efforts vary widely in their design, content, and delivery, as demanded by the diverse contexts in which they operate. Despite this, many still subscribe to similar practices and recommendations. Furthermore, there is an ongoing need for the field to come together to share this burgeoning knowledge base. The following learning and experiences underscore this need:

Training environments matter. Informants highlighted the importance of creating supportive training environments that foster mutual respect, inclusivity, tolerance, and collaboration. Both youth leaders and those who work closely with them speak of the need for safe physical and emotional spaces for young people to learn, share, and receive support. These spaces are especially crucial for marginalized populations, who otherwise have more limited access to such opportunities.

Under some conditions, training is more effectively offered in like-peer groups, so that participants feel comfortable and free to express themselves. This was described as particularly true for young females and the members of other stigmatized youth populations, who can feel intimidated and disinclined to share their personal experiences in mixed training groups. Such an approach is often used during the initial engagement of more marginalized youth segments, serving to connect young people with similar experiences, build community, and establish baseline knowledge and

skills. More integrated future training and engagement are then built on the segment-specific foundation. This speaks to the importance of staging programming so that the members of specific youth segments benefit from tailored approaches that cater to their particular needs and situations.

Positive and supportive training atmospheres benefit organizations, as well as individuals. Creating safe environments helps build trust and engender loyalty, while also allowing participants to form lasting relationships, both among themselves and with the organization's professional staff. This results in substantial social capital formation, the growth of which has significant positive externalities for individuals, collectives, and the organizations that support them.

Flexibility matters. YIELD informants repeatedly emphasized the need for flexibility when working with young people. Often, even the scheduling of trainings and related activities must remain dynamic in order to accommodate the competing demands of work, home, and school that young people, particularly the most vulnerable, struggle under on a day-to-day basis. Informants emphasized the need to engage young people on their own terms.

Bridging linguistic and cultural barriers increases inclusion. Marginalized young people need linguistically- and culturally-appropriate trainings, materials, and development opportunities. Many of our informants also identified another need for youth participants: to improve or learn globally-dominant languages such as French, Spanish, or English. Both needs will become increasingly important as the field seeks to engage a more diverse cross-section of young people, as linguistic and cultural barriers currently inhibit inclusive participation at sub-national, national, and international levels.

“It is critical to have training and materials in local Mayan languages. We are actively involved in developing and delivering culturally appropriate materials in our local context. SRHR issues have to be introduced carefully from the inside and in ways that generate support at all levels.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Guatemala)

Flexible training content leverages the richness of participant experience and is responsive to youth needs. YIELD informants emphasized the need for training content to remain flexible and youth-driven. This approach allows young people’s experiences to inform content. It also enables participants to influence the direction of the training based on both their interests and what they feel will most help them achieve success in their desired roles. While core technical and functional content may be transferrable, curricular guidelines can and should be organic “living tools” that can undergo rapid modification – as this makes them readily adaptable to diverse contexts and groups of young people. This, too, is productive and beneficial as it models a collaborative dynamic that recognizes the value of young people’s contributions, while fostering an inclusive atmosphere of co-learning and co-design.

“Our approach is to let girls drive training as a way to exercise and support their agency and decision-making. We implicitly trust the girls and respond to what they say they want. Hence, the training is always fluid and evolving – with and for girls.”

(female informant, youth-serving org., India)

Training begins by empowering individuals. Informants highlighted the benefits of building the self-esteem, self-confidence, and resilience of participants, while also encouraging them to clarify their personal values. As part of the training process, young people are encouraged to cultivate their voices – and to grow as both individuals and leaders. Broad, rights-based training is also intensely motivating as it gives individuals a sense of civic duty and power. Having undergone this kind of personal grounding in these issues, young people are better prepared to utilize additional layers of technical and functional training. Cultivating personal assets such as resilience has also been demonstrated to protect young people from unwanted SRHR outcomes, including adolescent pregnancy.¹²

“Through human rights-based sensitization, I started to see the relevance of national policies in my own life. It became clear to me that – in order for us to access the information, services, and support we need to make our own decision and control our bodies – we need to be actively involved.”

(young female informant, Nigeria)

“I always saw leadership as external – how you influence and convince people. But I learned the importance of working on myself – building my self-esteem and confidence to realize my leadership potential. Now I see that leadership really comes from within.”

(young female respondent, Malawi)

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAMS

Pravah, in India, begins by encouraging young people to understand and interrogate their own values. Then, the organization focuses on instilling a deep appreciation of human similarity and interconnection among its participants. This is part of a psychosocial approach designed to shape youth mindsets and, in so doing, prepare young people to become agents of long-term social change.

Global Health Corps, in Africa, uses its Training Institute to prepare each new cohort of diverse change-makers to maximize their impact over the course of their year-long fellowships and beyond. The Training Institute also helps shape the communities that will sustain these emerging leaders in their long-term commitment to service. An important part of the training focus is on supporting fellows in their deepening personal commitment to leadership. This is done through peer-based reflection and dialogue groups, as well as through explorations of the spiritual and emotional dimensions of leadership. As part of this, fellows explore topics such as personal values, resilience, courage, and ethical decision-making. While this process can be difficult for participants, many view these shared inner journeys as critical for developing trust in themselves, each other, and the program. One respondent described these bonds as the “secret sauce” of leadership development.

Young people want to be more than “youth experts.” Both youth and adult informants spoke of young people’s value as experts in their own lives and situations. However, many young people want to be more than “youth experts.” They want to use their evolving skills to participate in AYSRHR efforts in more diverse ways. This reinforces the need to provide training that exposes young people to specialized competencies and allows them to build skills that prepare them to lead their own initiatives or assume influential organizational positions in the future. Many youth leaders expressed a desire to delve into a broader swath of issues and perform a more capacious set of functions, including those related to finance, fundraising, and program management. Such training and opportunities allow young participants to contribute more widely to the work they do in the present, while also developing skillsets that are readily transferable to future professional opportunities.

“I am growing tired of exclusively being seen and treated as a young person, and only engaged on issues as they relate to youth. I have gained experience and expertise on a range of issues and want to transition to other kinds of roles.”

(young male informant, Sri Lanka)

“We make intentional efforts to hire junior professionals and engage young volunteers across the institution because they often possess new skills and fresh learning that older staff members do not have.

(female informant, youth-serving organization, Mexico)

Ongoing training helps build and reinforce knowledge and skills over time. YIELD findings suggest that a critical way to build the capabilities of young people is to deliver training content iteratively, such that knowledge and skills are reinforced over time. Ongoing and layered training approaches allow young people to refresh their knowledge and skills, integrate their own practice experiences, and adapt their training to the specific needs that they encounter in their AYSRHR activities. As previously noted, many informants advocate for beginning with a strong foundation of personal empowerment, and then layering both technical and functional expertise on top. This approach, while harder to implement, is considered more effective than simply offering one-off workshops. Informants describe training cycles that integrate phases of theoretical learning with periods of application and reflection as particularly effective. Such approaches allow young people to progress along a trajectory from awareness, to fluency, and – finally – to mastery.

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAMS

Lead for Impact, which works globally, has an issue-agnostic curriculum that trains young people how to systematically respond to social problems. The cornerstone of this approach is repeated loops of theoretical instruction, followed by periods of application and reflection. Dedicated time for both mentoring and networking is also built into the program.

International Women’s Health Coalition runs the Advocacy in Practice program, which begins by introducing and exposing young people to regional and global policy-making spaces. The program understands that these spaces can be overwhelming, so the first time that young people encounter them, the purpose is exposure only. The next time, these same young people – who, in their theoretical experiences, then move beyond “how to approach a diplomat” to focus on more sophisticated communications strategies and policy language – have become more comfortable, confident, and capable of undertaking advocacy directly. As the same small group of young people is brought back for repeated training by Advocacy in Practice, they become more specialized in the skills they build and the roles they adopt.

The Young Women’s Project in Washington, D.C. uses a layered training approach that is adaptable to the learning needs and interests of each participant. The program begins with foundational training in self-advocacy, which is provided for all young people engaged across the organization. Basic training builds core communication, negotiation, and conflict-resolution skills. Issue-specific training is then overlaid on this foundation, depending on the particular interests and availability of the individual. Young people are also trained as part-time staff to help deliver the organization’s health and education programs. Additionally, those who are most interested can pursue advanced leadership training, which includes deepening skills in policy advocacy, community organizing, and communications/social media. This adaptable, ongoing training approach allows young people to discover and pursue their interests, while also creating sophisticated, skill-building opportunities for those who want to engage more deeply.

Participatory training methodologies enable young learners to test new knowledge and skills. Many informants emphasized the value of incorporating dynamic and participatory pedagogies into AYSRHR training programs. This could mean encouraging young people to work in groups, share personal reflections, practice problem-solving techniques, or teach back what they learned. All of these methods build critical thinking and test new skills, while giving participants the opportunity to receive and respond to constructive feedback from peers and colleagues. This, in turn, makes training interactive and fun, and keeps young people engaged. Equally important, it strengthens young people's ability to transmit their knowledge and skills to others.

Questions remain about how to optimize training delivery platforms. Technology is an emergent and important component of effective youth training programs in AYSRHR. Many informants commented on the recent profusion of digital training platforms, which have clear advantages in terms of flexibility, expense, and accessibility (though many areas and populations, particularly the most underserved, still face barriers to connectivity). That said, most informants feel strongly that in-person training – and face-to-face contact – remains necessary for the development of skills; this level of interaction is also considered necessary for building the vital ongoing relationships that support young practitioners in their work. Emerging good practice in adolescent and youth capacity building utilizes some combination of both approaches, and includes in-person training

that is either preceded by online modules (which typically focus on content, rather than skills) or followed by ongoing online support. The cost of bringing young people from different geographical locations together to participate in face-to-face trainings is obviously a barrier to sustainability and scale. These experiences, though, are greatly valued by young people, who emphasize the importance of exposure, network formation, and 360-degree learning.

Current training tools and approaches are not easily accessible or widely shared. There is a broad and growing body of material and experience – including dynamic training tools and curricular content – focused on preparing young people to participate in and lead the field of AYSRHR. That said, many of our informants lamented how little of this information is currently being shared across organizations, among practitioners, or even between young people themselves. More could be done to share materials and practice – and so enable greater, open-source access to tools and content, which have proven to be effective in building youth capabilities in different contexts. This would have many benefits, including helping the field to avoid the duplication of costly program-development efforts. That said, while many of the practitioners with whom we spoke highlighted missed opportunities for sharing and adapting existing tools and materials, these practitioners were also quick to emphasize the need for context-sensitive, locally-appropriate content and approaches.

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: TECHNOLOGY

Our discussion of the importance of technological resources would be incomplete without highlighting training programs that focus, specifically, on developing technological skills. Building such skills is critical to enabling inclusive access.

A clear example of this is **Feminist Approach to Technology**, in India, which teaches girls digital literacy – including blogging and movie-making skills – as means of self-expression and self-empowerment. These skills then become a vehicle for the conduct of individual, gender-related advocacy projects.

There are other examples too: **Women Win** teaches girls and young women digital storytelling, and the **Rise Up Youth Champions Initiative** focuses on identifying and enabling youth-led, technology-based solutions to AYSRHR problems. Spotlighting these programs reveals another aspect of the value of technological resources: their potential to amplify the power of advocacy work.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings for future efforts are as follows:

- Foster safe, supportive training environments that are appropriate for specific groups of young people.
- Offer more training opportunities in local languages, while also facilitating access to instruction in globally-dominant languages, as appropriate.
- Provide a broad range of flexible content that allows young people's experiences, interests, and AYSRHR needs to inform delivery, while also giving them opportunities to participate in content development.
- Employ participatory methodologies to deliver ongoing, layered content in ways that build the personal, technical, and functional capabilities of young people – and enable them to teach what they know to others.
- Leverage platforms to share and exchange existing training tools and approaches that have demonstrated effectiveness.



ENABLE

FOSTER SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS THAT
ALLOW YOUNG PEOPLE TO EXERCISE THEIR
AGENCY AND BECOME GENUINE CONTRIBUTORS
TO AYSRHR EFFORTS

A supportive and equitable ecosystem is required for young people's AYSRHR contributions to make a difference.

Creating supportive environments in which young people can actively participate and contribute to AYSRHR solutions is clearly of critical importance. Yet affecting change in these domains is complex as it requires changing mindsets and behaviors, as well as institutional cultures and systems. YIELD informants offered important learning on what is working and where there are ongoing challenges. At every level, we found strong institutional examples of enabling environments for youth participation.

“The current paradigm places an unfair burden on young people to change the systems and structures that impede their contributions. They cannot do this alone. In order to contribute, young people need supportive adults and enabling environments that permit them to exercise their individual and collective agency.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

In this section, we begin by focusing on intergenerational relationships as an essential prerequisite for meaningful youth participation, with examples of how these relationships are currently manifesting highlighted throughout. Next, we explore hands-on learning opportunities, in which youth participants are encouraged to immediately apply their theoretical learning. We then look more closely at youth-led initiatives and what they need to succeed. These sub-sections focus on efforts that work with youth as bona

fide partners, as well as on those that are largely or exclusively led by youth. We conclude by discussing some of the environmental obstacles to youth participation in AYSRHR and how these obstacles might be overcome.

Creating enabling environments for youth participation

Authentic intergenerational partnerships are an essential prerequisite for youth participation in AYSRHR. YIELD informants agree, almost universally, with the principle that intergenerational partnerships are a pre-condition of young people's participation in AYSRHR. In order for these relationships to develop, adults must be willing to share power with young people. The literature also supports the need for traditional adult-dominated systems to change to make room for youth values: This has emerged as a good practice in youth participation.¹³ However, young informants spoke repeatedly of the ageism, stigma, and tokenism that they continue to confront when working with adults. Many of these same young people perceive adults as unwilling to let them participate fully, or as threatened by their potential contributions. This position was most clearly articulated by new-wave feminists, who have found it difficult to bridge the generational divide with adult women in the movement.

“I see a struggle between the older generation of feminists and my peers. We do not support each other. There is a need for approaches that facilitate genuine relationships of mutual appreciation, power-sharing, and learning.”

(young female informant, Sri Lanka)

“Adults do not trust young people. Or maybe they are afraid of us? Of course, we are not at the same level as adults when we start, but when we are given opportunities, we have shown that we can learn and deliver quickly.”

(young discussion-group participant, Malawi)

Based on the impressions and experiences of our informants, it is clear that effective youth-adult partnerships cannot be assumed, but must instead be systematically and intentionally cultivated. Efforts to do this must build the sensitivity and skills of adults, while actively changing mindsets. This requires institutional commitment grounded in the conviction that not only do young people have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them, but their contributions to the decision-making process are uniquely valuable.

The field has developed a range of tools and approaches for training young people and adults to work together. Advocates for Youth, in particular, is an institutional leader in championing youth-adult partnerships, and has developed training tools designed to foster these kinds of relationships. Their tools have become critical resources for other organizations attempting to transition to more youth-inclusive institutional cultures. Teen Health Mississippi is a clear example of this: With training and guidance from Advocates, it has intentionally developed an organizational culture that sees young people as the functional drivers of programming.

Profound results are possible when youth participation is mainstreamed across organizations. As evidenced by Teen Health Mississippi, some organizations are moving to systematically mainstream youth participation and leadership in order to create new organizational cultures. The objective is to put in place norms and systems that engage young people as partners across institutional efforts as a matter of course. This works to normalize young people’s participation both in governance (e.g., through board membership quotas) and across divisions (e.g., by allowing active youth participation in all domains of the institution). In order to do this, organizations must assess their readiness for such a transition, and intentionally prepare all levels of staff to work in equitable partnership with young people. A number of our informants had largely positive experiences with this type of comprehensive transition, and advocate strongly for an institutional change approach.

“Our institutional approach is grounded in the firm belief that young people are the only ones who can inform and guide what they need. Hence, without having them mainstreamed through all elements of our work, we would be less relevant, especially in serving the most marginalized youth, our priority demographic.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

“In order to be responsive and keep young people coming, we need to listen to them and design with them. Their needs and interests are constantly changing, so we need to keep pace and change with them.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, Ethiopia)

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: YOUTH-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

While emphasizing the importance of building effective collaborative relationships with adults, young YIELD informants also spoke frequently of the need to nurture youth-youth relationships. One way to do this is to designate youth-only spaces – where young people feel physically and emotionally safe, and can come together to share experiences and organize for collective action. Ideally, these spaces should be cooperative, rather than competitive, as damaging power dynamics can arise in youth-youth relationships as well. **Pravah**, in India, refers to youth-only spaces as “the fifth space,” where young people set the norms, and have the freedom to act in the service of youth-centered agendas. Informants from this organization insist that creating these environments is a crucial component of enabling young people to act.

International Planned Parenthood Federation is a pioneer in mainstreaming youth participation and leadership, and is spotlighted below. As indicated, Advocates for Youth also supports an organizational model in which youth participation and leadership are mainstreamed across the entire organization, from the community level to the highest levels of governance. Similarly, Education as a Vaccine, in Nigeria, is an adult-led organization that has mainstreamed youth participation and leadership by including young people on its board and supporting young people's contributions across all divisions of its organization.

