

# Midterm Evaluation of the Power to You(th) Programme

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The Evaluation team

## Glossary

|        |                                                                              |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AGYW   | Adolescent Girls and Young Women                                             |
| AHAIC  | Africa Health Agenda International Conference                                |
| AI     | Appreciative inquiry                                                         |
| ARP    | Alternative Rite of Passage                                                  |
| CBOs   | Community Based Organizations                                                |
| CIDP   | County Integrated Development Plan                                           |
| CM     | Child Marriage                                                               |
| CMT    | Country Management Teams                                                     |
| CSOs   | Civil Society Organisations                                                  |
| CSW    | Commission on the Status of Women                                            |
| CVSU   | Community Victim Support Unit                                                |
| DC     | District Commissioner                                                        |
| DPD    | Director of Planning and Development                                         |
| EASSI  | Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women |
| FAD    | Village level youth-led CSO                                                  |
| FGM/C  | Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting                                            |
| GBV    | Gender Based Violence                                                        |
| GDPR   | EU's General Data Protection Regulations                                     |
| GTA    | Gender Transformative Approach                                               |
| GMT    | Global Management Team                                                       |
| GSB    | Global Supervisory Board                                                     |
| GSS    | Ghana Statistical Service                                                    |
| GYG    | Global Youth Group                                                           |
| HP     | Harmful practice                                                             |
| HRH    | Human Resources for Health                                                   |
| IDI    | In-Depth Interview                                                           |
| IEC    | Information, Education and Communication                                     |
| KII    | Key Informant Interviews                                                     |
| KPI    | Key Performance Indicator                                                    |
| L&A    | Lobby and Advocacy                                                           |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer                                       |
| LLV    | Legal Literacy Volunteers                                                    |
| MDHS   | Malawi Demographic and Health Survey                                         |
| MFA    | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                                  |
| MTE    | Mid-Term Evaluation                                                          |
| MIYP   | Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation                                 |
| NAP    | National Action Plan                                                         |
| NC     | National Consultant                                                          |
| OH     | Outcome Harvesting                                                           |
| PG MIS | Projects Grant Management Information System                                 |
| PMERL  | Monitoring, Evaluation, Reflection & Learning                                |
| PtY    | Power to Youth                                                               |
| RPJMN  | National Long-Term Development Plan                                          |
| SCS    | Strengthening Civil Society                                                  |
| SDG    | Sustainable Development Goal                                                 |
| SEAH   | Sexual Exploitation and Harassment                                           |

|      |                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------|
| SGBV | Sexual and Gender-Based Violence         |
| SRHR | Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights    |
| SWOT | Strengths Weaknesses Opportunity Threats |
| TOC  | Theory of Change                         |
| ToP  | Termination of Pregnancy                 |
| TP   | Teenage Pregnancy                        |
| TWGs | Technical Working Groups                 |
| UDHS | Uganda Demographic Health Survey         |
| UP   | Unintended Pregnancy                     |
| VAW  | Violence Against Women                   |
| YSIG | Youth Initiative Small grants            |
| YFS  | Youth Friendly Services                  |
| YLOs | Youth Lead Organisations                 |



## Executive Summary

### Introduction:

The Power to You(th) programme is designed to place an emphasis on young people's ability to participate meaningfully in dialogues and decisions that affect adolescent girls and young women. By increasing the participation of young people from a range of backgrounds and groups in political and civic space, the programme aims to improve youth led and focused advocacy and accountability in relation to unintended pregnancy (UP), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and harmful practices such as child marriage (CM) and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). It is implemented in Malawi, Kenya, Indonesia, Senegal, Uganda, Ghana, and Ethiopia. Each country's programme has its own implementation approach that is anchored in the programme theory of change (TOC).

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to unpack challenges, lessons learned and good practices of the Power to You(th) programme to contribute to programme improvements with focus on learning and improvement. The objectives of the mid-term evaluation were to:

- Inform the planning for 2024-2025 at country, regional and global level and the subsequent revision of targets 2025 if needed;
- Use the evaluation findings to change or confirm the overall theory of change, which will inform planning for 2024-2025 at country, regional and global level;
- Improve the partnership at consortium level, including how the partnership implements its principle on Southern Leadership;
- Update the context analysis, risk analysis and cross cutting themes at country level;
- Meet the accountability requirements of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### Methodology:

A mixed methods approach was chosen, consisting of desk review of secondary data and analysis of the primary data. Data was collected using key informant interviews, outcome harvesting, appreciative inquiry, advocacy maturation tool and alliance partnerships thermometer (self-) assessment tool. The advocacy maturation tool focused on evaluating the effectiveness of lobbying and advocacy in all the countries. Data was collected at the country and global level. Data analysis was conducted using: contribution rubrics for contribution and impact of PtY; indicator analysis along the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) basket indicators in the table below; weighted mean analysis of the partnership surveys; appreciative analysis of the youth stories and ranked analysis of the advocacy maturation feedback.

At the global level, a total of 13 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 4 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with PtY programme staff, consortium staff and technical working groups were conducted.

