



IMPACT STATEMENT

**POWER TO YOU(TH): A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY
TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EMPOWERMENT.**

The Power to You(th) programme is a five-year, multi-country consortium (2021–2025) led by **Amref Health Africa in collaboration with Sonke Gender Justice, Rutgers, and CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, with funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.** Over the past five years, the programme has empowered adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities in **Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, and Indonesia** to take an active and meaningful role in decision making about their bodies and their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. We have also worked to challenge and transform harmful cultural norms including child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and unintended pregnancies.

Through youth-led, gender-transformative approaches, we have directly empowered more than **36,000 young people to challenge harmful norms, take leadership roles, and engage in community dialogues, reaching more than 200,000 people through campaigns, advocacy & awareness creation, and more than 5 million people** through media platforms.

Power to You(th) has not only contributed to shifting existing power dynamics, it has also ensured that youth are not only heard but also actively shape policies and decisions that affect their lives. In doing so, Power to You(th) stands as a catalyst for lasting systemic change in youth inclusion and gender justice.



“The Power to You(th) experience was life-changing to me. It not only strengthened me but also opened the door to more training and knowledge on early marriage, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Sexual and Gender Based Violence. Now, I’m equipped to educate my friends, family and the community, working to eliminate these from our society. I empower other girls by teaching them what to do and how to report when they face such situations.”

Zahara Ahmed, youth leader, Power to You(th) Ethiopia

Since its inception, the Power to You(th) programme has impacted more than **36,000 young people** across Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Malawi and Senegal through capacity strengthening, empowerment programmes and supporting youth-led social accountability and advocacy. These interventions have gone beyond raising awareness; they have empowered young people to question restrictive norms, step into leadership roles within their communities, and actively participate in, as well as meaningfully influence, key decision-making platforms.

This strengthened their understanding of governance systems and enhanced youth participation in community-level planning and decision-making spaces, including youth parliaments, safe spaces, and accountability forums.

“I never imagined I could speak in front of people, let alone share my personal experiences on such important issues. Finding my voice wasn’t just about me; it was about using it to inspire others.”

Doreen Mirembe, youth participant, Power to You(th) Uganda

As a result, the space for dialogue between youth and key government decision-makers has expanded, allowing young voices to shape policies and influence resource allocation. This shift has transformed youth from passive recipients of policy decisions into active leaders driving change and advocating for policies that protect their collective future.

“Exchange and advocacy meetings made it possible for the youth to understand how the local governments work and also ask them to take more into account the youth’s needs related to health and to involve them in public policy development.” Youth leader, Power to You(th) Senegal.

The recently concluded End Term Evaluation highlighted that, **“PtY contributed to multidimensional impact at individual, community, and institutional levels. Youth reported enhanced agency, leadership, and civic engagement, while community dialogues and media campaigns catalyzed shifts in gender norms and reduced tolerance of harmful practices. At the institutional level, PtY contributed to policy reforms, SRHR budget allocations, and youth inclusion in governance structures”** (End Term Evaluation PtY 2025)



STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY TO CHANGE SOCIAL NORMS

One of our defining successes lies in our efforts to strengthen civil society, especially Youth-Led, Women-Led and Community-Based organizations. During the programme’s lifetime, **approximately 530 civil society organizations** across the focus countries strengthened their capacities in lobbying and advocacy, Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA), Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and in financial and organizational management.

This has transformed individual organizations into influential actors capable of driving impactful lobbying and advocacy efforts that shape policies and shift social norms.