Enabling young people to learn by doing

Practical hands-on engagement in programming gives young people the opportunity to apply newly-learned information and skills. Opportunities for young people to immediately put their theoretical learning into practice are, in many ways, the natural extension of participatory training methodologies. Our youngest informants spoke of their desire for opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills gained in training programs – both through active participation in ongoing programming and the hands-on experience of leading projects, campaigns, and organizations in their own local contexts. Several of the training approaches that we examined through the YIELD project explicitly attempt to provide these opportunities. Examples include International Women's Health Coalition's Advocacy in Practice program, which provides advocacy training that enables grassroots

youth activists to understand and participate in national and international policy-making spaces; International Planned Parenthood Federation, which involves youth in all phases of its programming; and Education as a Vaccine in Nigeria, which encourages young people to pursue varying experiences in different programs, departments, and divisions of its organization. Other programs – like Global Health Corps – intentionally connect young leaders with hands-on fellowship opportunities.

“Enabling young people to speak for themselves has been highly effective in places like Ethiopia. The ‘Champions Group’ made up of young leaders, project staff, and government policy-makers offers a platform for young people to share their realities, desires, and needs. When the youth members themselves directly pushed back on a policy stand to limit adolescent contraceptive access, it was far more credible than if it had come from adult staff.”

(female informant, global research organization, U.K.)

While many of the youth leaders with whom we spoke commented on how important hands-on, applied learning was to their own development, others warned that this type of learning cannot be considered a replacement for more formal training experiences. Informants also indicated that youth-led projects – or “entrepreneurial leadership experiences” – require substantial on-going support in order to be successful. As with so much in the YIELD arena, achieving

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) currently takes a global, institution-wide approach to operationalizing the full participation of young people.

IPPF has developed flexible guidance to help support its member associations in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating youth-centered models of operation, in which young people's participation is fully-embedded in the work of the organization.¹⁵ Elements of IPPF's approach include: quotas for youth representation at all levels of governance; training programs focused on working with youth for all staff, volunteers, and service providers; situation analyses of youth sensitivity and involvement across all programs, and at all stages of programming; implementation of ethical protocols for working with young people, in order to ensure their safety both inside and outside of the organization; continuous monitoring to ensure that youth and adults are functioning within mutually-respectful relationships, and that youth are being given substantive roles at all levels of institutional decision-making (e.g., annual planning, budgeting, evaluation); and a youth-centered, strategic business plan that integrates young people across the organization.

By operationally reconfiguring the institution to mainstream young people's participation, IPPF has seen large, measurable increases in AYSRHR service utilization by young people. Both youth and adult informants also express mutual satisfaction with IPPF's institution-wide, youth-centered approach.

the appropriate balance of theoretical and applied learning hinges on specific, context-dependent project goals, as well as on the roles and interests of young people.

Mentoring provides young people with the ongoing support they need to move from theory to practice. Many young respondents commented on the importance of ongoing professional support in enabling them to apply evolving knowledge and skills to their respective professional contexts. Both current and former youth leaders also described the challenges inherent in transitioning to field work following training experiences, particularly in the absence of professional sounding boards to consult. Ongoing mentoring relationships are a crucial way to bridge this gap – and are most effective when they exist within an overall climate of mutual respect and appreciation for the unique contributions of both parties. Young informants, in particular, value the freedom to experiment and the opportunity to learn as they go; they also prefer their mentors to act as guides and facilitators, rather than as supervisors.

“The organization really invested a lot in me, allowing me access to training, resources, and opportunities to grow. I had autonomy and authority, and was treated like a peer by supportive mentors willing to share their power. Over time, I became the internal youth expert and was tasked with designing a plan to mainstream youth engagement across the global organization.”

(female former youth leader, Mexico)

We investigated a range of mentoring structures through the YIELD Project – from local, in-person mentorships to long-distance, online arrangements. Our informants identified pros and cons to each approach; that said, promising practice patterns did emerge. Chief among these was that mentors and mentees have the opportunity to build strong interpersonal relationships, ideally in-person, prior to the start of the mentoring experience. This is especially crucial if most subsequent mentoring will take place online. Informants also suggested that formal mentoring relationships are more effective than informal ones, and that near-peer mentors are often able to be particularly helpful (as they offer relevant experience, but are less hampered by inter-generational, cultural divides). FRIDA: The Young Feminist Fund’s approach to mentorship can be found on the following page, in the Spotlit Program box.

Professional accompaniment powers youth-led efforts. Ongoing support for young people can and should take different forms. Several of our informants emphasized the need to move beyond individual mentoring, and provide sustained professional accompaniment for youth-led projects, initiatives, and organizations. This refers mainly to technical assistance and organizational development opportunities for youth-led organizations and networks – a category of support that is critical for young people who seek to launch and manage their own AYSRHR initiatives.

“Adults do not know how to relate and work with youth – and they do not want to make the effort to engage young people in genuine ways. The field mar-

SPOTLIGHT ON LEARNING BY DOING

Youth Participation in High-level Advocacy Events

YIELD informants emphasized both the importance and potential challenges of enabling youth advocates to access relevant decision makers, particularly at higher echelons of governance. Participation in high-level events can be costly, and these opportunities can obviously only be made available to a limited number of young people. But, the rewards of this type of participation – in terms of youth influence over public policy and youth input towards ensuring accountability – can be correspondingly great. Furthermore, a number of our youngest informants described how visible participation in high-level national and intergovernmental meetings, conferences, and forums gave them invaluable opportunities to be heard and to build relationships with influential stakeholders. From this perspective, then, these forums teach young people about how policy processes work and how they can be actively influenced, while also working to strengthen professional and peer networks. This, in essence, is why many programs – like Women Deliver, International Women’s Health Coalition’s Advocacy in Practice, and the 2017 Family Planning Summit’s Youth Advisory Group – specifically place young people in these spaces. Doing so enables youth advocates to learn, gain exposure, and network, while also representing their issues and voicing their demands in ways that only they can.

ginalizes young people in the guise of empowerment by giving them money for ‘youth-led efforts,’ often without the sufficient conditions to allow them to thrive. This makes adults look and feel good, progressive, innovative, and empowering of ‘youth and their capabilities,’ but it can set young people up for failure.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

YIELD informants highlighted a number of manuals, guides, and other resources designed to support youth-led efforts, including those developed by CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality and the United Nations Population Fund. These materials are intended to help young leaders meet the challenges that come with running an organization, including: defining a mission, designing a governance structure, developing a strategic plan, and raising funds. It is important to remember that youth-led organizations face the inherent disadvantages of being unknown, small, disconnected, and under-resourced vis-à-vis other, established civil-society organizations. Youth-led efforts may also be seen as competition for limited attention and resources, or dismissed as inexperienced and ineffective. All of which means that in order to succeed, new youth-led organizations require strong, sound support in the form of ongoing professional accompaniment. The point, here – as one informant from a global, youth-serving organization noted – is “to avoid giving young people the keys without first teaching them how to drive.”

Unfortunately – while this type of support was cited as essential by youth leaders, as well as by a number of adult informants – ongoing professional accompaniment often remains extraordinarily difficult for youth-led initiatives to

access, as it requires a continuous investment of human and financial resources from adults and adult-led organizations. As these efforts are relatively scarce, there are fewer examples to share. Several of our respondents commented that youth-led initiatives need more support than they are getting. Others lamented the degree to which existing supports are uncompensated or invisible, and so inherently unsustainable. This is an area in which the field has room to improve.

Providing young people with funding for their own initiatives is valuable, but current practice can be improved. Organizations like GoJoven, Rise Up, Women Deliver, and the Central America & Mexico Youth Fund provide explicit financial support for young people interested in designing and implementing their own individual or group projects. These projects are seen as a valuable opportunity for young people to exercise autonomy in formulating and testing their own AYSRHR solutions. Ideally, this allows young contributors to set their own agendas, make their own decisions, and experiment with what works and what does not – all while gaining practical experience, deepening their skills, discovering their interests, and identifying the areas in which they need additional training or support. One of the broader advantages to this type of support is that it enables youth-led solutions in the form of new tools, campaigns, projects, programs, and organizations. While funds for youth-led activities of this kind appear to be increasing, informants discussed related challenges, including short project cycles; limited technical guidance on the ground; lack of funds available for human resources; and limited resources available for monitoring and evaluation, documentation, and dissemination.

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

FRIDA: The Young Feminist Fund’s mentoring approach – which utilizes its global network of young feminist advisors – was highlighted by several informants as being particularly powerful.

FRIDA mobilizes slightly-older, local, female advisors to work with young female grantees. These advisors share cultural and linguistic backgrounds with their grantees – and often have the additional advantage of intimate familiarity with the local contexts in which these grantees operate. The dynamic in these relationships is one of open, horizontal collaboration; this forms the basis for trust, honesty, and mutual confidence.

Not only do mentoring relationships of this kind enrich the quality of current youth-driven and youth-led AYSRHR efforts, but these relationships also tend to have ripple effects into the future. Both mentees and mentors spoke about two-way benefits that extend beyond the formal terms of a project or initiative. These benefits can include access to broader and more diverse networks, expanded resource pools, new professional opportunities, and joint collaborations.

In line with YIELD findings, the United States Agency for International Development's Leadership, Management and Governance Project conducted a literature review and global survey to identify best practices in youth participation and leadership across all sectors of development. They determined that the attributes of the most effective programs include: institutional commitment to building the capacity of young people and giving them space to be actively involved in all phases of programming; funding, in the form of grants or stipends, that allows young people to implement their own initiatives; connections to mentors or other sources of ongoing technical assistance that support young people as they apply their skills in new contexts; and pathways of opportunity to avoid losing young people as they transition or age out of a particular program.¹⁴

Understanding barriers that limit the impact of youth participation

Young participants and leaders in AYSRHR face a number of interrelated barriers to impact. These barriers are often context-specific, but a hallmark of supportive, enabling environments is that they help mitigate the effects of these barriers and, in so doing, enable young people to act. In what follows, we will focus on three critical elements: equitably compensating young people for their contributions; ensuring young people's safety; and supporting youth leaders in their efforts to care, adequately, for themselves.

Young people are not being fairly compensated for their time and contributions. Youth leaders spoke repeatedly of the value of their early volunteer experiences, and most support volunteer work for young people as an entrée into AYSRHR issues. The lack of compensation that young people receive, though, begins to feel exploitative at a certain point, especially if the young people in question are working alongside compensated adult colleagues. And the issue

goes beyond fairness. The lack of compensation invariably means that more financially-disadvantaged youth cannot afford to participate in AYSRHR efforts. It also forces young people to take on multiple roles, contributing to stress and burnout (see Spotlighted Program box below).

Paying youth for their work creates greater mutual accountability between young people and their adult partners. It may also simply be more cost- and programmatically-effective to hire smaller numbers of paid young people than to invest in large numbers of volunteers who then quickly drop out. Furthermore, particularly in the case of young females, being paid confers credibility and tends to favorably shift familial and societal norms around the value of young people. This, too, has ripple effects in terms of enabling broader youth participation in AYSRHR programs.

Young people face safety and security risks associated with their participation in AYSRHR activities. Given the sociocultural and political sensitivity of AYSRHR issues, supporting young people to become vocal public advocates and change agents has clear ethical and safety implications. As such, young people must be equipped and supported to mitigate these risks and manage their potential vulnerabilities. YIELD informants – and, particularly, female informants – commented on the need for physical, psychological, and digital security systems to protect against potential forms of backlash and violence. These needs may take the form of detailed, institutionalized security protocols or direct access to emergency funds (the latter of which already exist at organizations like Rise Up, GoJoven, and Asia Safe Abortion Partnership). While the specific needs of youth leaders vary by context, informants were particularly anxious about safety issues in light of the wave of conservative political shifts currently occurring around the world. These shifts are creating increasingly hostile environments in which to address SRHR issues: The spectrum of risk ranges from difficult

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

Young Women's Project: One of the major ways that youth participation is distinguished from adult participation, within the AYSRHR space, is that youth participation remains largely uncompensated. With the exception of fellowship-type programs (e.g. Global Health Corps and the United Nations Population Fund Young Innovators Fellowship Programme), and a number of programs that provide modest stipends, the prevailing trend in AYSRHR youth participation is not to pay young people for their time.

A notable exception to the non-compensation trend is the Young Women's Project, which hires and provides salaries to all of the young people on its staff. This is a core value of the organization as it promotes equity, allows the most disadvantaged to participate, and helps set vulnerable young people on positive academic and professional trajectories.

and draining to violent and dangerous. This makes it all the more necessary to recognize the ways in which working on AYSRHR issues often carries physical and mental health risks for young people.

“All human rights workers are targets, and young women in particular. We train partners in security and risk mitigation at all levels. An institutional approach to safety and security is part of how we assess the institutional strength of our local partners.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

Youth participants in AYSRHR run the risk of burnout. Most of the young people with whom we spoke play multiple, simultaneous AYSRHR roles in the context of rapidly-transitioning personal lives: they run their own local initiatives; partic-

ipate in ongoing training opportunities; serve on national technical working groups, youth coalitions, and boards; attend local, national, and international meetings and conferences; conduct training or consulting activities for pay; and work, all the while, to further their education and maintain their personal and family lives. There is, in other words, a clear tendency among strong and effective youth leaders to spread themselves very thin. As a result, several of our informants commented on the danger of burnout among young contributors, and emphasized the need for the field to support young people in achieving adequate levels of self-care. Part of this may simply be remaining flexible and allowing young influencers to manage their multiple commitments in ways that do not overburden them. This is all the more necessary as these commitments remain largely voluntary and unpaid.

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

FRIDA: The Young Feminist Fund promotes holistic security and collective wellbeing as part of an overarching strategy to encourage personal resilience and ensure the sustainability of the feminist movement.

As part of this, the organization embraces the integration of self-care practices. The goal of this is to help young activists and leaders cope with physical, emotional, and online risks; manage stress; and prevent the burnout and vulnerability that many experience in the early stages of their work as social change agents. Self-care – in this approach – starts with the individual and then extends to the collective, with the understanding that if young leaders and advocates fail to take care of themselves, they cannot effectively work together to address social inequalities and injustice. FRIDA therefore makes a point of promoting positive, healthy professional cultures and environments that encourage team-building and regular time away from work.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings for future efforts are as follows:

- Assess the willingness of stakeholders and decision-makers to create space for youth contributions. Systematically train stakeholders at all levels to share power in youth-adult relationships. Include strategies to provide ongoing monitoring and support to ensure that genuine youth participation is taking place.
- Work toward mainstreaming youth participation and leadership across stakeholder institutions and sectors committed to improving AYSRHR. This could take the form of quotas of young representatives in governance structures; youth participation in full program cycles; integration of young people across programs and divisions; and intentional efforts to absorb program graduates as staff. Continuously monitor and adapt these processes to improve and maintain the quality of youth participation and leadership at the institutional level.
- Ensure that youth participants and leaders have ongoing access to mentors and professional accompaniment.
- Resource youth-led and youth-run efforts in ways that maximize their effectiveness.
- Compensate young people fairly for their time and unique contributions. Providing young participants and leaders with a stipend or salary makes opportunities more democratic and accessible.
- Further test and share effective strategies to safeguard young people and enable them to care for themselves when working on AYSRHR.



CONNECT

CREATE PIPELINES AND PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS TO ENTER THE YIELD CYCLE, AND ENGAGE IN REPEATED CYCLES, IN ORDER TO AGE “UP” RATHER THAN AGE “OUT” OF THE FIELD

Connections among youth participants and adult decision makers are fundamental drivers of change.

Young people’s lives are always, inevitably, in a state of rapid transition. This creates a field-wide challenge to retain young talent, and support the development of young people, as they move from one program or life stage to another. Of course, not all young people wish to continue along an upward trajectory in AYSRHR, but even those who do are often stymied in their efforts. Losing these vital human resources is a problem not only for young people, but also for the field itself. The following learning and experiences suggest pathways forward, in terms of maximizing returns for both individuals and the field:

Peer and professional networks have intrinsic value – for individuals, organizations, and the broader AYSRHR ecosystem. Informants spoke frequently about the importance of peer networks as a means of connecting cohorts of youth contributors and leaders, both with each other and with ongoing professional opportunities. In order for these networks to function successfully, long-term investments must be made in building the capacity of their members, and it can be difficult to tailor the right level of support to individuals with varying needs. However, networks of this kind can have great value as they allow young people to build and leverage personal and professional relationships, while also identifying issues around which to create shared agendas. More will be said on this below. For now, we highlight one particular approach to network formation: clustering dense cohorts of young people at the institutional, as well as sub-national, national, regional, and global levels. This is a

uniquely effective way to create tipping points of youth visibility, influence, and momentum – and may therefore result in swift, impact-level changes. It is also invaluable in helping young people to blaze their own future trails in AYSRHR.

Professional networks are equally important. Our young informants repeatedly emphasized the value of professional networks as a means of identifying opportunities for continued professional growth (in addition to funding opportunities and opportunities for paid work); as a source of mentorships and other formative relationships; and as a hive-mind of knowledge and expertise that can be leveraged in the service of professional pursuits (e.g., designing particular projects or founding and sustaining youth-led organizations). Adult mentors and advisors play critical roles in connecting youth leaders to both resources and future AYSRHR opportunities by identifying funding streams or entry-level positions, assisting with the preparation of job or grant applications, and connecting young people to larger networks of intra- or extra-institutional support.