At country level, a total 260 KIIs were conducted; 71 outcomes were validated; 69 youth stories were collected; 56 advocacy maturation assessments were conducted and 85 partnership survey responses were collected.

Table 1: Evaluation Matrix

| Pathway                                                       | Indicator                                                                                                                                                     | Method                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>PATHWAY 1:</b><br>Strengthening youth to claim civic space | # of youth advocates with an improved understanding of decision-making process and power dynamics regarding key topics (by male, female, other, unidentified) | Progress reports and advocacy maturation tool |
|                                                               | # of young people who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful (SRHR A)                                | Progress reports and advocacy maturation tool |
|                                                               | # of CSOs participating in Power to You(th) (SCS 6)                                                                                                           | Consortium data                               |

### PATHWAY 2:

| Pathway                                              | Indicator                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Method                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strengthening civil society</b>                   | # of communities, CSOs, and advocacy networks with increased lobbying, advocating, thematic and/or research capabilities (SCS 5, SRHR J)                                                                                                                                     | Progress reports and Advocacy maturation tool |
|                                                      | # and type of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs for, by or with their membership/constituency                                                                                                                                                                         | Progress reports and KIs                      |
|                                                      | # of CSOs who have advanced on using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth (SCS 8)                                                                                                                  | Progress reports and KIs                      |
|                                                      | # of times government or private sector at all levels include CSOs in decision making processes related to our advocacy issues, react to CSO positions by adopting their argumentation or putting our advocacy issues on the agenda                                          | Progress reports and KIs                      |
|                                                      | Description of effective use of accountability mechanisms by citizens/communities and CSOs towards SRHR of all people (SRHR I)                                                                                                                                               | Appreciative inquiry and KIs                  |
| <b>PATHWAY 3: Changing social norms</b>              | # of media reports on PtY key issues that influence public and political debate                                                                                                                                                                                              | Progress reports and KIs                      |
|                                                      | Level of public support for family planning and prevention of harmful practices and SGBV                                                                                                                                                                                     | OH                                            |
| <b>PATHWAY 4: Policies and policy implementation</b> | Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce, implement, and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex                                                                                                                                 | OH                                            |
|                                                      | # and type of (inter)national laws and policies blocked, adopted, maintained, improved including the number of detrimental policies which are prevented or blocked from adoption or development to decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices and SGBV (SRHR H) | Progress reports and KIs                      |
|                                                      | # of (inter)national laws, policies, norms and practices implemented to decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices, and SGBV (SCS I)                                                                                                                            | Progress report and KIs                       |

## Evaluation Findings

**Effectiveness:** *The extent to which PtY intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results.*

The review shows that most progress is witnessed in Pathway 1 and 4. Pathways 2 and 3 remain equally valid but so far less progress is seen.

The PtY programme has contributed significantly to pathway 1 of getting young people to demand accountability and responsiveness on key issues (Strengthening young people to claim civic space) by working directly with youth, providing awareness raising, capacity strengthening, service provision and networking to youth, their families, and service providers. Under pathway 1, the youth have more knowledge of harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Through this knowledge, the youth have also amplified their voice and agency on SRHR issues. Further, as a result of empowerment initiatives and capacity strengthening, young people across the intervention areas and beyond now collectively speak up for their rights as they examine and question social norms, policies and systems.

The PtY programme has contributed to some extent to pathway 2 of getting CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space (Strengthening Civil Society) by working directly with CSOs in assessing and developing their organisational and lobby and advocacy capacities. Through PtY interventions, it was reported across all the countries that CSOs are now

applying innovative and inclusive lobby and advocacy approaches; CSOs whose capacities have been built are taking collective actions through active political engagement and lobbying and; as a result of increased capacities, the CSO space has attracted more legitimacy.

The PtY programme has contributed to some extent to pathway 3 of getting Societal actors to support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms (Changing social norms) by engaging with key societal stakeholders in promoting SRHR for youth and the inclusion of youth in SRHR decision making at community level. Some of the key results attributable to PtY activities include increased knowledge and skills acquired by societal actors to act on key issues. Furthermore, key societal actors like community and religious leaders are demonstrating increased positive attitudes towards the rights of young people and the need to address harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Importantly, these actors are also addressing the intergenerational gap challenge. Thirdly, as a result of the engagement of societal actors, young people are now more frequently involved as equal partners in decision-making in their communities.

The PtY programme has contributed significantly to pathway 4 of getting State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues (Improving policies and policy implementation) by engaging with key state actors in promoting SRHR for youth and the inclusion of youth in SRHR decision making at local and national government level. Similar to Pathway 2 outcomes, some of the notable achievements under this pathway include state actors more frequently involving young people as equal partners in policy processes. Recognizing the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies, state actors are also engaging more with societal actors such as community leaders and religious leaders. And thirdly, through PtY engagement, there has been a marked increase in knowledge and skills by state actors to design and implement effective policies and laws and budget for them.