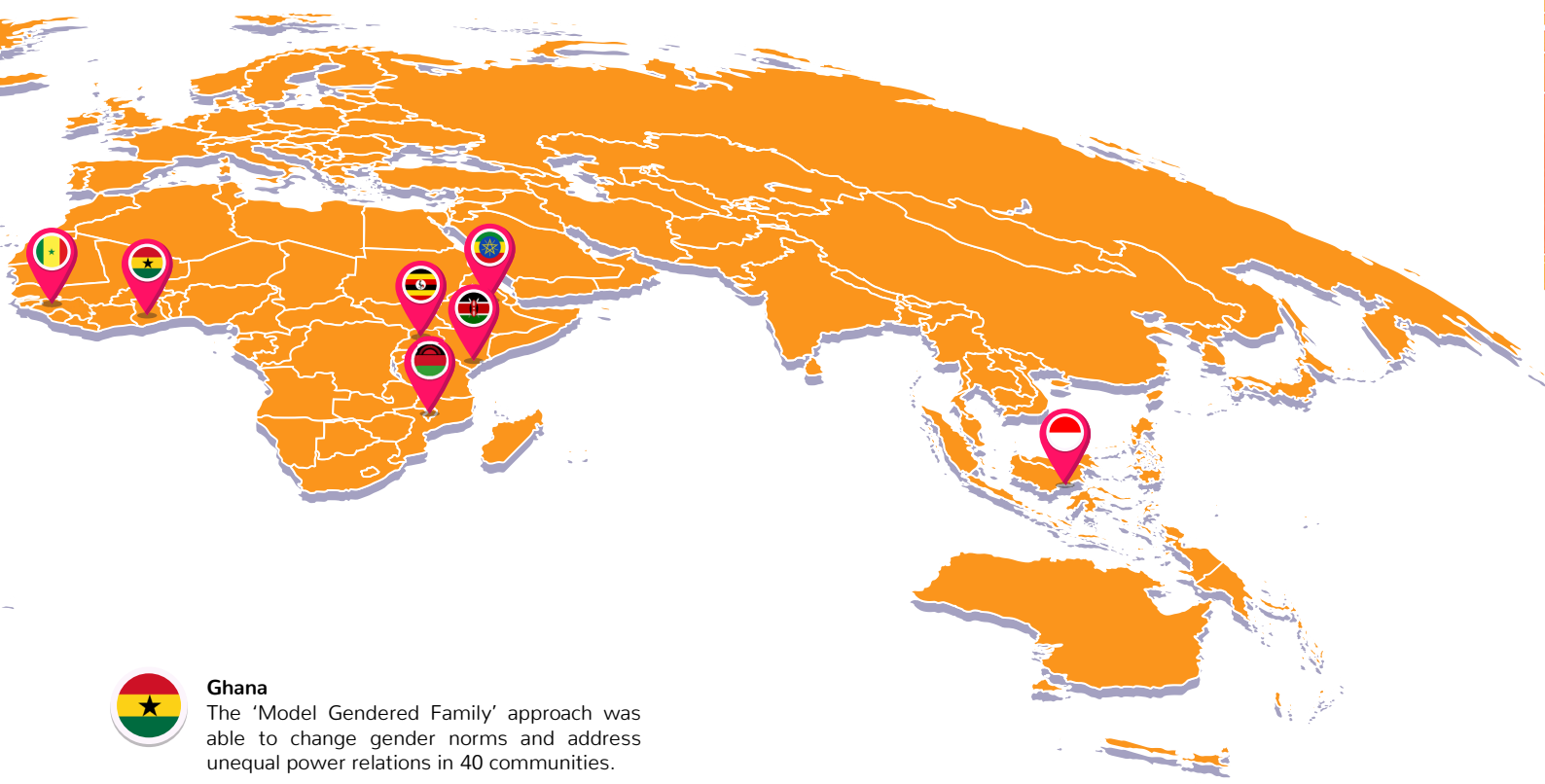
“This programme really made a difference to my organization. The Power to You(th) grant and capacity strengthening has marked our transition from an informal youth collective into a structured entity with

governance systems, a functional board, and clear financial procedures.” Stawisha Africa Initiative, Power to You(th) Kenya.

These youth and civil society organizations have made tremendous strides towards shifting social norms and increasing progressive attitudes. To achieve this, we have engaged influential societal actors, such as religious and traditional leaders, caregivers, teachers, health workers, and media professionals, as changemakers within their communities and institutions.

Interventions such as intergenerational dialogues and community advocacy are among our most distinctive and practical approaches, recording tremendous success in increasing adult openness to youth perspectives and boosting young people’s confidence to challenge harmful social norms such as Female Genital Mutilation, child marriages, and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: SOCIAL NORM CHANGE!



Ghana
The 'Model Gendered Family' approach was able to change gender norms and address unequal power relations in 40 communities.



Ethiopia
In Afar, one of the implementation regions, religious leaders joined hands with young people to help stop over 50 child marriages.



Malawi
In Machinga region, intergenerational dialogues resulted in the 'chief forum' enacting a by-law against underage marriage and returning 91 married girls to school.



Uganda
35 faith and cultural leaders in Kampala co-authored an inter-faith commitment to end teenage pregnancy and child marriage codifying messages and concrete roles for their institutions.



Kenya
Intergenerational dialogues in 4 counties broke taboos around sexuality, menstruation and early marriage, creating solidarity between youth and elders.



Senegal
Through the 'Grandmother Project approach' the programme was able to break taboos and change social norms on FGM.



Indonesia
PtY supported the scale-up of Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education to 643 schools which changed knowledge and attitudes on SRHR.

"In my past, child marriages were a common occurrence in my community, I even participated in these ceremonies without fully understanding the harmful consequences. However, I started to be conscious when I engaged in various training sessions in the Power to You(th) project. These experiences opened my eyes and made me aware of the detrimental factors associated with child marriages. I am grateful for the transformation that occurred within me. I can now actively work towards protecting the rights of girls and boys and ensuring they have the opportunity to lead good lives without being bound by a young marriage."