A growing number of programs – in addition to building the capabilities of young people by focusing on the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and tools – invest in connecting youth advocates to broader professional or advocacy-related networks. According to many of the young people with whom we spoke, this approach pays enormous dividends. The reason for this is simple: Strong professional networks function in a positive feedback loop with both increased professional opportunities and professional growth. As young people are exposed to new opportunities, they build new relationships and gain new professional skills – propel-

ling them into ever-increasing levels of opportunity, both within and across institutions and sectors. This, in turn, opens up additional doors, and gives them further opportunities to grow professionally. Sustained, ongoing support from knowledgeable adults is fundamental to the success of these processes. In addition, maintaining connections with program alumni (through various types of networks) creates platforms for documenting their trajectories, reengaging them in program or other activities, and coordinating for collective action.

“Networks are a very powerful resource for navigating our careers. We can use these to stay connected and to help each other. I am increasingly connected to more powerful networks. We are all moving into bigger roles in different contexts and are exchanging knowledge, connections, and opportunities.”

(young male informant, Sri Lanka)

“I am living the benefits of the networks I am building. For example, I have been connected with a youth-led organization in the United States similar to my organization, but with more of a track record. Its leaders are advising me about the systems we need to put in place to create a sustainable organization that reinvests in itself.”

(young female informant, Malawi)

Some young people can create their own future pathways in AYSRHR, but many cannot. Some young people are able to successfully transition to higher levels of professional responsibility, as well as paid AYSRHR work. These young contributors leverage early training experiences and professional development opportunities to grow their professional networks, expand their knowledge and skill sets, and access increasing levels of opportunity within institutions and in other local, national, and international contexts.

Unfortunately, however, many others do not navigate this transition quite so smoothly. This is perhaps unsurprising, as there are a limited number of opportunities available to young people who “age out” of youth participation and leadership roles. Many of our younger informants also emphasized the degree to which the onus for managing this transition falls almost entirely on them, as there is little explicit, post-program support available from the organizations with which they are affiliated. The problem is made thornier by the fact that aging youth leaders sometimes “betray the idea of transition” by holding onto positions that should, by definition, be held by younger people – simply because they are not able to secure other positions in the field. Another stumbling block is the limited number of employment opportunities available locally. Ideally, young people would return to their home communities after training, and work to improve the lives of their peers – but this becomes unpalatable to them when the lack of local opportunities means that they are returning to more circumscribed futures.

Our informants spoke, repeatedly, of the need to address these problems by creating more inclusive and sustainable pathways of opportunity for young people. Some organizations – like Education as a Vaccine in Nigeria – explicitly try to transition their volunteer staff into paid roles, which then serve as bridges to formal positions in other organizations. Other efforts – like the Population Council’s *Abriendo Oportunidades* program in Guatemala – hire alumni to deliver or run their youth-leadership training programs. This provides pathways of opportunity for young people, while also contributing to the sustainability and expansion of their programs well into the future.

YIELD research offers insights on promising practices in connecting young people with pathways of continuing AYSRHR opportunity. These include creating more entry-level positions in both established and developing organizations;

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America has created a unique and effective intra-institutional strategy to recruit, train, and retain activists and organizers from adolescence into adulthood. Through its national network of clinics, Planned Parenthood identifies young people between the ages of 15-18 and trains them to be AYSRHR peer educators with a basic foundation in SRHR advocacy. These young people can then move on to become members of the Planned Parenthood Generation Action Network, which is geared towards young people between the ages of 18-22. Each youth advocate gets training in undertaking SRHR-related campaigns and awareness-raising activities on college campuses and in communities across the country. From the age of 22+, these now-experienced influencers can participate in the Planned Parenthood Defenders Program and serve on Community Action Councils, this time as adult professionals. Each of these programs serves as a feeder to the next one, thereby creating linked pipelines and pathways for local and national engagement on SRHR issues.

supporting young people in their transition to higher-level, paid roles; bringing program graduates back to sustain, strengthen, and scale existing programs; supporting local organizations; and strengthening two-way, local-to-global youth-participation feedback loops.

Creating more entry-level positions helps young people age “up” rather than “out” of the field. If more junior or entry-level positions were available at AYSRHR organizations, the problem of young people “aging out with nowhere to go” would not be so dire, and the need to create viable succession plans would not be as great. One way to create more entry-level positions, as noted above, is for institutions to mainstream youth participation by establishing quotas that state how many young people or program alums will be hired to fill positions across all departments, divisions, and sectors of their work. The United Nations Population Fund has established this as a general recommendation going forward; as previously noted, *Education as a Vaccine*, *Feminist Approach to Technology*, and *Abriendo Oportunidades* also make concerted efforts to hire program alumni. These organizations are by no means alone: GoJoven hires its alumni as trainers; Rise Up grants travel and speaker fees to its program graduates based on the advocacy activities that they undertake at different levels; and Women Deliver has an established ‘Speakers Bureau’ that functions similarly. The primary challenge of this approach, however, is that these opportunities are still relatively few, as programs and organizations are limited in the number of young people that they can absorb. Moreover, as the global demand for these positions remains relatively static, the overall number of available opportunities continues to be small – particularly for more isolated or marginalized young people.

“As ‘older’ young people who have created new organizations and initiatives, we need a succession plan to create space for new talent... This can be hard – and scary – especially as founders are often very attached to what they have built. But we need to honor what it means to be truly youth-led and lead by example.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

“Many of us face big challenges in transitioning from the range of opportunities available to ‘young people’ to relatively fewer after the age of 30. More options should be available to help bridge this period as we move into professional roles at higher levels.”

(young male informant, Sri Lanka)

“I had trouble moving from voluntary roles to paid professional opportunities in SRHR. I picked a mentor and persisted until I got a job. This is helping me build a strong network and get more experience and skills.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

The field can support young people in their transition to higher-level, paid roles by connecting them with ongoing academic and professional opportunities. As previously noted, young informants lamented the lack of formal post-program support being provided by their affiliate organizations. (And it is worth noting that this support is often more inadequate when the young people in question are endeavoring to start or sustain their own initiatives or organizations.) One response to this problem is for AYSRHR organizations to provide explicit ongoing support for their graduates. Currently, few programs have a systematic approach to doing this, though many organizations are beginning to make the attempt (by hosting career panels, leadership summits, and networking events; or creating alumni chapters and social-media connections). Providing this support might mean building on or establishing formal channels by which young people could be connected with inter-program academic, professional, and development opportunities (including jobs, advocacy activities, and additional training opportunities and scholarships). Or, alternatively, it might mean making a push to institutionalize existing mentoring relationships – such that the time adult mentors existing mentoring relationships – just as long as the time adult mentors spend advising their young mentees on ongoing job, fellowship, or grant applications is no longer invisible or uncompensated. Most host organizations – including Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Teen Health Mississippi, and Advocates for Youth – already offer this level of support on an ad-hoc basis; formalizing it would simply make young people less dependent on the strength and generosity of their individual networks. Additionally, the time adult mentors spend advising young mentees should be institutionalized, and thereby made visible and remunerated.

“We need to create more systematic pathways for youth leaders who have been on youth councils by facilitating their opportunities to become sex educators and formal teachers in the education sector. Or enable them to work with state Departments of Health, or become health care providers. We see the interest, and I would love to see young leaders stay engaged and professionalized. We must ensure that they reinvest their knowledge, skills, and experience in the field, so that we can harness it and enable it to grow.”

(male informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

“I would love more guidance on how to transition to work in reproductive health as a profession. As alums, we get informal mentoring and guidance when we seek it out, but there is not a formal structure to support us. That would be valuable.”

(young female informant, U.S.)

“I see the need for a local community of practice. I am sure there are even more relevant people for us to connect with to learn and grow. For example, I am seeking a professional mentor who can work directly with me on [my organization], but I have not been able to find her yet. There are so many issues we need to learn about – and local, ongoing, experienced support would be so useful.”

(young female informant, Malawi)

Building vibrant alumni networks can pay big dividends. The most common form of post-program support that institutions offer their graduates is, by far, participation in alumni networks. At organizations like Women Deliver, Rise Up, and Global Health Corps, these networks – which are generally maintained through some combination of online and more local, in-person platforms – are the main vehicles for alerting graduates to ongoing professional opportunities. They are also important in and of themselves, as they provide a means of connecting program alumni with each other, as well as with host institutions. This allows young people to build their peer and professional relationships, and helps improve professional outcomes in other ways that have already been discussed in some detail above. Maintaining and sustaining these networks also serves – or could serve – an invaluable purpose for organizations, as these platforms could be used to track the professional trajectories and contributions of young people over time. The primary benefit of this is that it would enable organizations to better document the impact of their programs.

Engaging program graduates to support ongoing programs benefits organizations and communities, as well as individual young people. Another way to help young people transition into higher-level professional positions – or paid roles within the field of AYSRHR – is to engage program graduates to help sustain, strengthen, and scale existing programs. This might mean hiring them as staff consultants (as at Education as a Vaccine in Nigeria) – or it might mean positioning them as trainers or mentors (as at *Red de Mujeres Indígenas Abriendo Oportunidades Aq’ab’al* in Guatemala and the YP Foundation in India). Such approaches allow young people to further hone their professional skills, while helping to deliver subsequent generations of programming. This makes program alums an integral part of sustaining, and even scaling, efforts. Feminist Approach to Technology, for example, is in the process of developing a number of satellite sites, where program graduates have been hired as leaders and supervisors. In this sense, program alumni constitute a new, local human resource pool. Furthermore, employing young people in this way is good not only for youth leaders themselves, or for the organizations that benefit from their talents, but also for local communities. Often, when young people are observed leading, directing, and orga-

nizing programming efforts, the social norms around their participation shift. This helps fellow community members see young people as valuable contributors and influencers. Similar findings have been observed in girls’ individual and collective leadership.¹⁶

Local anchor organizations can play a vital role in supporting youth participation in practice. YIELD findings suggest that supporting local organizations, including those that are youth-led, would also help young people to age “up” rather than “out” of AYSRHR efforts. Ideally, young people should be engaged as early as possible at the local level – something that is only possible if trusted and respected organizations maintain a stable presence in local communities. These organizations are well-positioned to identify and support new cohorts of young people in the field. This, again, is especially important for more socially isolated and marginalized young people, who are otherwise difficult to engage, especially on a long-term or professionalized basis. Such roles are also important for the field, as the landscape of AYSRHR efforts benefits from the creation of diverse pipelines of new, young talent.

“The way to truly build a pipeline of young leaders is to support the long-term strengthening and success of anchor institutions at the most local level. With community and institutional systems in place to identify, build, support, and launch young leaders from a pipeline to a pathway, the stream can be steady and successful. Young leaders will, by definition, move on quickly. They are a transient and transitioning population. There have to be systems to bring new ones in and support those who move on, so that their human capital is further built – and ideally retained and reinvested.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

The field should act to strengthen two-way, local-to-global youth-participation feedback loops. Vital youth-participation feedback loops that communicate local realities and needs to higher-level decision-making bodies are weak; this hinders local implementation and accountability around decisions. There are examples of YIELD programming at the local and subnational levels, as well as at the global level, but there are limited navigable, two-way bridges between these domains of activity. This restricts the flow of information from the grassroots level to higher levels of decision making, while also making it more difficult for tangible results from higher-level decisions to filter back to the ground. More needs to be learned about how to create and sustain such channels in different contexts.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings for future efforts are as follows:

- Establish formal peer and professional networks to support youth participants both during and after their programming experiences. Such expanding networks become invaluable resources in helping young people to scaffold from one AYSRHR experience to another.
- Create intentional pathways within and across initiatives for young people to build their knowledge, skills, and experience – and move into roles of increasing responsibility and influence. A win-win strategy includes hiring program graduates as staff, as these young people represent a valuable, new, local human resource to strengthen and sustain AYSRHR efforts. This also includes ensuring adequate support for youth-led and youth-run initiatives.
- Cluster, connect, and support cohorts and cadres of young leaders – at different levels and across intersectional issues – to foster local, sub-national, national, and international solidarity, feedback loops, and collective action. Young people need access to each other in order to create the tipping-point densities of visibility and action that foster long-term social change.



IMPACT

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IS SUPPORTED, VIRTUOUS CYCLES ARE CREATED THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POSITIVE CHANGE ACROSS THE AYSRHR ECOSYSTEM

Youth participation accelerates impact across all levels of the AYSRHR ecosystem and beyond.

YIELD informants across all stakeholder groups highlighted concrete examples of the ways that youth participation benefits young people, the AYSRHR ecosystem, and broader civil society. This relatively new field may struggle to generate rigorous evidence of impact (as discussed in more detail below), but that does not mean that these impacts are not occurring. In what follows, we detail findings across all three categories of impact.

Impacts on youth participants

Youth participation in AYSRHR efforts contributes to the interrelated personal and professional growth of young people. Engaging with AYSRHR issues and efforts has a number of overlapping impacts on young people. As a result of their contributions to these efforts, young people hone their sense of purpose and agency; they also derive considerable satisfaction from improving the lives of those living within their home communities and at higher levels. Our younger informants spoke frequently about how their participation empowered them and increased their self-confidence and resilience; these are demonstrated protective factors in reducing negative health outcomes among adolescents.¹⁷ As previously noted, several of the training programs that we examined through the YIELD project begin with a focus on the self, and then gradually expand outwards to encourage advocacy in the broader world. Access to safe physical and emotional spaces in which to build life and leadership skills is part of this. The development and cultivation of these

skills and traits is part of the growth that young advocates experience as the result of their participation in YIELD programs.

Moreover, personal and professional growth are often mirror images of each other, especially when it comes to leadership, civic awareness, and AYSRHR issues (the latter of which inevitably have personal, as well as professional, implications for young people). As a result, the sense of agency – of being part of something bigger than themselves – that young people carry forward from these programs plays a substantial role in motivating them to grow professionally. That said, it is equally clear that building youth capabilities – and allowing young people to exercise these capabilities in supportive environments – has direct effects on professional development. These interrelated effects on the personal and professional lives of individuals are among the most well documented of the impacts of youth participation and leadership¹⁸, and, as such, will only be briefly addressed here.

“My experience working (as a youth representative on a global research initiative) took me out of my comfort zone. It was hard, but it really motivated me to learn about new things, and made me more confident and articulate. And it was great for my networking skills. I am now connected to the top players on the global development stage, and I continue to connect with them both professionally and personally.”

(young male informant, Sri Lanka)

As a result of their participation in AYSRHR training programs and their involvement in AYSRHR efforts, young people acquire new knowledge, skills, and tools that they are then encouraged to apply to a variety of other youth-engagement opportunities. In other words, as they gain expertise and skills, and are exposed to a wide range of professional

contexts, young people grow professionally. More than this, these same young people also simultaneously develop relationships with caring adults and like-minded peers, build strong professional networks, and increase their overall stock of social capital. The impact of all of this – on young people, specifically – is hard to overstate.

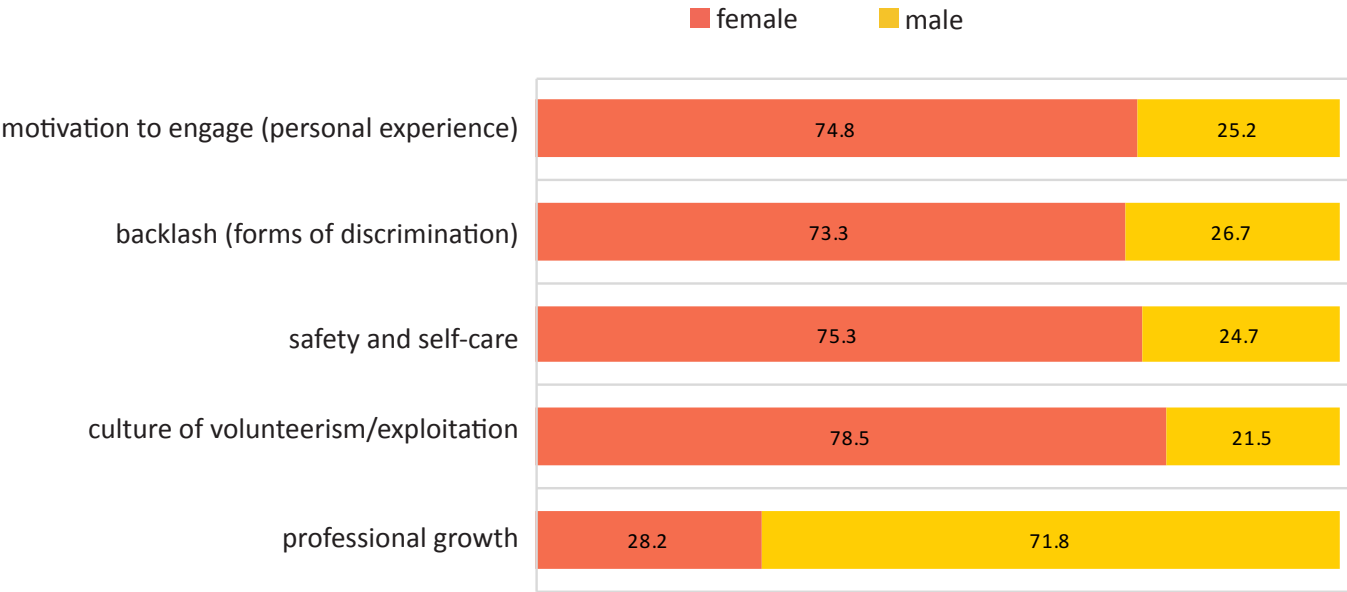
CROSS-CUTTING THEME: GENDER

Females and males articulate different motivations, needs, and experiences related to participation in AYSRHR activities. As we analyzed data collected over the course of the YIELD project, it became clear that some of the “codes” that we created – or the lenses that we used to interpret the data – applied much more frequently to the responses of female informants. This was true for codes like *motivation to engage (personal experience)*, suggesting that females were more likely than males to engage with AYSRHR efforts as the result of personal, and often negative, life experiences; *backlash (forms of discrimination)*, suggesting that females were more likely than males to refer to backlash and discrimination that they experienced as a result of this engagement; and *safety and self-care*, suggesting that females perceive themselves to be more vulnerable, as a result of their AYSRHR work, than males do.