**Relevance:** *The extent to which PtY intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change*

In terms of the relevance of the PtY programme in addressing the needs of youth and ensuring their inclusion in decision-making, the MTE confirmed that the involvement of the youth is critical in addressing harmful practices such as FGM/C, teenage pregnancies and child marriages because they are the groups which are most affected. Based on the statistics at national level and regional level, these issues are a priority in the specific national SRHR framework hence it is critical to address them and, in the process, involve the people who are most affected by them who are the youth. The respondents confirmed the relevance of the programme's thematic areas or priority areas of unintended pregnancies, SGBV and HP to the communities because the issues are very prevalent. PtY has supported young people in developing the skills and confidence to advocate for their rights and create positive change in their communities. Youth are also more aware of their rights and are becoming increasingly engaged in social and political issues that affect their lives.

**Sustainability:** PtY has ensured that there is an exit strategy to ensure continuity of programme interventions and gains beyond the programme period. The KII respondents noted that working with the community was one of the sustainability measures that the programme has in place. Strengthening the capacity of local youth-led Community based organisations (CBOs) and CSOs is another strategy the programme is using. If the programme closes, the strengthened capacity of several youth organisations in the community ensures the continued implementation of the activities or programmes. The country programmes have been working successfully to influence the development, review, operationalization and implementation of laws and policies that create a favourable environment to address the harmful practices that are a priority for the PtY programme.

**Partnership:** Using the 5 partnership's building blocks –strategy, connection & cooperation, steering structure, processes and learning & innovation –, the PtY partners assessed the partnership functionalities. The overall rating for all the building blocks reached a highly satisfactory score of 84 out of 100 with: processes-86, strategy-85, connection & cooperation-84, learning & innovation-83 and steering structure-80.

The key highlights of achievements include:

- Inclusiveness of the strategy development process;
- PtY strategy prioritising learning across the consortium and within country teams;
- Leveraging and utilisation of each other's expertise, capacities and means at country, GMT and GSB levels within PtY;
- Cross learning through exchange visits that has impacted on further improved cooperation and connection with countries learning from each other, networking and appreciating the strength of each other especially around the key pathways;
- Clear structures within the PtY ensuring that each structure's role such as GMT, CMTs, Coordination lab and partners being understood by consortium members across the consortium;
- Inclusion of Southern Leadership to support decision making within the program;
- Presence of systems in place to monitor the programme through measuring outcomes and ensuring that there is compliance across the programme cycle. CMTs have indeed dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and financial staff from the consortium partners who offer technical support and lessons learned (formal and informal) from programme implementation generally inform the adjustment of activities appropriately with annual reflections critical in joint planning and execution of next year's plans.

Some of the key challenges identified under partnerships include:

- Competing initiatives and activities that hinder country teams from participating in global and regional activities;
- Lack of a joint vision and strategy and clear role of each partner in the programme as some country teams were not actively involved at the design phase of the programme
- Lack of clear understanding of the GTA by some country teams as the capacity strengthening on GTA started late into the programme implementation
- Power struggles within partnership at the country level with lead partners cited as making unilateral decisions at times;
- The Southern Leadership structure has also not been fully understood by all partners, especially by those who joined after the programme had started;
- Lack of clear learning questions within the program, which hinders joint documentation on learning and best practices.

**Theory of Change:** The Power to Youth (PtY) Theory of Change (TOC) was developed through a co-creation process. The MTE shows the high relevance of the ultimate pathway outcomes as goals of the PtY programme. However, from the outcome harvesting data, some proposed changes to the pathways could be considered. In addition, while all pathways have demonstrated their validity, pathways 1 (Strengthening youth to claim civic space) and 2 (CSOs strengthening civil society) sometimes overlap as the work conducted by CSOs led by youth could either be categorised under pathway 1 or 2.

**Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation:** The very core of the Power to You(th) programme is that it is youth-centric and that the voice of young people is heard at all levels of decision-making (individual, family, neighbourhood, school, community, state, regional and international level). Meaningful youth participation and engagement has been integrated both internally within the PtY consortium governance structures, as well as externally in the advocacy programmatic work towards communities, social actors and state actors. The Power to You(th) programme placed emphasis on strengthening the capacity of young people to lobby for meaningful inclusion and participation in community interface and dialogue interactions aimed at ensuring that issues that affect the youth, more importantly girls and young women, are taken into consideration and right decisions about them are made. In doing so, PtY has created a platform for the young people to hold duty bearers accountable on issues affecting them.

**The gender transformative approach** is a cross-cutting theme in the PtY programme that focuses on the roles of men and women, boys, and girls and how these affect PtY outcomes. GTA has been mainstreamed in all aspects of the programmes such as advocacy and meaningful inclusive youth participation. The programme further set up gender commissions within the regional platforms with the aim of incorporating the GTA component by supporting gender sensitivity in implementation of project activities and operationalization of the program. Language is a key

barrier where often when one says gender people automatically relate it to LGBTQ+ especially in countries like Senegal and Uganda. Some of the organisations do not clearly understand what the GTA approach entails and are having a hard time distinguishing it from gender mainstreaming.

**Context and risk analysis** for the PtY programme was conducted collaboratively with the youth from the CSOs to identify the potential risks and mitigation strategies and how they worked through the program. The initial context analysis not only looked at the operating environment but also there was an aspect of assessing the CSOs capacity and youth group capacities. The respondents stated that risk analysis is conducted frequently with countries having annual reflections whereby people identify the risks that they would encounter in the implementation. The respondents noted that to address the risk of opposition, the country teams need support in coming up with a strong advocacy strategy.