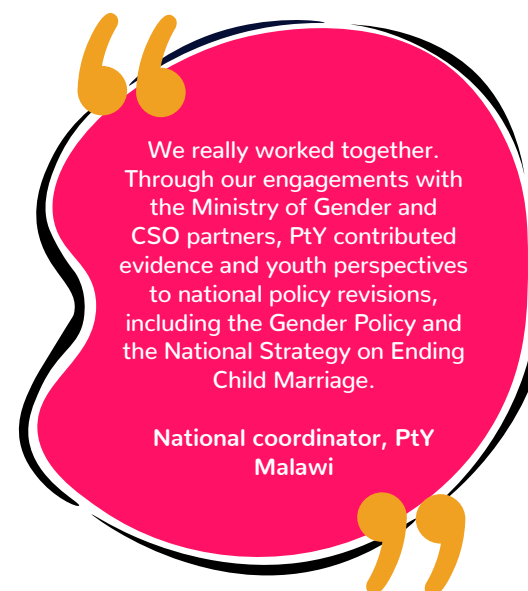
Melake Birhan, Orthodox Church priest, Ethiopia



INFLUENCING POWER AND POLICY AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

"Collective CSO action led by Power to You(th) has played a key role in increasing national budget allocations for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Malawi and in advancing policy reforms in countries such as Indonesia and Ethiopia." (End Term Evaluation PtY 2025)

Beyond grassroots impact, we have strategically worked to influence institutional change, contributing to significant policy shifts or reforms. These included changes in over **70 laws and policies related to the age of consent, child marriage, FGM, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Comprehensive Sexuality Education** many of which were catalyzed by coordinated campaigns and policy dialogues led by youth networks supported through Power to You(th).



We really worked together. Through our engagements with the Ministry of Gender and CSO partners, PtY contributed evidence and youth perspectives to national policy revisions, including the Gender Policy and the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage.

National coordinator, PtY
Malawi



Ghana
Advocacy by Power to You(th) partners under the "don't tax my period" campaign contributed to removal of taxes on sanitary pads.



Uganda
PtY youth coalitions in Mbale and Busia achieved increased Family Planning budget allocations and SRHR inclusion in district development plans.



Ethiopia
PtY advocacy led to adoption of the 'Family Law' in Afar Region, a landmark reform addressing child marriage, FGM, and inheritance rights.



Kenya
Youth Parliament advocacy sparked national conversations on cross-border Female Genital Mutilation practices. More than 500 youth were engaged in legislative dialogue spanning the Kenya-Tanzania border.



Malawi
Power to You(th) partners contributed to revision of the National Gender Policy, which now specifically includes youth SRHR and harmful practices prevention.



Indonesia
PtY Indonesia worked with district and village governments in Garut and East Lombok to translate the national child marriage prevention strategy into local plans and regulations. Awareness raising, advocacy and improved enforcement has led to a decrease of 15% in child marriage cases in Garut and East Lombok between 2021 - 2024.



Senegal
Advocacy led to increased budgetary allocations to youth-friendly services integrated into local government budgets in Mbacké, Thiès, Fatick, Rufisque, Guédiawaye, and Matam.

At the global and regional level, Power to You(th) expanded its advocacy efforts through various activities, including **digital campaigns and engagement in key international policy spaces, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Human Rights Council, the Commission on Population and Development, and the Summit of the Future.** Sonke and AMREF, alongside partners in Uganda, successfully advocated for the introduction of a comprehensive **Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Bill**, which was tabled at the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and subsequently gazetted.



LEARNING, COLLABORATION, AND ADAPTIVE PRACTICE

Power to You(th) fostered a strong **culture of research and learning**, recognizing that **lasting transformation must be grounded in evidence**. In a world where harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies remain deeply rooted, the programme has co-created

data-driven solutions alongside young people. Through operational research, surveys, country exchanges, human-centered design pilots, and external evaluations, Power to You(th) has continuously learned, adapted, and refined its approaches to enhance effectiveness.

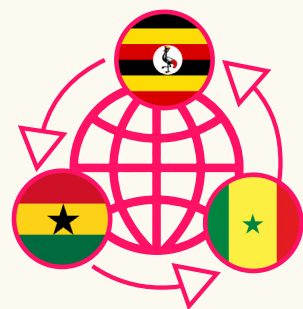


Central Operational Research

With national teams and young researchers in the lead, PtY explored how key approaches sparked change. More information on: [Evidence and Learning - Power to You\(th\)](#).

Human Centered Design

This process empowered youth-led organizations across seven countries to explore, co-create, and pilot solutions that directly addressed the challenges faced by young people in their communities. More information on: [Human Centred Design Innovation - Power to You\(th\)](#).



Country Exchanges

To support learning and the scale-up of successful models, country exchanges were organized. For more information: [Evidence and Learning - Power to You\(th\)](#).



CONCLUSION

Power to You(th) hasn't just reached young people, it has equipped them to lead. Across seven countries, youth coalitions are shifting policy, reshaping norms, and proving that gender justice and civic power grow fastest when they're locally led. Through a deliberate and inclusive approach, we have empowered young people, built resilient civil society coalitions, and influenced critical policy reforms.

The programme's legacy is not just in the numbers reached, but the leadership nurtured, the systems transformed, and the doors opened for a new generation of advocates. It stands as a model for youth-centered, locally owned, and globally informed change aimed at addressing the violence, injustice and weak institutions that young girls, women and the youth often face in pursuit of their aspirations.

“

When young people are given space, listened to, and assisted, we can show tremendous potential. We are not just beneficiaries — we are the main actors of change.

Inayah, youth leader,
Power to You(th)
Indonesia

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For More Information, visit www.powertoyouth.com



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