The only code that applied more frequently to the responses of male informants was *professional growth*. (This is illustrated visually below in Figure 5, a graph that depicts the percentage of female versus male responses assigned to each code.)

We flag this here because it may provisionally suggest that males experience greater professional rewards for engaging in AYSRHR efforts than females do – and that females run higher risks as a result of their engagement. If true, this might be a reflection of gender gaps in compensation and employment, as well as personal security – and something that must be rectified going forward. Failure to do so may translate to propagating the very gender inequalities the field seeks to undo.

Figure 5. Code Applications by Gender



This is particularly true when one considers the dialectical relationships that exist between networks, increased professional opportunities, and professional growth – as well as the ways in which all of these factors work together to secure young people’s continuing access to resources. On the one hand, it clearly requires resources to train young people, to build their capabilities, and to give them continued opportunities for professional growth – both at the organizational level and in broader sub-national, national, and international contexts. On the other hand, as young people are given additional opportunities, they become increasingly adept at translating these opportunities into greater personal and professional growth.

The expansive benefits of youth participation and leadership – at levels beyond the most local – currently accrue to a limited group of relatively elite young people. The process by which young people translate new opportunities, relationships, and skills into ever-increasing levels of opportunity – both within organizations and at national and international levels – does not always happen organically. Many organizations and training approaches take an explicit “cream-rises-to-the-top” approach, and invest in individuals at different levels, according to their degree of engagement or skill. This means that many of these opportunities are

concentrated in the hands of relatively few young people – who do, in fact, derive enormous benefit from them. However, many other young people are missing out. That said, it seems self-evident that both individual organizations and the broader AYSRHR community reap clear, ongoing benefits from the growth of young people’s capabilities and agency. These benefits constitute a substantial return on the field’s investment in youth participation and leadership – a topic that will be discussed in more detail below.

Impacts on the AYSRHR ecosystem

The impacts that youth participation and leadership have on the AYSRHR ecosystem – and on AYSRHR outcomes – have not been as effectively or thoroughly documented as the impacts on young people themselves. This does not mean, though, that the engagement of young people has not had multi-faceted impacts on the field.

The word cloud in Figure 6, found on the following page, highlights the relative importance of each of the codes that we used to analyze data gleaned from the YIELD project. This provides a visual of the complex interrelationships between these codes. This graphic can be seen more clearly in interactive, electronic form, but the point is not to delin-

SPOTLIGHT ON AN INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PERSON

The following is a story told to us by a young female informant from Mexico.

Our informant began working at a global, youth-serving organization when she was 20 years old. At first, it was just a summer job, but she had potential, and her supervisors encouraged her to continue working for the organization after she returned to school.

She was curious and enthusiastic; had generous, enabling, and supportive mentors; and was given roles of increasing responsibility, as well as additional opportunities to grow professionally. Eventually, she developed to the point that she was able to publish her work, lead trainings, and participate in global working groups on youth. In time, she was even chosen to lead a new global youth taskforce being piloted by her organization. Taking this position required a move to the United States, as well as further training, but the institution invested in her, and that investment was rewarded: The taskforce was successful.

It was only after the leadership of the organization changed – and became less hospitable to youth participation – that she left to pursue other professional options. She described this decision as wrenching, but throughout the process she retained the support of her original mentors, who helped her successfully transition into a U.S. doctoral program. Her current work continues to be informed by AYSRHR issues, albeit from a more intersectional perspective.

Clearly, then, this informant’s engagement with AYSRHR efforts had an enormous impact on the trajectory of her life and career. Furthermore, this story is unique only in its particulars. We saw this level of impact mirrored in the lives of virtually all of the young informants with whom we spoke. Most of these informants continue to work in the field.

Youth participation strengthens organizations. Involving young people in AYSRHR efforts helps organizations become more connected, responsive, and innovative in their efforts. This, in turn, helps clarify organizational missions and improve organizational programming. Furthermore, to the extent that institutions continue to strive for inclusion and representation – and we have already discussed the degree to which fostering organizational cultures of youth participation is increasingly recommended by the field – this, too, has the potential to improve policies and programs within existing AYSRHR organizations.

Figure 6. YIELD Word Cloud



“We are seeing measurable increases in service uptake by young people and improved outcomes, including reductions in teen pregnancy. I am convinced that mainstreaming youth engagement is at least part of the reason for that.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, Ethiopia)

Youth participation contributes to outcome-level AYSRHR impacts. The outcome-level impacts that youth participation has on the ecosystem of AYSRHR efforts are, in some ways, among the most difficult to disentangle. More will be said later in the report on how the field might improve its monitoring and evaluation efforts, and thus strengthen its understanding of the depth and breadth of the impacts occurring in this area.

A significant part of the impact that youth participation has on the AYSRHR ecosystem is clearly in the form of new youth-led projects, campaigns, and organizations. Our informants spoke repeatedly about the impacts that these kinds of youth-led efforts have on the field of AYSRHR – including, but not limited to, areas of programming, service delivery, advocacy, and research. To illustrate this point, we present some voices of youth below.

“Our youth-led organization undertook pioneering health services research on the access and quality barriers experienced by the transgender community. We then conducted sensitization workshops for hospital staff on how to provide gender-affirming health-care to improve service quality for gender-diverse populations.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

“I never expected to see this kind of potential in my country, in terms of the policy work that is being done around legalizing abortion. And we are at the heart of it. Most of us are under the age of 30, and we are being consulted as experts on this issue.”

(young female informant, Sri Lanka)

“Through the National Youth Council, we developed a manual based on youth inputs about what is required to provide youth-friendly health services. And our manual was adopted by the Ministry of Health.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

“I am seeing girls resist early marriage and negotiate the use of contraception. We hear many personal sto-

ries of how our work has positively changed lives.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Guatemala)

“I have been personally involved in several initiatives in my country that have contributed to national-level change, including a revision of the abortion law and policies around the delivery of adolescent and youth-friendly services through the public sector. The voice and influence of young people on these issues has been critical.”

(female former youth leader, Rwanda)

“SRHR is about more than accessing services. It’s about autonomy and agency. Young people are a strong force when our voices are heard. This is what the Black Protest in Poland showed – that we are the ones giving people in Parliament power. We are the government. We have rights. We decide.”

(young female informant, global youth-led organization)

Youth participation contributes to improved program design and delivery – and related outcomes. As can be seen above, youth engagement takes many forms. The impact of youth participation and leadership springs from youth-led efforts

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: YOUTH-ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

Youth participation in AYSRHR is good for adults. We have so far concentrated on the impacts that youth participation and leadership have on young people themselves – and, additionally, on the impacts that youth engagement has on institutions. It is also worth noting that working with young people meaningfully impacts adults.

When adults interact closely with young people, they come into direct contact with the energy, passion, and creativity of youth. They experience first-hand the unique contributions that young people make, and the unique knowledge and skills that they possess. All of this helps adults to see youth leaders as legitimate partners in AYSRHR efforts. The result? Adults begin to make more space for young people’s participation and leadership. Similar findings have been demonstrated in the literature.²⁶

Adults also reap other benefits from their partnerships with young people. Working with young advocates and influencers revitalizes their efforts and gives them renewed commitment to the cause; enhances their sense of competence and confidence in relating to young people; and makes them more attuned to both youth realities and the communities in which they work. Often, it also gives them access to fresh ideas and perspectives – such that they are able to develop more relevant, responsive, creative, and sustainable programs and/or policies. And to all of this is also added another substantial benefit: the ability to reach more people by tapping into youth networks and engaging young people as personnel.

to design and implement innovative new programs or services; improve the quality of existing AYSRHR services (by collaborating in the development of youth-centered delivery models); increase the demand for AYSRHR information and services (by undertaking targeted outreach efforts or spearheading awareness campaigns among peers); create momentum for social or political change (by mobilizing young people to advocate for more responsive laws or policies); and provide youth-centered guidance on how best to monitor the implementation of existing policies. The above is by no means a complete list of the unique and critical contributions that young people make to improve AYSRHR efforts. In what follows, we present additional examples, as described by adult informants. Such advantages of youth participation are also echoed in the literature, which links youth involvement in health activities to the benefits of tailoring programs to their specific needs.²⁰

“Our Teen Connectors serve as the bridge between our service providers and our young female client

population. They help us identify new clients, understand what they want, design approaches responsive to their needs, and channel feedback on how we are doing. Since introducing our Teen Connectors to mobilize young women and bring them into services, we have seen important increases in the number of unmarried young women using our clinics. We have seen rising rates of young females switching from short-term to longer-term contraceptive methods. And we are working to overcome loss to follow-up.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, Zambia)

“The Youth Peer Provider model is a hybrid of peer education and community based distribution. We train adolescents to provide counseling and contraceptive supplies directly to their peers – where they are. Through this approach, the critical gap between information and service delivery is closed, which is where so many young people with unmet needs drop through. In Africa and Latin America, we have seen

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: GRANTEE-FUNDER RELATIONSHIPS

Many of the programs and organizations that we examined through the YIELD project explicitly support youth-led projects, campaigns, organizations, and networks by providing not only seed funding for these efforts, but also ongoing mentoring and professional accompaniment. The importance of these forms of support has already been discussed in some detail.

As program, service, and advocacy organizations move to invest in young people – and youth-led organizations continue, against all odds, to flourish – it reinforces the need for the funding paradigm to shift in response. Both young people and fledgling, youth-led organizations thrive when given flexible, long-term support, as well as core funding for critical tasks like capacity-building and organizational development. Providing more of this type of funding, even at relatively modest levels, would more adequately support youth-led efforts. A handful of examples can be better studied to lend insight into how funders can offer the right kinds of support to youth-led efforts.

One of the clearest of these examples is FRIDA: The Young Feminist Fund, which is disrupting philanthropy through an approach that it refers to as participatory grant-making. This approach entails letting grantees – or those entrenched in the issues on the ground – review each other’s applications and decide which proposals should be funded, given the limited resources available. This inclusive and transparent model puts decision-making power in the hands of young feminists themselves – actively changing the power balance and relationship dynamics that operate in philanthropy. This same open, collaborative spirit drives FRIDA to learn as much as possible about the needs of the young feminists it supports. Through commissioned research and its own monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems, FRIDA generates and shares evidence. This evidence helps ensure that the grant-making and broader support that FRIDA gives to young, feminist activists is as responsive as possible.

significant increases in contraceptive uptake among first time users, increased numbers of clinic visits, and reductions in adolescent pregnancy in clients under the age of 20.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

“Through integrated programming that combines youth friendly service delivery and comprehensive sexuality education with active roles for young people as health promoters and change agents, clinic visits by adolescents in El Salvador have tripled, and in Bolivia they have doubled over the past several years. We are seeing the clear and direct value of incorporating youth into our delivery models.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

“Anyone who wants proof of the impact of youth advocates need look no further than recent movements in the United States: Black Lives Matter, United We Dream, and the Women’s March together have changed the fabric of our country. These issue-inclusive mobilization groundswells were all run by women of color under the age of 30.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

Advocacy efforts are strengthened and propelled by youth voices. Many of our informants emphasized the role that youth-led efforts play in producing better policies and tangible advocacy wins. The literature also indicates that youth participation contributes to better decisions and policies.²¹ It allows decision-makers to tap into the unique perspectives, knowledge, and experiences of adolescents – which, in turn, brings a better understanding of their needs and problems, and leads to better solutions.²² Recent examples of youth-inclusive policy changes articulated by YIELD informants include the attainment of national budget increases for contraceptives in Tanzania; work around the legalization of abortion in Sri Lanka and Rwanda; and the adoption of new, comprehensive sexuality education curricula in schools in India, Pakistan and Belize. It is important to remember, however, that policy victories are just the tip of the iceberg, in terms of the overall contribution that youth-led efforts make to the larger AYSRHR ecosystem. That is because, inevitably, behind each of these measurable victories, there are powerful youth networks and movements, which function as groundswells of awareness and support for AYSRHR causes. Furthermore, the youth influencers, advocates, and contributors who champion these causes represent a valuable pipeline of AYSRHR leadership that is likely to prove as essential in the future as it is already demonstrating itself to be now. Again, more will be said on this later in the report.

“We cannot define our success by the indicator of policy wins alone. We are creating bold, disruptive, unapologetic campaigns that are inspiring and galvanizing youth in the pro-choice movement. And we are seeing our numbers of supporters and champions grow. We need to redefine what success looks like.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, U.S.)

Youth participation is not necessarily expensive. The literature contradicts the assertion that involving young people in decision-making, at all levels, is more expensive than involving adults. The positive financial implications of allowing young people to influence youth-responsive solutions – which may then be more readily accepted and practical – remain largely overlooked. Further study of the cost-effectiveness of youth participation is advised.²³

Impacts on civil society

If the outcome-level impacts that youth engagement has on the AYSRHR ecosystem are difficult to quantify, more difficult still are the impacts that youth participation and leadership have on civil society. However, our findings suggest that not only are these impacts occurring, but they are occurring in powerful and meaningful ways.

Sustained civic engagement around AYSRHR and related issues – by and with young people – helps shift social norms. As young people become increasingly involved with AYSRHR efforts, they become more aware of their rights and more civically engaged. In a sense, they take what might be described as their first steps along a path that leads them to become “advocates for life” on SRHR issues. The links between youth participation in development activities and their increased engagement in civil society is reinforced in the literature.²⁴ The ongoing presence of these advocates in local communities – as well as in sub-national, national, and international policy-making spaces – is of great value. These same young people become the impetus for changing social and cultural norms, as well as enabling and sustaining collective action.²⁵ In this way, young people are very clearly an important and unique force for social change – and the backbone of participatory and democratic governance. As a result, the investments made in building their capabilities and enabling their agency create ongoing ripple effects.

“Planting the seed of leadership in SRHR issues early can bear fruit at many points later on – the developmental literature shows this. Return only starts to show in early adulthood, when girls have the agency to start making SRH-related decisions. It takes time to see the full extent of program benefits, but we know it pays off.”

(female researcher, U.S.)

“It is really after 10 years of work in communities that the sustainability of youth-led contributions to SRHR can be seen. When information and education and behavior change are passed from sibling to sibling, from youth advocates to community members, and from youth leaders to young professionals. This is when real impact can be seen.”

(female former youth leader, India)

The current Minister of Health in Ethiopia was trained in a Family Guidance Association youth program. When he was interviewed for their 50th anniversary, he said that early experience generated his interest in medicine and put him on his current path. Many of our youth go on to hold influential positions across disciplines and remain champions of SRHR for life.”

(female informant, youth-serving organization, Ethiopia)

Again, however, the impacts that youth participation and leadership have on civil society are intrinsically difficult to measure. This is at least partially because these impacts are so far-reaching, and have such long time horizons. We discuss some of the innovative methodologies that AYSRHR researchers are currently using to investigate these impacts below. For now, though, we emphasize that our informants are nearly unanimous in their belief that these impacts constitute powerful returns on the field’s investments in young people. We end this section by spotlighting the Feminist Approach to Technology, an organization that is already beginning to see the fruits of its labors in this area.

SPOTLIGHTED PROGRAM

Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT), in India, has two programs: one that focuses on teaching science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills to girls and another that concentrates on developing girls’ leadership skills.

The organization is committed to a truly girl-centered model of programming: The central tenet is listening to girls and letting them lead. But the model also integrates gender, rights, and AYSRHR concepts into a larger framework of STEM education and technology-based leadership. The programming is locally-driven, culturally-sensitive, age- and developmentally-appropriate – and also emphasizes hands-on, applied learning through project making and delivery. In addition, the organization encourages girls to get involved in advocacy by pushing for policy changes that support gender equity. Many participants eventually embrace a broader advocacy agenda, in which they champion opportunities for girls and young women, overall.