**Technical working groups:** For the provision of technical assistance for countries to implement the interventions to improve youth led and focused advocacy and accountability in relation to unintended pregnancy (UP), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, a number of technical working groups have been established. These are: GTA, MIYP L&A, PMEL and Communication. Each TWG in the PtY has its mandate and goals based on their expertise. The TWGs leverage the ability of the global youth group as advocates presenting themselves, which gives them exposure to speak for the programme priorities and get involved in agenda setting and push accountability for duty bearers. Despite TWGs developing a training schedule with a menu on what to train on, the requests from the country teams are still very low however this could be because the menu was shared outside the exchange learning sessions.

The PtY consortium has comprehensive and robust communications strategies, both internally and externally. The programme developed an overarching guideline launched in 2022 with the aim of ensuring the involvement of all partnership members and closed feedback loops. At the global level PtY programme has maintained a flexible external communications strategy, allowing adjustments for different international conferences, events, joint campaigns, and activities in the annual work plan. PtY internal communications are to promote transparency, alignment, and engagement among stakeholders.

The project has a robust M&E system, whereby there is a technical staff for M&E in each implementing organisation who monitors the impact in the countries. The programme has focused on establishing a well-functioning data collection and management system where different M&E tools like outcome harvesting are used.

**Recommendations:** Based on the evaluation findings, the MTE is bringing forward the following recommendations:

- Conduct discussions and sensitization sessions at the country level to ensure that all the countries understand the concept of Southern Leadership and how it functions and what their role is within this approach.
- Establish a dissemination strategy especially through the quarterly update and reflection meeting where different TWGs share information that they deem important and crucial for implementation of the program.
- Identify the most significant stories from inspiring beneficiaries / role models /champions/ youth advocates etc. and amplify their voice through their stories.
- Involve an impartial central body for mediation in situations where internal communication becomes deadlocked. Further, there is a need to establish clear procedures for internal communication during times of crisis to ensure swift and effective information dissemination, decision-making, and response coordination.
- Reconsider some of the lower-level outcomes and make appropriate changes to the theory of change pathways. As a general recommendation, it is suggested to regularly include a reflection on the theory of change in PtY reflection events and ensure the theory of change is contextualised for each country.
- Broaden the scope of the programme to include the young people who are in school in countries where it is not done.
- Countries need more support from the consortium partners to conduct the risk analysis and management of these risks. Also, it is recommended to ensure that there is a common understanding of SEAH within the PtY consortium based upon the PTY

Safeguarding Policy. Interventions and responses must be aimed at counteracting the power imbalances and gender inequalities that are the root causes of such violations.

- Furthermore, partners are encouraged to promptly report all credible allegations in accordance with the reporting process outlined in the PTY Safeguarding policy. Also, partners are encouraged to prioritise awareness-raising activities around what constitutes SEAH and where to report it.
- Reflect on the learning questions during the planning meetings and jointly review at the end of the year during harvesting outcomes to assess attainment of outcomes and identify lessons for partners in the consortium. This can also include questions based on the ToC assumptions and contextualising country ToCs.
- 
- The consortium partners and adult policymakers need capacity strengthening to understand meaningful youth participation and engagement and its importance.
- Ensure that the youths have interpreters and the documents being used in platforms that require communication in English are translated for youth advocates who lack proficiency in the language.
- Demystify beliefs around youth engagement in the society such as youth should not speak where there are elders, as well as enlighten the policy makers on the need of the youth in decision making. Gender Transformative Approaches can be applied to address the root causes of PtY issues and address power imbalances hampering youth engagement in addressing root causes. This can be achieved through supporting the youth at the community level to understand the specific power dynamics in their communities and how to use this understanding to influence decision making.
- Maintain and strengthen PtY programme focus on capacity strengthening of existing CSOs, youth networks and local structures in GTA and MIYP.
- Support the action plans developed by CSOs to increase the youth's voices through technical assistance and financial support for the youth initiatives. .
- Continue with advocacy at the community level through regular sensitization forums and dialogues to impart knowledge to community members on harmful practices.
- Leverage on cordial state actor relationships to advocate with governments to support the mainstreaming of Youth friendly services in the healthcare system to increase access to SRHR services and support the fight against harmful practices.
- Continue creating the intergenerational platforms where conversations on harmful practices are conducted.
- Lobbying and advocating with the government to ensure there is a functional healthcare system through health financing, sufficient medical products and adequate human resources for health.
- Popularise reporting mechanisms for harmful practices and SGBV, gender inequalities and safeguarding issues.
- Empower the CSOs in all the countries to ensure that their organisational structures are strengthened especially on advocating for the CSOs inclusion in the policy making process.
- Sensitise policy makers and advocate with politicians on the importance of comprehensive education on SRHR.
- Lobbying policy/decision-makers for increasing budgets/allocating funds for policies & implementation of policies related to PtY themes
- Develop and implement a more robust strategy to disseminate and popularise legal and policy instruments that directly promote gender equality and human rights, to address resistance from some quarters of society, particularly males and traditional leadership including their participation and ownership.
- To address the risk of opposition, the country teams need capacity strengthening, guidance in mapping of opposition and support in coming up with a strong advocacy strategy that takes into consideration some of the guidelines developed such as the "Working on SRHR in Times of Opposition: Facilitator's Guide" developed by Rutgers.

## 1. Introduction

The Power to You(th) (PtY) consortium requested Dr Albino Luciani and Mrs Karin van den Belt to conduct a Mid Term Evaluation of the PtY programme. The programme under review is the Power to You(th) programme. Power to You(th) (PtY) is a five-year programme from 2021 - 2025, that seeks to empower adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) to increase their agency, claim their rights, address gender inequalities, challenge gender norms, and advocate for inclusive decision-making. The Power to You(th) (PtY) consortium, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is led by Amref Netherlands, in collaboration with Sonke Gender Justice and Rutgers, and supported by KIT and CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality as technical partners. This report outlines the evaluation findings.

### 1.1 Background Power to You(th) Programme

The Power to You(th) programme is designed to place an emphasis on young people's ability to participate meaningfully in dialogues and decisions that affect adolescent girls and young women. By increasing the participation of young people from a range of backgrounds and groups in political and civic space, the programme aims to improve youth led and focused advocacy and accountability in relation to unintended pregnancy (UP), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting. The partnership strengthens civil society organisations (CSOs) to empower and increase the voice of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). Power to Youth works with supportive actors to create change:

- Young people from underserved communities – particularly AGYW – who are most at risk of HPs, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies are our primary stakeholders and beneficiaries;
- CSOs – our strategic partners that are operating at local, national, and global levels, they are embedded in local communities, these CSOs have legitimacy in working on SRHR with local groups and organisations;
- Societal actors/reformists including, men/boys, women/girls, parents, and caregivers, and religious, traditional, and opinion leaders. Influential progressive societal actors can advocate for, challenge, and counter restrictive social norms and mobilise a critical mass of people that become influential enough for a community to change its practices;
- State actors/reformists including local authorities, national governments, and regional and global governmental bodies, and service providers at public institutions.

### 1.2 Description of Strategies per Country and Pathway

In order to bring about the above mentioned changes, several core strategies are applied and contextualised per country. This section describes the strategies used by each country to implement the PtY program:

In **Ghana**, the PtY programme was designed to strengthen youth and empower them to claim their civic space. The strategies involved included evidence generation through youth-led research where participatory monitoring and research are youth-led throughout the design, data collection, analysis, reporting and use; institutionalisation of youth-led PMERL team through capacity strengthening and development and use of standard operating procedures (guideline) to reflect the aspirations of young people in programming, enhancing/strengthening capacities of youth and their networks using meaningful and inclusive youth participation(MIYP) and lobby and advocacy; strengthening the agency of youth through learning hubs (capacity strengthening, experience sharing and planned joint actions) and idea pitching through the Youth Initiative Small Grants using Gender Transformative Approach (GTA); youth networking and convening/learning using “youthatalk” platform. Further the consortium focused on enhancing CSOs and YLOs capacities in the areas of lobby and advocacy, AGYW led programming, and gender transformative approaches. The other strategy is promoting learning through the CSO Learning Hubs where CSOs, YLOs and Media campaigns use traditional and social media to advocate and lobby for inclusion of AGYW in CSOs, YLOs and government interventions. The country program is also using transformative and progressive social norms within the communities (to reduce SGBV prevalence, unintended pregnancy and harmful practices such as child marriage, “kayayie”, FGM/C); media monitoring of stakeholders’ actions on reported SGBV issues (using feminist approach to ending SGBV); and Legal Literacy Volunteers (LLVs) (to enhance case identification

and reporting). Further, Ghana applied strategies of: networking and building partnerships with national CSOs; strengthening national media outlets; lobbying and advocacy with government agencies and law enforcement officials responsible for policy development, implementation and enforcement.

In **Senegal**, the main strategies used included strengthening the capacity of young people to claim their civic rights and to become involved in decision-making bodies. Advocacy on Harmful practices based on training activities for young people to improve their knowledge of policies, laws and decision-making bodies was applied. In addition to the advocacy activities to fight against harmful practices, awareness-raising activities for communities to change their behaviour was conducted using community dialogue activities, intergenerational dialogue sessions, radio broadcasts and sketches. Moreover, the programme focused on promotion of family planning.

PtY in **Indonesia** focused on child marriage (CM), TP and SGBV. At the national level 2030 Youth Force Indonesia amplified implemented advocacy strategies by conducting national surveys and discussion with CSOs and Government Planning Agency. At district level through the GTA and the MIYP strategies, PtY supported the development of village level youth led CSOs (FAD) and built their capacities on key issues to address the problem at village level, while adolescent and youth at school through implementing SRHR modules and developing accountability mechanisms at school level. Further, in collaboration and communication PtY uniquely built teamwork between adolescent girls and boys as well as between youth and parents. The programme also focused on capacity need assessments of partners as well as amplifying voices by establishing and strengthening youth CSOs networks. In addition, the programme focused on identifying influencers as potential allies including public figures, media owners, and religious leaders. Further, the PtY partners and societal actors conducted research to provide advocacy content and campaigning around counter narratives on child marriage, TP and VAW. Media (journalists) are a crucial stakeholder to engage in the advocacy work. Also, the programme focused on integration of school and CSOs to improve SRHR and combat SGBV. The PtY advocacy strategy targeted law enforcement officers and political leaders with different demands.