The oldest of FAT’s programs has been in existence for only six years, so the organization has not had much opportunity, yet, to demonstrate impact. That said, FAT has made a concerted effort to track its participants over time, and has seen considerable growth in the girls and young women that it trains.

Already, there have been significant changes in how participants speak, what they say, how they carry themselves, how they make decisions, and how they negotiate with others. The girls have demonstrated improvement in both academic performance and outcomes (to the point that many now stay in school longer and are more likely to pursue higher education); in health outcomes (as many more now access AYSRHR services); and even in work and social outcomes (as some are now comfortable voicing their professional aspirations to their families and pushing back on child marriage). The program’s participants have also become effective advocates: They are currently negotiating with the Ministry of Education to include STEM labs in public schools based on the demonstrated success of the organization’s own independent labs.

Perhaps even more impressive, however, are the changes that FAT has witnessed in these girls’ families and communities, which have become demonstrably more supportive. The organization’s work is linked to broader social change, in terms of shifting local norms related to gender and family power structures. And what is this if not a cascading effect of investing in youth?

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings for future efforts are as follows:

- YIELD informants agree: Cultivating youth participation is good for young people, AYSRHR interventions, and society as a whole. We know less about the effects of youth participation on health and social outcomes, as these causal pathways are difficult to establish. But there is broad optimism that more can be done to generate a robust evidence base (see following section).



TRACK

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION STRATEGIES THAT DOCUMENT THE RESULTS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Additional resources, stronger cross-stakeholder partnerships, and emerging research tools can help document impact.

We have discussed the importance of equipping young people for action (by building their capabilities), enabling young people to act (by providing supportive environments in which they can exercise their agency), and connecting young people with resources and opportunities (in order to create pathways for them to age “up” rather than “out” of AYSRHR work). We have also commented, in some detail, on the what we know about the intersecting impacts that investments of this kind have on young people, the field of AYSRHR, and even the broader landscape of civil society. Here we focus on how the field might better track these impacts, or measure the contributions that young people make to AYSRHR efforts, while also documenting the more specific outcome-level results of their participation.

As previously discussed, youth participation takes many forms – and has far-reaching impacts on both young people and institutions. In addition, the impact that youth contributions have on the field of AYSRHR springs from a diverse set of youth-led efforts. These include efforts to design and implement innovative new programs or services; improve the quality of existing AYSRHR services (by collaborating in the production of youth-centered delivery models); increase the demand for AYSRHR information and services (by undertaking intensive outreach efforts or spearheading awareness campaigns); create momentum for social or political change (by mobilizing young people to advocate for more responsive laws or policies); and provide youth-cen-

tered guidance on how best to monitor the implementation of existing policies. This is merely an illustrative list of youth-led endeavors and is far from exhaustive. How, then, should the field go about measuring and documenting such deep and overlapping impacts?

The problem: why the field’s current monitoring and evaluation efforts are inadequate

All of the practitioners with whom we spoke are certain that youth contributions have a meaningful impact on AYSRHR efforts. But the field is currently measuring only a small fraction of these impacts. Efforts to measure the impacts of youth participation and leadership are hindered by three interrelated problems: one, the limited resources available for monitoring and evaluation; two, the splintered, disconnected nature of the field; and three, a lack of overarching agreement on purpose and methodology, which prevents the field from developing consistent indicators or metrics.

Limited resources are earmarked for monitoring and evaluation. There are limited resources (human and financial) available to measure the impact of youth contributions – and many of our informants emphasized the ways that this constrains the field’s monitoring and evaluation efforts. Youth-led initiatives and organizations, in particular, lack the time, money, and skills to document their own results or analyze data that they do collect – and more established organizations share some of these same problems (if, perhaps, to a more limited degree). These initiatives and organizations – most of which are program- and/or advocacy-centered – are not research-focused, or necessarily equipped

to do this type of analytical work. In some cases, the problem is the lack of resources available to document results; in others, the lack of ability to analyze collected data, or even the lack of resources available to prepare analyzed data for external dissemination. Regardless of the specific nature of the problem, the result is the same: poor documentation of organizational efforts and impacts. Almost all YIELD informants indicated that their home institutions are interested in doing more monitoring and evaluation work, but lack the institutional capacity to do so. All of this seems to speak, then, to two broader problems: having limited funds specifically allocated for evaluation efforts, and relying too heavily on under-equipped organizations to spearhead evaluation of their own effectiveness.

“I am sure things would be far worse without our work. We have so many stories to tell and so many demonstrations of positive impact on individual lives. We need better ways to communicate our stories of success and aggregate them to show the value of our work.”

(female former youth leader, with youth-serving org., U.S.)

“We see many examples of how youth leadership experience builds resiliency and allows more marginalized youth to thrive. It is good for individuals and good for the broader movement. It is important to do more research around this and document it with rigor.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

“I see great potential in the collection and use of youth-generated data on SRHR services. When we can link direct client feedback to policy advocacy, we can create a powerful, evidence-based policy-practice loop that holds the public sector accountable.”

(female former youth leader, youth-serving org., Nigeria)

YIELD programs are woefully disconnected in the area of monitoring and evaluation. Many informants noted that the splintered nature of the field impedes its ability to assess the impact of youth contributions. Currently, a number of organizations are trying, with varying levels of sophistication and success, to document and analyze their own effectiveness. This learning, though, is not being shared across institutions – meaning that each institution has to continually reinvent the wheel with regard to its own evaluation practices, and is unable to benefit from learning that already exists within the field. Some possible solutions to this problem – including the creation of communities of practice, the increased use of open-source documentation and analysis, and the formation of funders’ groups focused on identifying and socializing best practices in youth-centered investment – will be discussed in more detail on the following pages.

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: THE PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER RELATIONSHIP

Our informants offered a number of potential solutions to the problems identified above. Some felt that their home organizations would benefit from knowledge-management support and expertise at the institutional level; others favored partnerships with research organizations, or the creation of multi-disciplinary, research-centered teams. But it is important to note that there is another cleavage operating here: between practitioners and researchers.

While the researchers with whom we spoke were, by and large, optimistic about the potential of the field’s monitoring and evaluation efforts, some practitioners were more cautious, especially when discussing the potential fruitfulness of practitioner-researcher partnerships. These informants had one central concern: that “ivory tower” academics would interfere with their work, without appropriately understanding or appreciating the complex conditions and practical realities on the ground. These concerns remind us that if these types of practitioner-researcher partnerships are to be successful and effective, they must be nurtured with the same degree of care that we use in cultivating relationships between young people and adults. This is particularly true when they are one and the same.

SPOTLIGHT ON AGGREGATED DATA

As we analyzed data collected over the course of the YIELD project, it became clear that some of the broad code categories that we used – among them *characteristics of youth leaders*, *impacts on youth*, and *evidence* – were more interrelated than others. This can be seen visually. For example, in the broad category of *impacts on youth* – which includes codes like *personal growth*, *professional growth*, *network formation*, and *safety and self-care* – some, but not all, of the codes are interrelated, or correlated with one another. In this way, *personal growth* is linked to *professional growth*, and *professional growth* is linked to *network formation*; these relationships can be seen in the spots of yellow amid the sea of blue and green, seen in Figure 7.

The broad category of *evidence* – which we used to isolate all of the responses that referred to the field’s attempts to document and assess the impact of youth contributions – was unusually interrelated. The codes within this category – including *poor documentation*, *insufficient resources for monitoring and evaluation*, *splintered/disconnected field*, *lack of agreement on methodology*, and *lack of consistent indicators or metrics* – were the most highly correlated within our data set. This, too, can be seen visually in the yellows, oranges, and reds in Figure 8. These colors represent the high levels of co-occurrence, or interrelationship, between these codes.

What does this mean? It means that when informants discussed the problems that plague the field’s current monitoring and evaluation efforts, they mentioned not one of these dimensions, but all of them. For practitioners, researchers, and funders alike, these problems are interrelated – and constitute a major impediment to progress in this area.

Interestingly, these very interrelationships suggest that – however disconnected the field in which they operate – our informants are in near-universal agreement as to how to characterize these broader problems. This broad base of agreement will be of clear benefit moving forward.

Figure 7. Interrelationships within the Category of Impacts on Youth

	1	2	1	21
1		12	28	5
2	12		21	6
1	28	21		2
21	5	6	2	

Figure 8. Interrelationships within the Category of Evidence

	16	7	56	24	19
16		27	46	8	31
7	27		20	3	11
56	46	20		12	54
24	8	3	12		12
19	31	11	54	12	

There is little alignment around either purpose or methodologies. YIELD informants highlighted an overarching lack of alignment on how to measure impact, which inhibits current monitoring and evaluation efforts. The field's efforts in this area have failed to coalesce around a particular set of methodologies – meaning that many are being piloted simultaneously. This is not surprising, as many of our respondents reported that the field is not aligned around primary objectives. There is, in other words, no central agreement on the larger categories of impact that the field is trying to make. As an example, Natal (2002)²⁷ highlights that youth participation can be considered a process or an approach to meet objectives – or it can be regarded as an outcome or an end in itself. Without a central, overarching focus – or a common understanding of the fundamental research questions that the field is seeking to answer – it is difficult to imagine how to effectively assess the impact that youth contributions are having on the AYSRHR space. Related to this is another problem, suggestive of a broader practitioner-funder split. A number of our informants commented on the difficulty of measuring “youth influence,” and expressed concerns that their funders might have unrealistic expectations about what level of impact could be realistically or rigorously demonstrated.

All of this has spillover effects on the indicators and metrics being used by the field. In the absence of broad agreement on what constitutes “impact,” the field cannot develop common metrics with which to assess the results of youth participation and leadership. Of course, even once these metrics exist, they will not be a panacea, as much of the work of assessment will by necessity be local and contextual. That said, common indicators would represent a significant advance in the field's monitoring and evaluation efforts – and a number of institutions are currently in the process of developing indicators for their own work, in concert with external evaluators and consultants. Examples include proxy indicators for contribution, built off the ProCapacity Index (a mixed-methods tool developed by Abt Associates, which uses a scorecard approach to measure the capacity and sustainability of organizations, and which has been adapted to specifically measure health clinics in ways that allow for comparability across different clinics)²⁸; work related to the ChampionTracker Tool (which allows advocates to track their own contributions over time, in ways that enable them to assess their own progress along a continuum of action); and deep-dives into the Emergent Model, which is based on complexity theory.²⁹ But, again, all of these efforts are likely to be of limited use if the field cannot agree on common objectives and methodologies. In what follows, we present some suggested pathways forward.

The solution: pathways forward in the field's monitoring and evaluation efforts

YIELD findings suggest that the field needs to allocate more resources to monitoring and evaluation efforts – while also providing more dedicated, research-based support to the organizations spearheading these efforts. (Again, this support could take many forms, including both institutional technical assistance and more formal partnerships with research organizations.) As previously noted, it is equally crucial that practitioners, researchers, and funders develop some unified understanding of both purpose and methodology. This, more than anything else, will enable the field to effectively measure the impacts that youth contributions have on the AYSRHR ecosystem. We suggest three pathways forward to move the field in this direction. The first is creating communities of practice; the second is investing in innovative and new methodologies; and the third is harnessing the power of existing social-science principles and techniques.

“Young people working on SRHR issues ... are not systematically connected. In fact, there is clearly a political strategy to divide us and impede our collective power. We need a directory and other mechanisms to learn about each other, connect, share, and cross-refer.”

(youth discussion-group participant, Malawi)

Creating communities of practice would jump-start the field's evaluation efforts. As previously noted, monitoring and evaluation efforts are currently plagued by both the disconnected nature of YIELD programming and the lack of overarching agreement on either fundamental research questions or methodologies. One solution to both of these problems is to build on and/or create viable communities of practice – which would function, not only as forums for collaborative discussion, but also as archives of open-source documentation, tools, and analysis. The existence of these forums would allow practitioners, researchers, and funders – all of whom are invested in maximizing the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership – to share ideas, identify best practices within the field, fine-tune evaluation efforts, and vet a range of common indicators and metrics. And perhaps even more important, the existence of these communities of practice would also help the field move towards some common agreement regarding overarching principles, fundamental research questions, and broad methodologies.

Investing in innovative, new methodologies will help propel AYSRHR research forward. As previously noted, some organizations are currently piloting innovative, new methodologies with which to assess the impact of youth contributions to AYSRHR efforts. Some of these methodologies – including

the longitudinal follow-up of young people – are well-established and of unequivocal benefit, if perhaps unevenly applied. (See the Cross-cutting Themes box below.) Others – like tracking service uptake before and after outreach efforts, or using mystery clients to assess the accessibility and quality of services – have recently demonstrated their relevance by providing strong, ongoing assessments of AYSRHR programs. Still others – among them harnessing the power of collective storytelling or using impact-mapping to assess advocacy work (via online advocacy trackers³⁰, Impact Mapper software³¹, or the Gender at Work framework³²) – are newer and remain relatively untried. The field of youth participation in AYSRHR is, in this sense, “pre-paradigm” – in that its monitoring and evaluation efforts have not yet coalesced around a defined set of methodologies.³³ That said, the goal of each of these innovative measurement techniques is the same: to provide stronger evidence of the impacts of youth contributions on AYSRHR efforts. Fundamentally, then, these methodological experiments are strengths, rather than liabilities. This is especially true if they are made within the context of larger communities of

practice, such that their successes and failures enable the field to refine its future monitoring and evaluation efforts.

“There is a lot of interest in [our training experience], so we are sharing as much as we can. But so much more can and should be done to better document and socialize our learning.”

(female informant, global youth-serving org.)

“If we could just introduce experimental designs to start to explore and get a handle on stronger evidence, that would be a huge shift in the youth participation and leadership space.”

(female informant, global research organization)

“We need to track [youth-led efforts], and youth leaders overall, much better over time to see what they go on to do and what influence they have. Social media can help with this.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: TECHNOLOGY

The longitudinal follow-up of young people is – or should be – one of the cornerstones of the field’s monitoring and evaluation efforts. This technique not only allows researchers to track knowledge and skill retention among youth exposed to training or education programs, but it also allows them to track the personal and professional growth of young people engaged in AYSRHR efforts. Furthermore, if longitudinal data is collected in a detailed and rigorous way – such that it remains comparable over long periods of time – it should enable the field to assess the impact that individual youth leaders have on both institutions and the broader landscape of AYSRHR efforts. Even more than this, it will document the roles that these same young people later come to play within civil society.

In the aggregate, this type of information can be very powerful. Unfortunately, however, collecting such data is often insuperably difficult, especially in the context of short project cycles and limited resources for monitoring and evaluation. But new forms of technology – including social-media platforms – have given our informants new hope regarding the potential of longitudinally tracking youth participants. This is because these technologies have made it easier, and cheaper, to track young people than ever before. The process will take time, but will almost certainly be fruitful. The field will benefit from the troves of longitudinal data that new technologies now enable us to collect.

To a certain extent, we are already seeing results of this kind. Both GoJoven and Global Health Corps have been able to track the trajectories of their graduates over time. In a 2015 evaluation, GoJoven found that 89% of its program alumni reported doing some form of AYSRHR and/or SRHR work as their primary work. Furthermore, 82% reported being in some sort of leadership role.³⁴ Likewise, in a 2017 evaluation, Global Health Corps found that 90% of their graduates were working in global health or social justice, 83% were in mid- or senior-level leadership positions, and another 20% were founders or co-founders of their own organizations. Similarly, 85% of their African alumni continued to work in the region, and 33% got their current job through the Global Health Corps community.³⁵ These results are important, as the philosophy of Global Health Corps is to “go deep to go wide,” a strategy that leads the organization to invest heavily in a relative few, who then ascend to increasingly high-impact roles.

Ongoing YIELD evidence generation should harness the power of existing social-science principles and techniques. We have discussed, in some detail, the many intersecting impacts that youth engagement has on AYSRHR efforts. That said, while some of these impacts are easy to quantify, others are constitutively less so. Young people are particularly credible influencers in the AYSRHR space, and are at the heart of many movements for change. But they are not alone in their efforts or advocacy; other individuals, institutions, governments, and even historical processes all play their part. Furthermore, YIELD efforts have broad impacts – not only on individual young people, but on the social, political, and cultural systems in which they operate. All of this means that assessing “youth influence” on AYSRHR is both complex and difficult. Causal relationships are not easy to establish, and most assessments place us firmly in the realm of contribution analysis. However, there is increasing momentum around measuring influence, particularly in advocacy-related efforts.³⁶

The field’s monitoring and evaluation efforts fall within the scope of social science research, and can benefit from wider adoption of established, social-science methodologies.

These methodologies are both quantitative and qualitative – and range from large-scale statistical analyses (using data gleaned from surveys, longitudinal tracking, or even the historical record) to detailed case studies (of the kind currently being employed to assess the women’s movement to legalize abortion in Uruguay).³⁷ These techniques – when used in conjunction with the innovative, new methodologies listed above (many of which are specific to AYSRHR efforts) – will allow the field to better assess the impact of youth contributions.