In **Malawi** the programme concentrated its first year (2021) on developing young people's capacity to influence policies and decision-makers. The programme encouraged, mentored, and trained young people to express their concerns to decision-makers and leaders and to take part in decision making bodies. The engagement with community leaders on issues of local governance and youth participation culminated in both male and female youth being meaningfully included (some as chairpersons) in local governance structures that include development committees and village development committees to enhance articulation of youth issues therein. At national level, the young people engaged the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare to advocate for the review of the standard operating guidelines for the Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU) to include young people in the composition of the Community Victim Support Unit structure. Following this engagement, the Ministry successfully revised the guidelines which are now awaiting approval. To strengthen civil society actor capacity, the strategic direction was to increase the capacity of CSOs to lobby and advocate. The programme conducted training in advocacy and Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (SEAH) targeting both PtY Malawi consortium members and partners (MenEngage). In addition, there was also advocacy conducted with the Parliamentary Committee on Health being a partner in supporting the Termination of Pregnancy (ToP) bill. In addition, a partnership was established with other like-minded organisations or networks such as Break Free, MenEngage, MEGEN, COPUA, FPAM, Feminist Macro-Economist Alliance Malawi and IPAS Malawi. Dialogues between young people, CSOs and societal actors took place, with the aim of promoting SRHR and dealing with harmful social norms. Print and electronic media played a critical role in enhancing visibility and publicity of the program. The PtY Malawi Consortium, extensively promoted the use of digital media with youth networks, advocates and champions in the implementation districts. PtY programme influenced policy and legal changes that would benefit the SRHR and broad rights of the youth particularly girls and young women.

In **Uganda**, the programme strategically placed emphasis on young people's ability to participate meaningfully in dialogues and decisions that affect adolescent girls and young women. The programme aimed to conduct consultative interviews and meetings which involved youth advocates and as a result a position paper was developed with their input with recommendations

on how they would wish to be engaged in the various departments in Isingiro and Busia district. Training was conducted and the capacity of youth advocates was built in order for them to understand their meaningful involvement in the district departments and assess their level of involvement in decision-making processes at the district level. Further, there was engagement of young people as champions who advocated for the ending of unintended pregnancies, SGBV and harmful practices. Many capacity strengthening activities were conducted as this was one of the main strategies. Capacity enhancement was combined with linking and learning initiatives for Civil Society organisations involved in the programme in order to enhance understanding of Gender Transformative Approaches, Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation and Lobby & Advocacy. The programme used media especially social media accounts (Facebook, twitter, Instagram) to increase their online presence and engagement thus their advocacy initiatives as well as stir conversations and influence public debate. Intergenerational dialogues between young people and societal actors like religious leaders, traditional leaders and elders took place with the aim of examining and challenging harmful social norms. Further, cross-border dialogues aimed at generating community-led strategies on how to end FGM across the Uganda-Kenya border.

Working directly with state actors who were 'reformist' and champions of progressive social norms, was a key strategy used. The programme-built relationships with 'reformist' government actors to jointly advocate for improved laws, policies and budgets regarding harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Advocacy and lobbying meetings were conducted to address meaningful and inclusive youth participation, gender transformation, harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. The Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative (EASSI) in collaboration with the programme conducted sensitization of policy makers on implementation of existing laws and policies in order to bridge and address the implementation gaps highlighted in the policy review findings.

In **Kenya**, PtY invested in multiple levels at which young people were encouraged and empowered to engage in discussions and decision-making processes related to SRHR. This was achieved by numerous round table discussions with young people on FGM, UP and SGBV and other development related issues, mentoring AGYW groups and clubs, networking and use of school debates on harmful practices. In ensuring CSOs amplified the young people's voices, the programme leveraged on local radio and social media to increase civic outreach and build public support, advocacy for inclusion and representation, capacity strengthening through technical assistance and the use of training of trainers, engagement of community resource persons and mentorship; engaging in advocacy on improved service delivery, linking and learning initiatives, , organisational development system strengthening of CSOs and advocacy on creation of functional referral pathways and linkages with legal aid clinics, rescue centres and health clinics to address the SRHR needs of youth as well as development and dissemination of research/policy papers on SRHR, organising SRHR multi-stakeholder meetings and meetings with policymakers to discuss SRHR. To promote adoption of progressive norms in the communities, PtY in Kenya promoted an Alternative Rite of Passage (ARP) practice as a way of tackling FGM and created awareness and shared information on referral/ reporting pathways for SGBV survivors to ensure ease of reporting and counter possible intimidation or stigmatization. The programme supported AGYWs through linkages with existing safe spaces/ rescue centre for FGM and SGBV survivors and created public awareness and sensitization through community and public meetings in different religious settings. Further to improving the policy making process, the programme influenced the process of the development of the Children's Act of 2022, proposed for more punitive laws that exclude the option of family reconciliations in cases where criminal HPs such as SGBV and FGM and early marriage as well as conducting activism and youth inclusion in budget and policy making processes, development of sector plans as critical stakeholders.

In **Ethiopia**, the PtY programme envisions to empower young people to demand accountability and responsiveness on SGBV, HPs, and unintended pregnancies from societal and state actors by strengthening existing youth structures and reaching underserved AGYW through capacity strengthening trainings, research, awareness raising, policy literacy, vocational skills and entrepreneurship training, and support to youth organisations. Furthermore, the second pathway foresees increasing the lobbying and advocacy capacity of CSOs to claim, protect, and expand civic space. In view of this, PtY Ethiopia has crafted various strategies, including conducting organisational capacity assessments and gender and social inclusion analyses, sensitising CSOs

on PtY key issues, supporting organisational development, facilitating networking and exposure to the experiences of others, and providing financial support to CSOs. For pathway 3, in aiming to change social norms (knowledge and skills of influential societal actors) that influence prevalence of HPs, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies the programme has undertaken assessments to identify harmful and discriminatory social norms and workable approaches to change them, develop social and behavioural change (SBCC) strategies and materials, engage media, capacitate societal actors and existing platforms, advocate for groups of societal actors to revise their bylaws, and diffuse changes by identifying role model figures and providing financial support to CBOs led by changed societal actors. Finally, for pathway 4 involving state actors, core strategies aimed to improve policy making and implementation at subnational and national levels to protect AGYW from HPs, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies. To attain the objectives, PtY contrives strengthening state actors' skills and knowledge on duty bearers' responsibility to respect, promote and realise human rights, and willingness to create an enabling environment for citizen voices. In this sense, the project aims to generate evidence to support evidence-based policy formulation and implementation, sensitise state actors, capacitate state actors, and implement a model of youth friendly SRHR and SGBV service corners in government health centres in selected underserved sites. This includes renovating and equipping the corners with basic equipment and supplies, providing comprehensive training on youth friendly services, strengthening case reporting and referral linkage, and advocating for adaptation in their localities.

### 1.3 Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of this evaluation is to unpack challenges, lessons learned and good practices of the Power to You(th) programme to contribute to programme improvements, so the focus is on learning and improvement.

The midterm was a participatory evaluation, involving different stakeholders such as young people, CSOs, social and state actors to capture their voices, review programme strategy and provide insight on the way stakeholders/target groups value the programme. The midterm evaluation centred around outcomes evidenced through Outcome Harvesting (OH) and storytelling-based inquiries involving the youth.

More specifically, the objectives of the mid-term evaluation were to use the evaluation findings to:

1. Inform the planning for 2024-2025 at country, regional and global level and the subsequent revision of targets 2025 if needed;
2. Use the evaluation findings to change or confirm the overall theory of change, which will inform planning for 2024-2025 at country, regional and global level;
3. Improve the partnership at consortium level, including how the partnership implements its principle on Southern Leadership;
4. Update the context analysis, risk analysis and cross cutting themes at country level;
5. Meet the accountability requirements of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The mid-term evaluation thus looked at programme implementation at country, regional and global levels, and progress made in the first phase of the programme. The relevance of advocacy messages and engagement of advocacy stakeholders were carefully investigated. The effectiveness of specific advocacy approaches to influencing laws and policies as well as social norm change influencing with keen interest on norms and values were reflected upon and recommendations for future advocacy actions were provided during the MTE. Other elements of the MTE included an assessment of the partnership at both in-country level and consortium level, the level of Gender transformative action being in line with expectations and the extent to which quality risk assessments can ensure programme sustainability.

Besides using the evaluation findings, the evaluation process was used to include evaluation users, programme staff and youth as active stakeholders in all phases of the evaluation so that they can strengthen their capacity on evaluative thinking, which will allow them to (better) reflect on the programme's progress and actively provide feedback throughout the rest of the programme.

#### 1.4 Evaluation Questions

The Power to You(th) consortium developed the following evaluation questions to be addressed in the MTE:

Questions related to objective 1 and 2, the programme and its theory of change:

1. What results have been achieved by the programme, and to what extent do those results contribute to achieving the intended outcomes included in the Theory of Change?
2. Which programme strategies or external factors were most effective in contributing to achieving the intended outcomes included in the Theory of Change?
3. Do programme participants (youth) perceive a contribution by the programme to their (increased) inclusion in decision-making processes regarding harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies?
4. Do programme participants (youth) think their inclusion in decision-making processes is now (more) meaningful and contributing to (policy) improvements related to harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies?
5. Do programme participants think that the programme has contributed to social changes (values, norms, beliefs and attitudes) in regard to harmful practices SGBV and unintended pregnancies?