Clear evidence gaps in YIELD for AYSRHR remain. As noted throughout the report, our literature reviews and field inquiries identified substantial knowledge gaps in areas related to YIELD for AYSRHR efforts. We highlight these core gaps here following the reporting process map, with the understanding that conducting specific research to address these gaps is not a substitute for a broader reconceptualization of the field’s monitoring and evaluation efforts. This reconceptualization is still necessary, if we are to adequately document the complex and multi-faceted impacts of youth participation in AYSRHR. That said, it would be useful to generate substantive answers to the following questions:

Area	Core Research Questions
FIND	Which recruitment and retention strategies work best with different youth sub-groups?
EQUIP	Which inter and extra-programmatic designs and structures best support youth participation so that young people can be more than “experts in their own lives”?
ENABLE	How can we effectively connect youth and adults so that both perspectives are genuinely valued and leveraged?
CONNECT	How can we connect youth participation across administrative levels (i.e., connect local to sub-regional to national to global), creating effective two-way feedback loops to inform laws, policies, programs, services, and research?
IMPACT	How does youth participation in AYSRHR influence health and social outcomes for young people – both in terms of those engaged and those reached? What are the long-term impacts of youth participation in AYSRHR – for young people, stakeholder institutions, and the broader ecosystem? What does scale look like and how can it be achieved in YIELD for AYSRHR programming?
CROSS-CUTTING	What are alternative funding models that create long-term stability and space for youth-led innovation? What are the gender and identity-group implications of adolescent and youth participation in AYSRHR efforts? How do we disrupt systems of gender inequality, rather than potentially propagating them? How can the benefits of technology be leveraged and potential risks mitigated to maximize and scale efforts in the different domains of youth participation in AYSRHR? What is the cost-benefit calculus of youth participation in AYSRHR?

Young people themselves have fundamental roles to play documenting YIELD effectiveness. As with all other areas of AYSRHR, young people can and are making valuable contributions to monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning efforts. Informants cited examples of the multiple benefits of training and engaging young people in these activities, including leveraging the specific insights that young people bring to developing research questions, as well as gather-

ing and interpreting data from peers; building the individual skills and experiences of young people; and ensuring greater credibility in the generation and application of findings. Such benefits have also been documented in both the youth participation and the AYSRHR literature. However, as with other areas of youth participation, appropriate training and support are critical, as is the safeguarding of young people in peer researcher roles.³⁸

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings for future efforts are as follows:

- Build sufficient resources for effective monitoring and evaluation into project proposals, and integrate evaluation strategies into programming from its inception.
- Create cross-stakeholder communities of practice to share current learning and coordinate action around common YIELD for AYSRHR purposes, methodologies, and indicators.
- Identify potential research opportunities across current program portfolios, in order to nest common experiments and address ongoing knowledge gaps.
- Leverage social-science research expertise from SRHR and beyond to enable genuine, two-way research-practice partnerships. Such collaborations build the internal research capacity of implementing organizations, while also generating more and better external evaluations.
- Engage the unique contributions of young people in evidence generation, while always ensuring appropriate training, support, and safeguarding.

CONCLUSION

YIELD project findings show that young people are arguably *the most critical stakeholders* in the ongoing challenge of meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents and youth – from the local to the global level. After all, who could be more committed, tenacious, creative, and optimistic in working toward change from the inside-out than the end-users themselves? It is obvious, however, that young people need the sustained support of practitioners, decision-makers, researchers, and funders in helping to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. And while there is clearly a good deal of activity supporting youth participation in AYSRHR around the world, it is not nearly enough.

The current field lacks the shared vision and coordination necessary to move from what is now a fragmented range of programs and projects to a more systemic way of working with young people as partners and leaders. Authentic youth

participation requires changing mindsets and behaviors – within the policy, practice, research, and funder spheres – to more equitably share power with young people. As such, YIELD informants call upon funders to leverage investments made to date by moving in three critical directions:

- **Support a systems-based approach** to mainstreaming youth participation across the AYSRHR ecosystem;
- **Coordinate stakeholders** to facilitate agenda-setting, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration; and
- **Act as catalysts** for expanding and supporting youth-led and youth-driven initiatives in ways that allow them to have sustainable, multi-level impact.

Important value is currently being left on the table by not taking these actions – and, in taking them, the field will be better able to optimize AYSRHR outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

“There is a perception that investing in youth is expensive. We cannot afford NOT to invest in young people – and it has to be done over the long term. We are looking at a 30-year proposition to change a generation by encouraging and enabling them to engage politically and otherwise. This the key to long-term social justice.”

(female informant, global youth-serving organization)

Funders are unique and critical stakeholders in the YIELD for AYSRHR ecosystem – and, as such, can play a pivotal role in promoting and supporting the sea of changes required to maximize the return on YIELD investments. The YIELD project offers recommendations to inform a next-generation investment strategy.

Support a systems-based approach

YIELD informants and other committed stakeholders concur: The best underlying strategy to reap the widespread benefits of youth involvement is to foster the mainstreaming of inclusive youth participation across the AYSRHR ecosystem. Changing adult behavior, institutional cultures, and larger systems is challenging and requires long-term commitment and support. However, real participation necessitates a redistribution of power. If the full return on current and future investments in youth participation is to materialize, this work must be prioritized. YIELD stakeholder experience indicates that these kinds of changes can and are being realized.

Funders can promote the mainstreaming of youth participation in AYSRHR in a range of ways, including by guiding and supporting:

- *Youth-serving institutions:* Enable youth-serving institutions that have mainstreamed youth participation to document and share their stories of change and results (e.g., through extended case studies); explore the creation of a working group that could provide guidance for the rest of the field (e.g., by drawing on success stories, tools, and experiences from within and outside of the SRHR sector, including in the broad domains of health, education, community development, civic engagement, and aid effectiveness); and incentivize institutional transformation processes (e.g., by sup-

porting whole-organization training and sensitization, developing teams of junior and senior youth-participation fellows, creating additional junior-professional positions, and providing appropriate mentoring and support to all young staff).

- *Decision-making bodies:* Support the creation and sustainability of youth-participation platforms (e.g., institutional board quotas, national youth councils, independent youth commissioners, youth representatives in civil society country platforms) in cross-sector decision-making bodies at all levels, such that a minimum threshold of diverse youth participants is represented. In addition, decision-makers need to be adequately prepared to work effectively with young people.

Coordinate stakeholders for impact

According to informants across all areas of YIELD inquiry, the current lack of coordination and knowledge-sharing constitutes an important barrier to impact. Funders might address the currently fragmented body of work under the YIELD umbrella in the following ways:

- *Convene:* Bring stakeholders together to explore the creation of linked evidence-and-practice working groups, charged with developing shared vision and generating buy-in for a next generation of more coordinated efforts. This might include convening stakeholders to develop common theories of change; honing related programmatic and evaluation approaches to integrate and test these theories of change; and creating common indicators and metrics with which to measure effectiveness.
- *Establish platforms:* Leverage existing and/or create centralized, open platforms to facilitate knowledge sharing, harness collective wisdom, and build bridges between the disparate activities currently under the YIELD umbrella.
- *Work at intersections and foster integrated programming:* To foster both diversity and innovation, the field should move beyond the SRHR sector, and incorporate initiatives and organizations working on intersectional issues. Furthermore, incentivizing and providing sup-

port to implementing consortia (e.g., linking youth participation and leadership in AYSRHR programs to initiatives that provide life skills, economic empowerment, vocational training, and support for ongoing formal education) can help address the broad inter-related needs and demands of young people as they transition to adulthood, while freeing up the AYSRHR sector to focus on AYSRHR.

- *Track progress:* Formally engage with current research initiatives focused on youth participation in AYSRHR, as well as on adolescent health and youth participation more broadly (e.g. The Lancet Standing Commission on Adolescent Health And Wellbeing and the National Academy of Sciences Convening on Adolescent Health) to leverage mutual interests in generating more robust knowledge and evidence; support a cross-stakeholder taskforce to develop and oversee the execution of a plan to fill existing research gaps; facilitate research-practice partnerships to help implementers better track and demonstrate the results of their work; and ensure the necessary resources to support the research process.

Act as catalysts

Informants, particularly those representing youth-led organizations and networks, repeatedly stressed the challenges they face within the current funding paradigm. Short-term project funding does not allow them to build their institutions, seek necessary ongoing accompaniment, or experiment with their own ideas and agendas. Young people also feel the burden of continuous fundraising, which takes them away from their missions and is often insufficient to fairly and appropriately compensate them for their efforts. Funders can help remedy these issues by modifying the ways funding is allocated to youth-led and youth-run efforts. In this domain, there are exciting, pioneering examples to explore.

- *Exchange with other funders:* Convening a funders' panel and subsequent working group on YIELD for AYSRHR would create opportunities for the exchange of valuable experiences and insights on how funding approaches could be transformed to provide better support and enable greater two-way accountability.
- *Get resources in the hands of young people:* Driving resources to local and sub-national youth-led and youth-driven initiatives would strengthen organizations that are well positioned to undertake targeted recruitment – while also providing contextually-appropriate training and support to emerging cadres of

young leaders. The opportunity to develop youth-led projects, initiatives, and organizations allows young people to unleash their creativity and innovation, as well as learn by doing. Young people benefit best from both funding and ongoing accompaniment as they take on new responsibilities and apply new information and skills. Agile, youth-responsive intermediaries on the ground could be engaged to support this kind of resourcing.

- *Invest in earnest:* Provide long-term, flexible funding that allows youth-led and youth-centered programming to innovate, learn, and evolve as part of the larger process of generating more effective AYSRHR solutions.

The field of YIELD for AYSRHR is currently experiencing a “never-before opportunity” to maximize the potential of young people as central actors in addressing their own sexual and reproductive health needs.³⁹ Global attention, momentum, and investment have aligned with the unprecedented power of a generation that is both old enough to act independently and young enough to turn its indignation into action. As history affirms, revolutions have always been driven by the young. Now is their time.

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APPENDIX

INSTITUTION	COUNTRY/ GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	PROGRAM SUMMARY
Aahung	Pakistan	Established in 1995, Aahung is a Pakistan-based NGO that takes a rights-based approach to improve access to quality sexual and reproductive health services with a focus on adolescents and youth. Aahung works in partnership with the education and health sectors to integrate culturally-informed life skills based education (CSE) in public schools and universities and YFS in health facilities and communities. Aahung's sexual and reproductive health and education strategies engage all stakeholders, with a focus on pre-service training for educators and health care providers to effect system-wide change. Aahung employs a range of on and offline communications strategies to raise awareness and increase demand and uptake of comprehensive SRHR services. And Aahung engages in advocacy efforts to promote the development and implementation of responsive SRHR laws and policies for adolescents and youth. Particular emphasis is placed on responding to the unique needs of adolescent girls and young women. http://www.aahung.org
Advocates for Youth	US/Global	Since its founding in 1980, Advocates for Youth has served as a bold voice and leader in the field of adolescent reproductive and sexual health. For more than three decades, the organization has worked to promote effective adolescent reproductive and sexual health programs and policies in the United States and the global south. Advocates for Youth partners with youth leaders, adult allies, and youth-serving organizations to advocate for policies and champion programs that recognize young people's rights to honest sexual health information; accessible, confidential, and affordable sexual health services; and the resources and opportunities necessary to create sexual health equity for all youth. http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/
Agents of Ishq	India	Agents of Ishq is an open source multi-media project about sex, love and desire, developed with and targeted toward adolescents and young people in India. The sex-positive approach aims to create safe, open, honest on and offline spaces for young people to share and learn about agency, freedom, choice, safety, pleasure and mutual consent in the context of respectful and loving relationships that promote gender equality. Materials are developed in Hindi and English to be aesthetically beautiful and youth-informed. http://agentsofishq.com
Asia Safe Abortion Partnership	Asia	The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) began in 2008 and continues to grow and connect a regional network of activists, providers and researchers working to advocate for improved access to safe abortion. ASAP works to reduce unsafe abortion and maternal morbidity and mortality in Asia by promoting and advancing access to safe abortion services. ASAP runs a Youth Advocacy Institute that brings together young people from across the region for training to increase awareness and enable youth-led action to increase access to safe abortion as a gender and sexual and reproductive right, as well as a human right. Participants are trained to use social media and other networking tools for context-specific advocacy. ASAP makes small grants to youth participants to conduct advocacy projects in their own countries and provides ongoing mentoring and support to young leaders and country-level youth-led abortion advocacy networks. http://asap-asia.org
Balance	Mexico	Balance is a young feminist organization working to promote sexual and reproductive rights, choice and access to quality comprehensive information and services for women and girls in Mexico. They conduct evidence-based advocacy at the national, regional and international levels supported by leadership training, movement building and research. http://www.redbalance.org

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	US/Global	The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Family Planning program works to bring access to high-quality contraceptive information, services, and supplies to an additional 120 million women and girls in the poorest countries by 2020 without coercion or discrimination, with the longer-term goal of universal access to voluntary family planning. BMGF supports national governments that have committed to the goals of FP2020 and are leading the development and implementation of their own country-specific plans. India and Nigeria are focus countries, as well selected investments in Indonesia, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In francophone West Africa, BMGF is a core member of the Ouagadougou Partnership for Family Planning, and supports Senegal and Niger to implement supply and demand approaches that can inform practice across countries in that region. BMGF is particularly committed to exploring how its family planning efforts can meet the needs of young women and girls.
Children's Investment Fund Foundation	UK/Global	CIFF is a UK-based charity started in 2002 with the mission of improving the lives of children living in poverty. Adolescent sexual and reproductive health is core priority wherein CIFF aims to shape an AIDS free generation where every teenage girl has agency to avoid unwanted pregnancies and is able to access their sexual and reproductive rights. The CIFF portfolio includes investments in integrated SRH services, self-testing and self-medication for HIV/AIDS and youth-led advocacy on SRH issues. https://ciff.org
CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality	Global	CHOICE is a youth-led Dutch organization that spun off the World Population Foundation/ Rutgers, becoming independent in 2005. The mission of CHOICE is to support young people worldwide to meaningfully participate in AYSRHR decision making and claim their sexual and reproductive rights. Through a volunteer-based model, CHOICE trains young people in Holland to work primarily with youth-led organizations in the global south. CHOICE offers digital and in-person capacity building with a focus on equipping young people to advocate for their sexual and reproductive health and rights at local, national and international levels. In addition to leadership and advocacy training and technical assistance, CHOICE aims to strengthen and connect youth-led organizations at different levels to build alliances and work collectively. CHOICE also promotes intergenerational partnerships in AYSRHR by providing training and support to both youth and adult-led organizations. https://choiceforyouth.org
CIES: Salud Sexual y Reproductiva	Bolivia	CIES is the IPPF affiliate in Bolivia. The organization provides a national network of comprehensive health clinics with a focus on providing quality accessible comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services to adolescents and youth. Service delivery is complemented by a number of youth training and participation activities. Young people are provided with leadership training and undertake peer to peer education and community outreach. CIES also supports a national youth network called Red Tu Decides, through which young people are trained and supported to undertake AYSRHR awareness raising and advocacy at different levels in both urban and rural areas. https://www.cies.org.bo
Consortium of Youth Development Organizations	Ethiopia	CoYDOE is a youth-led national network of youth-led and youth-serving organizations in Ethiopia, established in 2013. Members work across intersectional issues and AYSRHR is often a component. CoYDOE offers member capacity building and creates a platform for organizations to connect, share and collaborate countrywide. The ED participates in PHI/Rise Up's Youth Champions Initiative and is developing a gaming app to raise awareness and educate around AYSRHR issues in Ethiopia.
*Education as a Vaccine	Nigeria	EVA is a youth-driven Nigeria-based NGO founded in 2000 to promote the health and development of children and young people. Integrated programming priorities focus on sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, child health and basic education. Young people make up the majority of EVA's staff and volunteer base driving social change across the country. EVA conducts advocacy toward the passage and implementation of health and education legislation, including the delivery of CSE through the education sector and quality YFS through the health sector. They provide AYSRHR information and services through mobile technologies, community outreach and youth centers. And EVA uses BCC strategies and capacity building to sensitize and engage AYSRHR stakeholders, including health care providers, educators, religious and traditional leaders and policy makers. http://www.evanigeria.org/

Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia	Ethiopia	"FGAE, an IPPF affiliate active in Ethiopia since 1966, has grown to develop a deep and wide national infrastructure to deliver comprehensive AYSRH services across Ethiopia. The organization plays an important role in advancing the SRH status and wellbeing of underserved young people ages 10-24 through partnerships with government and other stakeholders and scaling up innovative adolescent and youth-centered SRH programs. A specific focus on meeting the needs of adolescents and youth has been mainstreamed such that all service delivery modalities have integrated AYSRH interventions and young people are actively engaged in many facets of the organization's work, including through outreach education and demand creation by youth champions and youth change agents who serve as AYSRH service connectors and navigators. FGAE also works with young people to engage in AYSRH advocacy efforts at all levels. FGAE prioritizes reaching the most vulnerable, specifically married and rural youth; those out of school; those with disabilities and special needs; young people engaging in transactional sexual relationships; young PLHIV; youth in high risk work and those attending higher learning institutions. FGAE works with the public education system and developed contextualized guidance on CSE for teachers and learners in and out of school. And they provide integrated YFS through a tiered service delivery system, including comprehensive abortion care, HIV counseling and testing and support for victims of sexual violence. http://www.fgaeet.org
2017 Family Planning Summit: Youth Advisory Group	Global	Leading up to the 2017 Family Planning Summit, a Youth Advisory Group was formed and engaged to take active participation in the Summit and help drive accountability efforts at the country level afterward. The Summit's Youth Advisory Group is comprised of fifteen young people (age 30 and under) who represent global, regional, and country youth-led networks or organizations from fourteen FP2020 countries. The Youth Advisory Group developed an accountability framework to mobilize young people and youth networks at the country level to advocate for the full implementation of the commitments made by their governments. The framework calls for ensuring that country commitments and policies are responsive to adolescent health needs, mobilizing political and public support for implementation, and strengthening the capacity of youth-led organizations and networks to engage in advocacy and accountability.
Feminist Approach to Technology	India	Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT) is a not-for-profit organization established in 2008 and based in Delhi, India. FAT seeks to empower girls and young women by giving them access to use and create technology through a feminist rights-based framework. Enabling girls and young women as users, creators/makers and decision-makers around technology, FAT implements three complementary program streams: Young Women's Leadership Program; Girls and STEM program; and Women and Technology Advocacy Initiative. An innovative approach using technology as a tool to break down gender barriers at the individual, social and institutional levels, FAT is seeing results that include more vulnerable girls able to access and use technology for community-based gender activism, including around AYSRHR issues; more girls interested in pursuing STEM education and careers; and greater social attention and norm shifting around the issue of gender and technology. http://www.fat-net.org
Ford Foundation	US/Global	The Ford Foundation is dedicated to addressing inequality in all its forms, by supporting social change through investment in individual leadership, strong institutions, and innovative, often high-risk ideas. AYSRHR, gender equality, racial justice and other related intersectional issues have long been areas of support by the Foundation, even as strategies and approaches have evolved over time. Adolescent and youth development and engagement, especially that of those most underserved, as citizens and social change agents remains a cross-cutting priority as grant making has become more issue agnostic. https://www.fordfoundation.org
FRIDA: The Young Feminist Fund	Mexico/Global	With the vision of a world free of oppression and violence for women and all people, FRIDA was established in 2009 to provide young feminist leaders with the resources they need to amplify their voices and bring attention to their work, much of it focused on SRHR. In addition to funding, FRIDA also offers support, flexibility and networks for young feminists, individually and collectively, to sustain their influence to bring about long-term social change. FRIDA uses a decentralized global infrastructure of advisors that permits the fund to identify and support young grassroots activists on their own terms. Through participatory grantmaking, FRIDA balances power relationships in philanthropy and enables the co-creation of new cultures of collective leadership, with and by young feminist leaders. By trusting young feminists as experts of their own realities and providing them with resources, opportunities and networks, FRIDA supports girls, young women and trans youth to be powerful forces for change from the grassroots to the global levels. https://youngfeministfund.org

Global Health Corps	US/Malawi/ Rwanda/Uganda/Zambia	Established in 2008, the mission of GHC is to support and mobilize a global community of young changemakers and emerging leaders to build the movement for health equity. Through a one-year fellowship that pairs competitively selected young people from a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds with health institutions working at different levels, GHC offers both theoretical and hands-on leadership and professional training and support. GHC believes the most powerful lever for change in global health is great leadership: the right leaders in the right positions can build and strengthen just health systems. Using a model that trains and connects cohorts of young fellows and alumni, GHC harnesses growing enthusiasm, talent, and passion among this generation's youth with the goal of reaching tipping points of saturation and influence in different geographies. With enough young leaders appropriately trained, supported and connected, they are able to move into high-impact roles and work individually and collectively to address the most pressing health inequities, including AYSRHR, at different levels. https://ghcorps.org
GoBelize	Belize	GoBelize: GoJoven Alumni Association is a local NGO established in 2011, which spun off GoJoven International. GoBelize connects and supports GoJoven alumni to train new cohorts of young leaders in AYSRHR in Belize using a variation of the GoJoven model (see below), as well as to implement other activities related to AYSRHR outreach, service delivery and advocacy at the subnational and national levels. https://gojoven.org/gobelize/
*Growing Ambitions	Malawi	Growing Ambitions, established in 2015, is a local, youth-led Malawi-based NGO dedicated to creating a safe space for adolescent girls and young women from peri-urban areas around Lilongwe to come together to share, learn, connect and receive support from near-peer mentors. Programming is driven by participants and program staff strive to be flexible and resourceful in supporting them to respond to their vocational, health, education, family and personal needs. https://growingambitions.wordpress.com
Hewlett Foundation	US/Global	Hewlett's Global Development and Population Program makes grants to expand women's reproductive and economic choices, amplify citizen participation, and improve policymaking through evidence. The Foundation makes grants to support organizations that expand women's choices about whether and when to have children and how to earn a living. The portfolio includes grants focused on understanding and meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents and youth. Reproductive health and rights grants support organizations overseas and in the United State and grants to increase economic opportunities focus on East and West Africa. https://www.hewlett.org/
IDEO .org	US/Global	IDEO.org launched in 2011 to design products, services, and experiences to improve the lives of people in poor and vulnerable communities. IDEO.org uses human-centered design, a creative approach to problem solving that starts with people and arrives at new solutions tailored to meet their lives. The Health XO program focuses on redesigning sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents, with a focus on girls and young women. Examples of IDEO.org's work in this area include the Diva Centers project in Zambia, which creates nail salons as safe informal social spaces for girls and young women to come together, share and receive contraceptive information, counseling and services. In Zambia, IDEO.org launched Future Fab, an adolescent lifestyle brand that connects with young people on issues they care about while raising awareness, creating demand and connecting young people to sexual and reproductive health services. https://www.ideo.org/
Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development	US	The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development unleashes the potential of youth, adults, organizations, and communities to engage together in creating a just and equitable society. ICCYD strengthens communities by connecting them with their young people, and strengthens young people by connecting them with their communities. In partnership with community organizations, researchers, policymakers and philanthropists, ICCYD offers training, builds capacity, develops tools and connects stakeholders. Areas of expertise include youth development and leadership, youth adult partnership, collective leadership and youth and civic engagement. ICCYD also supports online communities to facilitate knowledge sharing on these issues. http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/home

International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere region	Latin America and the Caribbean	IPPF/WHR works with 50 partner organizations, in 40 countries across the Americas and the Caribbean to ensure the fulfillment of sexual and reproductive rights for all, including universal access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education. IPPF defends the right of all young people to enjoy their sexual lives free from ill health, unwanted pregnancy, violence and discrimination. Youth participation and leadership are mainstreamed across IPPF activities. And to support outreach and awareness raising, service delivery and SRHR advocacy at all levels, IPPF/WHR supports a regional Youth Network of young activists ages 10-24. https://www.ippfwhr.org
International Women's Health Coalition	Global	IWHC advances the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and young people, particularly adolescent girls, in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Since 2007, IWHC has identified and mentored young people from around the world to advocate for national and global policies that further sexual and reproductive rights. IWHC's Advocacy in Practice program holds hands-on workshops that involve deep learning and team building to prepare young people for negotiations with UN diplomats and government officials. Held before major UN meetings and regional conferences to enable direct application of advocacy skills, participants develop a common language to address sexual and reproductive health and rights, and use techniques such as role play to approach their government officials. Advocates then return to their home countries better equipped to lobby their governments for policies in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights. https://iwhc.org
Ipas	Mexico	Ipas is a global nongovernmental organization dedicated to ending preventable deaths and disabilities from unsafe abortion. Through local, national and global partnerships, Ipas works to ensure that women can obtain safe, respectful and comprehensive abortion care, including counseling and contraception to prevent future unintended pregnancies. Ipas conducts advocacy, clinical and related training programs for health-care workers, and formative and intervention research to generate new knowledge for the larger reproductive health and rights community, targeted research to understand women's needs and wants regarding reproductive health care and how they make decisions about contraception and abortion. http://www.ipasmexico.org
Itad	Global	Itad works to make international development as effective as possible and ultimately to improve more lives. Through working in partnership with the range of development actors, Itad helps give institutions the information and insight they need to make development work smarter and produce better results. Itad focuses on supporting complex, meticulous monitoring and evaluation that involves different stakeholders across different scenarios, with the aim of providing insight and ideas to drive more effective use of resources in international development. Within the Health Theme, AYSRHR evaluation is a central topic. http://www.itad.com/
International Youth Alliance for Family Planning	Global	IYAFP is a youth-led global alliance established in 2015 to enable young people around the world to contribute and lead community interventions and decisions on family planning and SRHR. With the intention of disrupting the status quo in SRHR, IYAFP connects youth to opportunities in advocacy, leadership, education and collaboration and provides them with training, funding and networks. Using these strategies, IYAFP aims to empower young people to become global advocates with the skills, knowledge and resources needed to scale up youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health initiatives and services while putting permanent processes in place to ensure continued youth involvement in decision making related to SRHR interventions to ultimately empower girls, youth, and women economically, financially, and socially. http://iyafp.org/
J. Solomon Consulting	US/Global	Julie Solomon, Ph.D. is the Founder and Principal of J. Solomon Consulting, LLC, a program evaluation consulting firm that focuses primarily on the health sector. Julie has spent the past 16 years directing mixed-method quantitative/qualitative program evaluation and applied research projects and providing program planning and evaluation consultation and training services to non-profit organizations, government agencies, coalitions, and grantmakers. Julie conducted a retrospective evaluation of the GOJoven: Youth Leadership in Sexual and Reproductive Health Program in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico and has collaborated with a number of institutions to support M&E activities in the areas of AYSRHR and youth leadership. https://careerlinguist.com/2015/03/04/career-paths-for-linguists-series-program-evaluation

Lead for Impact	US/Global	Lead for Impact is an intergenerational social enterprise that provides transformational leadership services and training to individuals, communities, and organizations. The mission is to support emerging and established leaders from all sectors in developing their internal resources and professional skill sets so they can have a positive impact on the communities and organizations with which they work. Lead for Impact's vision is that transformative and impactful leadership—skillfully and interchangeably connecting the inside to the outside—represents a new way of achieving collaborative and sustainable change. Lead for Impact has collaborated with a number of partners in the area of AYSRHR, including supporting UNFPA's Young Innovators Fellowship Program. http://www.lead4impact.com/
Love Matters	Global	Love Matters is a youth-centered multimedia platform that provides gender friendly SRH information to young people and engages them to talk about love, sex and relationships in an open, honest and non-judgemental way. The vision of Love Matters is to be the leading source of information in a world where love, sex and relationships are a right and a choice. Using sexual pleasure as a hook to tackle cultural taboos such as abortion or sex outside marriage, Love Matters' digital approach includes a responsive website, social media channels and a discussion board in English and Hindi allowing young people to access SRHR information directly from their mobile phones. The mobile focused technology bypasses traditional gatekeepers and provides a safe and anonymous place for youth to learn and engage. In this way, Love Matters seeks to bridge the gap in sexual reproductive health information between young people, sexual health experts, educators and services. Love Matters India has reached over 14 million people and has the most popular SRH Facebook page in India. Love Matters is a global project with operations in India, China, Latin America, Kenya and Egypt. https://lovematters.in
Marie Stopes International	Kenya, Zambia	MSI provides client-centered reproductive health services around the world. Through a network of global service delivery points, MSI provides access to contraceptive services, safe abortion and maternal health care. Through social franchising and social marketing, MSI makes SRH services and reproductive health supplies available through private clinics, pharmacies and other outlets. To raise awareness, create demand and extend SRH service access at the community level, MSI works through a network of nurses and midwives, who specifically target girls and young women to help overcome the multiple barriers that prevent their access to mainstream information and services. MSI places a priority focus on reaching and meeting the SRH needs of adolescents and are implementing programs specifically designed to engage them. For example, through the new human-centered design approaches in Kenya and Zambia, MSI is working to address contextual obstacles to adolescent contraceptive use. https://mariestopes.org
Mississippi First	US	Mississippi First is a local non-profit organization launched in 2008 that works to improve the quality of K-12 public education in the state through policy advocacy and related strategies to implement education reform. A growing part of their efforts related to lobbying for and helping to ensure the delivery of quality comprehensive sex education in schools. A separate NGO, called TeenHealth Mississippi spun off from Mississippi First in 2017 to expand and take that work forward. http://www.mississippifirst.org/
NoVo Foundation	US/Global	NoVo Foundation is dedicated to catalyzing a transformation in global society, moving from a culture of domination to one of equality and partnership. NoVo supports the development of capacities in people—individually and collectively—to help create a caring and balanced world. NoVo Foundation seeks to end violence against girls and women everywhere. Through partnerships with change agents who take on deep-seated attitudes that lead to violence against girls and women, NoVo works to empower girls and women in order to balance inequitable relationships and challenge powerful institutions and behaviors that perpetuate violence and discrimination. By providing support to efforts that help shift social and cultural norms, shape policy and legal frameworks, empower girls and women, strengthen communications and community organizing and expand research, NoVo is addressing violence both in the US and internationally. https://novofoundation.org

Organization of African Youth	Africa	Established in 2009, the Organisation of African Youth (OAYouth) is a continental, member-based, non-profit umbrella organisation registered in 11 countries and operating with 35 chapters in Africa. OAYouth serves as a regional platform for young people and youth-led initiatives to assert their power in numbers, energy and imagination to positively transform their communities, countries and region. OAYouth works to motivate, unify and empower African youth to be drivers of Africa's social, political and economic transformation. Through structured programs, OAYouth harnesses resources and ideas to empower and enage young leaders in intersectional policy advocacy on the issues that most concern them. A number of OAYouth members are working on issues related to AYSRHR at different levels. https://www.oayouth.org
Pathfinder	Global	Pathfinder champions sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide, mobilizing communities most in need to break through barriers and forge their own path to a healthier future. In partnership with local governments, communities, and health systems, Pathfinder works to remove barriers to critical sexual and reproductive health services and expand access to contraception, promote healthy pregnancies, save women's lives, and stop the spread of new HIV infections. Pathfinder promotes the rights of adolescents and youth to make informed choices and decisions with regard to their sexual and reproductive health and supports programs to ensure young people have access to comprehensive information and services to realize those rights. http://www.pathfinder.org/
Planned Parenthood Federation of America	US	Planned Parenthood is one of the leading providers of high-quality, affordable health care for women, men, and young people, and the largest provider of sex education in the US. Planned Parenthood works simultaneously on multiple interrelated levels: outreach education, service delivery and policy advocacy. Planned Parenthood is proud to provide young people with honest, factual health and relationship information — in classrooms, community centers, and online. Expert nurses, doctors, educators, and health center staff are dedicated to bringing high-quality, non-judgmental, affordable care to their communities. And Planned Parenthood is an outspoken, passionate advocate for policies that help all people access high-quality reproductive and sexual health care, education, and information. https://www.plannedparenthood.org
Planned Parenthood Global	Global	For more than 45 years, Planned Parenthood Global (PPG), the international arm of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, has worked overseas to break down barriers to health care. In partnership with more than 100 organizations across Africa and Latin America, PPG advances the health and rights of young people, women, and families, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable and underserved. PPG works with local partners and allies, providing them with resources, information, and support to stand strong on their own. PPG helps grassroots organizations develop solid reproductive health programs, identify other sources of funding, build their communications and advocacy skills, and develop strategic plans. https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/planned-parenthood-global/who-we-are
Population Action International	Global	PAI is an international, non-governmental organization that uses research and advocacy to improve global access to family planning and reproductive health care. PAI champions policies that put women in charge of their reproductive health. Working with policymakers in Washington and a network of partners in developing countries, PAI removes roadblocks between women and the services and supplies they need. PAI manages the YOUAccess Fund, which provides capital and seed funding to youth-led organizations in the Global South to advance access to and use of contraception. YOUAccess grants provide flexible funding that allows for risk-taking and provides a platform for youth ownership of projects. Awardees contribute to building family planning champions among policy makers, leaders, and organizations at national, district and community levels. The grants offer the opportunity for innovative project development, knowledge sharing, and evidence-building for the best course for future initiatives to meet youth contraceptive needs. https://pai.org

Population Council	Global	The Population Council conducts research to address critical health and development issues, including allowing couples to plan their families and chart their futures, helping people avoid HIV infection and access life-saving HIV services, and empowering girls to protect themselves and have a say in their own lives. The Population Council has the world's largest body of research on programs to improve the lives of adolescent girls in developing countries. The Population Council identifies best practices, refines the critical elements of girl-centered programs, and uses solid evidence to help organizations allocate scarce resources to the most effective programs. The Council also helps governments formulate the most effective evidence-based policies to improve girls' lives and meet national development goals. Council programs have delayed age at marriage, increased girls' savings, improved girls' literacy, built girls' assets, and returned girls to formal schooling. http://www.popcouncil.org/
Population Works Africa	Francophone Africa	Population Works Africa (PWA) seeks to amplify the voices of young African advocates, supporting the development of youth programs that are impactful and locally rooted. In collaboration with local partners, PWA supports efforts to craft, resource, execute, and monitor the solutions young advocates are developing on the continent. We specialize and work specifically with youth movements in the francophone African region. https://www.popworksafrika.org/
Pravah	India	Pravah is a Delhi-based youth development organization that runs life skills and leadership training and a range of related programs for adolescents and youth. An important aspect of Pravah's approach is connecting young people with opportunities to engage in social service volunteer opportunities. Pravah works directly with adolescents and young people to facilitate journeys of personal transformation while transforming the real world. The organization believes this will lead to the creation of a generation of inside – out leaders who connect themselves with the larger world and can take informed value based stances and action. In addition, Pravah trains teachers and other adult youth development specialists to help influence and shape a positive youth ecosystem. Pravah's work is issue agnostic, allowing young people to engage with social issues that are most salient, including AYSRHR.
Public Health Institute/Go-Joven: Youth Leadership in Sexual and Reproductive Health	Central America	The GoJoven program was launched in 2004 as a regional effort in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico to increase youth leadership and action on SRHR issues. The program promotes and supports the development of young leaders to act as catalysts to expand ASRHR choices, services, policies, and programs at the community, national, and regional levels. Designed to be youth-driven, diverse, inclusive and local, GoJoven intentionally targets geographic areas with poor SRHR outcomes among young people to identify and cultivate young local talent. The fellowship program consists of competitively selecting young applicants connected to local institutions. These individuals access a year-long training program that brings fellows together three times to deepen their leadership, technical, strategic planning, management, evaluation and fundraising skills. Fellows then receive funding to work in teams to implement self-designed project addressing pressing local SRHR needs. Fellows are connected through a network that links each new cohort with alumni from past cohorts and are offered opportunities for complementary professional development. Particularly motivated alumni can apply to a linked scholarship fund to access financing to complete formal high school, undergraduate or graduate training. In recent years, local GoJoven associations have been started in each of countries to strengthen and sustain the results of the original program. https://gojoven.org/
Public Health Institute/Rise Up	US/Global	Rise Up activates women and girls to transform their lives, families and communities for a more just and equitable world through investment in local solutions, strengthening leadership, and building movements. Since 2009, Rise Up has invested in a network of over 500 leaders that has directly benefited 7 million girls, youth, and women, advocating for over 100 laws and policies impacting 115 million people in Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and the US. Rise Up runs a number of parallel programs, including Let Girls Lead, Champions for Change and the Youth Champions Initiatives, to engage and build the capacity of young people to participate in policy advocacy at different levels. https://www.riseuptogether.org

Purposeful Productions	Global	Purposeful Productions is a movement building hub for adolescent girls in the global south. Through strategic focus areas in insights and influencing; convening and micro-grants; and media and communications, Purposeful supports girls and their allies to radically remake the world for themselves. The work of Purposeful is both global and local. In Sierra Leone, they are implementing an integrated strategy to create a ground-swell of girls who can access and imagine new possibilities for themselves and their communities. Elsewhere, Purposeful supports a diverse range of partners to spark and sustain movements with and for girls. https://www.purposeful-productions.org/
*REDMI	Guatemala	REDMI is a network of young Mayan women from Totonicopan, Guatemala who started their own local NGO after participating in a Population Council program to empower rural indigenous girls. REDMI creates safe spaces for rural girls ages 8-19 to meet, share and learn life skills and financial literacy from local near-peer mentors. Older girls also participate in a small production coop where they make and sell textile products, earning income to invest in their continuing education. REDMI is committed to disrupting cycles of early marriage, unplanned pregnancy and intergenerational poverty in rural Guatemalan communities. https://catrinka.com/pages/catrinka-girls-project
Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition	Global	The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition is a global partnership of public, private and non-governmental organizations. Its aim is to ensure that all people in low- and middle-income countries can choose, obtain and use the supplies and appropriate services they need to safeguard their reproductive health. Since 2004, the Coalition has been part of international efforts to secure reproductive health supplies by increasing resources, strengthening systems, and building effective partnerships. Young people's access to reproductive health services is constrained by a whole range of factors ranging from cultural to logistical. The RHSC focuses especially on increasing access to safe, affordable contraceptives. The Youth Caucus aims to increase access to RH supplies by making available research and data on youth contraceptives and other maternal health supplies needs, and also to strengthen young people's engagement and participation within the Coalition. https://www.rhsupplies.org
RESURJ	Global	RESURJ is a membership-based alliance of feminist activists working across generations, constituencies, and identities seeking to realize sexual and reproductive justice for all. RESURJ's justice approach encompasses an understanding of and a commitment to addressing the interlinkages between our bodies, our health, and our human rights in the context of the ecological, economic, and social crises of our times. This approach also recognizes historic injustices and systemic inequality in gender power relations. RESURJ engages in advocacy, movement building and cross-movement and cross-regional dialogues around issues as diverse as access to safe and legal abortion, adolescents' and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, the recognition of sexual rights and non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality, comprehensive sexuality education and the meaningful participation of young feminists in policy spaces. http://resurj.org/
*SheDecides	Philippines	SheDecides is a global movement to promote, provide, protect and enhance the fundamental rights of every girl and woman. Every girl and every woman has the right to do what she chooses with her body; she has the right to health. And these rights affect her personal development, her participation in society, her livelihood and whether her family and community thrives. A world where SheDecides means that every girl and every woman can safely exercise her right to decide for herself what she does with her body, who she shares her body with and whether she wants to have children. She must have access to education and information about her body and her options, modern contraception and safe abortion. https://www.shedecides.com
SPECTRA	Rwanda	SPECTRA is a Rwandan young feminist non-governmental organization founded by and for young feminists in 2016. SPECTRA aims to build a strong and well-coordinated movement of empowered young feminist leaders who contribute meaningfully to social and gender justice and the realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and young women. SPECTRA does this through movement and capacity building, mentorship/inter-generational learning, and advocacy.

Sri Lanka Youth Advocacy Network	Sri Lanka	YANSL is a network run by young people, working with young people, for young people and women. We believe that creating a strong, transformative connection between grassroots realities and national decision making is the key to effective, inclusive policy creation and implementation. Members of the network are trained youth champions who are passionate and have expertise on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender inequality and unsafe abortion. In addition to offline advocacy efforts, the network also uses online and social networking platforms to build alliances to achieve social justice, create dialogue on taboo topics and hold the government accountable.
Summit Foundation	Central America	The Summit Foundation seeks to achieve gender equality for marginalized women and girls by transforming their social, reproductive and economic lives. Summit invests in young leaders and their projects, as well as broader initiatives to advance gender equality and expand adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. Summit also supports a number of projects that advance momentum for women and girls' equality in Latin America and globally. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 5, our long-term vision is that girls and women achieve full equality and are fully empowered, valued by their families and communities, and have viable pathways to quality education, health, employment and fully participate in civic and political life. http://www.summitfdn.org/
Tanzania Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Coalition	Tanzania	TAYRHC is a coalition of youth-led organizations in Tanzania working together to advocate for the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people at the national and subnational levels. The coalition's shared goals are to conduct policy advocacy, ensure accountability, promote youth engagement and work toward increased investment in youth access to contraception and youth friendly services.
*Teen Health Mississippi	US	Teen Health Mississippi is a local non-profit committed to improving the sexual health of Mississippi teens. Working in partnership with young people, THMS engages youth advocates and community stakeholders to increase awareness of important policies relating to teen sexual health and champion policies at state, local, and organizational levels that improve teen sexual health. THMS also provides training and resources to build the capacity of youth-serving adults and organizations to effectively implement strategies, programs, and services that are guided by research and key positive youth development practices. And THMS supports the implementation of programs and strategies that are informed by research and best practices to target risk and protective factors that influence teen sexual health. https://teenhealthms.org
The Central America & Mexico Youth (CAMY) Fund	Central America and Mexico	The Central America & Mexico Youth Fund (CAMY Fund) supports young leaders in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua in designing and implementing projects to improve the lives of local youth and their communities. The CAMY Fund is a vehicle for donors to support young leaders as they design and implement projects that improve the lives of youth and their communities. http://www.camyfund.org/
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	US/Global	The Packard Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health program is committed to promoting reproductive health and rights, with a focus on high quality information and services. The program places a special emphasis on engaging and serving youth, and believe that young people have the best potential for building and sustaining a movement of change. Core objectives of the program include: improve the quality of comprehensive sexuality education, voluntary contraception, and abortion care; strengthen service delivery, build leadership and advocacy capacity, and shift social and cultural norms to allow women and youth to make their own reproductive health care decisions; and forge partnerships with global research advocacy organizations, especially networks led by youth, and to create positive and effective messages about reproductive health and rights at the regional and global levels. https://www.packard.org
The Lancet Standing Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing	UK/Global	The 2016 publication of The Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health made a global call for greater attention to and investment in the health and wellbeing of adolescents, as the largest cohort in human history comes of age. The report acknowledges the limited focus placed on adolescent health to date, despite their unique, diverse and changing needs and emphasizes the triple benefit that results: the good health of adolescents carries through to adulthood and into the next generation. The Lancet is dedicated to creating discussion around this critical topic by publishing the best research to lead to better lives for all. The Standing Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing has formed a Youth Network of young commissioners who will work with the Standing Commission to take action around the six recommendations from the 2016 Lancet Report. This includes recommendations for engaging and partnering with young people as agents for change. http://adolescentsourfuture.com

The MARIA Abortion Fund for Social Justice	Mexico	The MARIA Abortion Fund for Social Justice aims to contribute to the creation of a legal and social context throughout Mexico that allows, respects and promotes women's right to choose an abortion as a legitimate outcome of an unwanted/non-viable pregnancy. Since 2009, the MARIA Fund has supported more than 4,650 women from all over the country; it has trained 5 generations of abortion doulas to give accompaniment and 2 generations of local activists from outside Mexico City on positive messaging on abortion and sexual rights. It has also developed 3 communication strategies on social media to promote a social context that embraces abortion within the social justice and human rights approaches. https://abortionfunds.org
The YP Foundation	India	TYPF aims to ensure that the rights of young people are realized through a process of personal empowerment. To empower young people, TYPF provides training and access to information and services, with a rights based approach. TYPF works with young people to help them create programs and advocate for the issues that most concern them. TYPF programmes are implemented by young people, for young people. TYPF's primary constituents are the volunteers who are inducted annually across programmatic divisions to reach out to the young participants in each programme. They play a key role as peer facilitators, and provide CSE and Life Skills Education to young people, particularly adolescent girls from low-resource backgrounds and marginalised communities. http://www.theypfoundation.org/
United Nations Population Fund	Global	UNFPA is the United Nations reproductive health and rights agency with a mission to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA calls for the realization of reproductive rights for all and supports access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services – including voluntary family planning, maternal health care and comprehensive sexuality education. The sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people has long been a priority area for UNFPA and the agency has undertaken a wide range of programming, research and advocacy on related issues around the world. https://www.unfpa.org
University of Chicago, Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation in Sexual and Reproductive Health	US/Global	The Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation in Sexual and Reproductive Health (Ci3) at the University of Chicago is a faculty-led initiative to advance sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice locally, nationally, and globally. Members bring a wide range of expertise and come from diverse disciplines. Ci3 creates an intellectual hub for a network of faculty, staff and students to work collaboratively with partners from outside of the University to address critical problems in sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice. With a particular focus on adolescents, women, and communities of color, Ci3's goal is to develop new research methodologies, evidence, intervention strategies, and novel solutions to advance human health and well-being. https://www.uchicago.edu
University of California at Berkeley, Center on the Developing Adolescent	US	The Center on the Developing Adolescent is housed within UC Berkeley's Institute of Human Development (IHD). The Center is focused on the recognition that the onset of adolescence begins a complex maturational period — one with enormous risks and great opportunities. The relevant developmental science involves individual-level factors such as habits, attitudes, decision-making, emotion-regulation, motivation, and learning processes, as well as a broad range of social factors including the influences of families, peers, schools, media, and social disparities. Given these complexities, integrative team science approaches are needed. Exciting scientific advances in developmental social, affective, and cognitive neuroscience must be integrated with broader expertise regarding clinical, social, educational, public health, policy, and cultural perspectives on adolescence. http://developingadolescent.berkeley.edu/
University of California at Berkeley, Health and Social Behavior Program	US	UC Berkeley School of Public Health Professor of Community Health and Human Development Emily J. Ozer is an affiliated faculty member of Berkeley Social Welfare. Professor Ozer teaches graduate courses in behavioral science theory, mental health, community interventions and program evaluation. Her research interests include school-based health promotion and prevention programs, post-traumatic stress disorder and community-based participatory research. She is particularly interested in how the school and classroom contexts in which prevention programs are implemented affect outcomes. Her current research involves a multi-method study of the impact of an empowerment-oriented participatory research intervention on adolescents attending San Francisco public schools. In her work, Professor Ozer seeks to bridge collaborative-participatory approaches to conducting interventions with traditional scientific designs by testing the impact of intentional variation in collaborative processes. https://socialwelfare.berkeley.edu

URGE	US	URGE envisions a world where all people have agency over their own bodies and relationships, and the power, knowledge, and tools to exercise that agency. URGE builds this vision by engaging young people in creating and leading the way to sexual and reproductive justice for all by providing training, field mobilization, and national leadership for a youth-driven agenda. http://urge.org/
*Welfare Association for a New Generation	Pakistan	WANG strives to untie the potential of communities through diversified engagement that enables them to transform society. With a focus on adolescents and young people, WANG undertakes capacity building, advocacy and community outreach to engage individuals, communities, institutions, the media and government institutions around the diversity of issues of importance to young people. http://wang.org.pk/
YLabs	Global	YLabs brings together the science of adolescent development, behavioral economics and human-centered design to build and test programs that can enhance the unique potential of adolescents. YLabs was founded in 2015 at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and has grown into a team of researchers from North America, North Africa, Europe, India, and Sub Saharan Africa.
Young Women's Project	US	The Young Women's Project builds the leadership and power of young people so that they can transform DC institutions to expand rights and opportunities for DC youth. YWP programs guide youth through a process of personal transformation so they can become leaders in their peer groups, schools, families, and communities who are able to analyze problems, identify solutions, and advocate for change. The Peer Health and Sexuality Education Project (PHASE) is a teen-adult partnership that works to improve DC teens' reproductive health by expanding comprehensive sexuality education, ensuring access to community and school based reproductive health care, and engaging teen women and men as peer educators and decision makers on reproductive health issues. https://www.youngwomensproject.org
Youth Coalition	Canada/Global	Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights is an international organization of young people (ages 18-29 years) committed to promoting adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive rights at the national, regional and international levels. Members are students, researchers, lawyers, health care professionals, educators, development workers - and dedicated activists. The Youth Coalition aims to ensure that the sexual and reproductive rights of all young people are respected, guaranteed and promoted, and strives to secure the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making that affects their lives, by advocating, generating knowledge, sharing information, building partnerships and training young activists with a focus on the regional and international levels. http://www.youthcoalition.org/
Y-PEER	Global	Y-PEER is a global network of organizations and institutions working in the field of sexual and reproductive health in 52 countries throughout the world. Using varied approaches Y-PEER's mission is to strengthen and spread high quality peer-to-peer education in the field of adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV prevention worldwide. Y-PEER conducts capacity building, undertakes policy advocacy and creates platforms for young advocates to network and collaborate. http://www.y-peer.org/
Women Deliver	Global	Women Deliver is a global advocate for gender equality and the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women. Started in 2010, the Women Deliver Young Leaders Program counts 700 youth advocates from more than 120 countries who are advancing gender equality and the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women. The Young Leaders Program includes online training through the WD digital university, a speakers bureau, media training and opportunities, small grants, participation in the WD global conference, in-country advocacy opportunities and support and access to an alumni network and mentorship opportunities. http://womendeliver.org/
Women Win	Global	Women Win is the global leader in girls' empowerment through sport. WW leverages the power of play to help girls build leadership skills and become better equipped to exercise their rights. Sport is only a tool. WW's endgame is helping girls thrive as they face the most pressing issues of adolescence, including accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), addressing gender based violence (GBV) and achieving economic empowerment (EE). Since 2007, WW has impacted the lives of 2,200,400 adolescent girls in over 100 countries. Women Win currently supports initiatives in Asia, Africa, Middle East, North and South America. https://womenwin.org

Zimbabwe Young People's Network on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/ AIDS	Zimbabwe	The Young People's Network on HIV and AIDS was established in 2007 and is a membership based network convened by National AIDS Council. It is committed to providing quality and effective leadership for a comprehensive and coordinated multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS for young people in Zimbabwe. The Young People's Network on HIV and AIDS currently has representation at national level, in the country's 10 provinces and in 85 Districts. Network members are between the ages of 10-24 and are in school, out of school, in business, in tertiary institutions, in arts, in faith based organizations, in media, in sport, living with HIV, living with a disability, child governance, in resettlement areas, orphans and vulnerable children, in fishing camps and other sectors that have been deemed necessary by the network members and relevant stakeholders. https://ypnzim.wordpress.com
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*Co-coordinators of country-level youth discussion groups

YIELD Project Learning Report

This report is a product of the Youth Investment, Engagement, and Leadership Development (YIELD) Project. The YIELD Project is guided by a Steering Committee comprised of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Summit Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Learn more at yieldproject.org.

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