Questions related to objective 3, the partnership, are:

6. How is the partnership functioning (in – countries between the CSOs, youth and country representative structures at the Global Management Team-Global Supervisory Board (GMT-GSB) level, between consortium partners and countries, between consortium partners at the country, regional and global levels), what are its weaknesses and strengths, and how could it be improved to enable the (better) achievement of results?
7. What does the collaboration with the Dutch embassy look like, and how could the collaboration be improved?

Questions related to objective 4, the context- and risk analysis at country level, are:

8. What is the status of the context analysis, how is it used, and what could the programme team do to increase its relevance and usefulness?
9. What is the status (up-to-date or out-dated) of the risk analysis, how is it used, and what could the programme team do to increase its relevance and usefulness?

## 2. Methodology

The MTE was conducted by the Global team and by country consultants. The MTE design included global level assessments as well as country level studies. For the country level studies national consultants were recruited in each country. A standard term of reference guided the recruitment process and national consultants were identified and contracted by PtY country teams. Subsequently, the Global team provided them with training on the expectations and methods to be used for the country level studies. The engagement of national consultants allowed for extensive data collection on seven countries and provided for a very rich data set as input for the MTE report.

The Midterm evaluation used a mixed methods approach. The approach entailed desk review of secondary data and analysis of the primary data collected. Quantitative data was redacted from existing programme progress reports while qualitative data was collected using key informant interviews, outcome harvesting, appreciative inquiry, Advocacy Maturation Tool and alliance partnerships thermometer (self-) assessment tool.

### 2.1 Data Collection Process

Different quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect data from different programme stakeholders including outcome harvesting, key informant interviews and appreciative inquiry.

#### 2.1.1 Desk Review

The Consulting Team first worked at getting preliminary answers through deep dive desk review and carefully studied further the available programme documentation and monitoring data. During the desk review the team analysed the OH logbooks of previous years and searched for signs of change (outcomes). Furthermore, answers to evaluation questions were sought from the available programme documents, research and evaluation reports, mid- end, and annual reports, PtY learning reports and monitoring data such as outcome harvesting information, baseline study report, programme documents (periodic reports, work plans, proposals etc).

Priority was put on efforts toward assessing the extent to which progress is witnessed on the PtY programme objectives of the programme, Theory of Change; appraising progress towards planned results and drawing any lessons identified so far by the consortium that may help improve the implementation of the programme. The analysis was conducted through the mapping of relevant information per result area and/or indicators. This was primarily a qualitative analysis complemented with quantitative data where available.

#### 2.1.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIs)

KIs were conducted using semi-structured interview guides. The semi-structured interview guides included broad open-ended questions based on the evaluation questions at country level, regional and global level, and consortium level. The key informant interviews had two primary purposes:

1. Assessment of the programme's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, lessons learnt and best practices through KIs with PtY key internal stakeholders. The guides were tailored to suit the different roles and functions of specific types of respondents for the Power to Youth programme. The interviews were conducted virtually via the preferred platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Skype.

Specifically:

- At the Country Level the KIs involved interviewing the programme team including management, CSOs leads, social and state actors. The KIs aimed to assess the progress of the programme in achieving its objectives, the effectiveness of the advocacy approaches used in the programme as well as identification of challenges, lessons learnt and best practices from programme implementation. Further, this entailed questions focusing on context analysis and risk analysis (including SEAH, fraud and corruption) and cross-cutting themes such as gender, youth, climate

- At the Global and Regional level, the KII involved the members of the power to Youth technical working groups (TWGs), global and regional bodies including governments, to assess the effectiveness of the advocacy activities and soundness of the mechanisms put in place by PtY for outcome sustainability
- Interviews at the consortium level involved representatives of the consortium organisation with the aim of assessing the sustainability of the consortium partnership strategies, challenges, best practices, and lessons learnt in implementing the programme.

**At the global level, a total of 13 KIIs and 4 IDIs with PtY programme staff, consortium staff and technical working groups were conducted.** The interviews with PtY staff members addressed evaluation questions 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

The other purpose of the KIIs entailed:

The validation of outcomes harvested in the 2023 Outcome Harvesting workshops, through KIIs with key actors targeted by the PtY programme. During the OH workshops a substantiation plan was developed for each country and the outcomes to be substantiated were identified. The substantiation plan also included the identification of substantiators for each outcome to be validated. Based on the outcomes to be validated and substantiators to be approached for the validation of the outcomes, interview guides were tailor-made. **In total 260 KIIs were conducted with youth leaders, CSOs, societal actors and state actors in the 7 countries.**

### 2.1.3 Outcome Harvesting

Outcome harvesting workshops were conducted in seven countries with key stakeholders which included PtY programme staff, implementing partners and young people. The OH workshops focused on collecting outcomes that occurred in the past year and validating existing outcomes harvested, including positive and negative unexpected and unintended outcomes. After the outcomes were harvested, they were linked to the PtY Theory of Change and the four pathways where applicable. The significance of each outcome harvested was jointly determined in the workshop by all participants. Finally, as part of the OH methodology the workshop participants identified plausible contribution statements per each individual outcome harvested. Information collected during national outcome harvesting workshops was added to existing national outcome harvesting logbooks. Logbooks are structured in such a way that correlations can be identified between actors involved in the change, thematic area covered by the outcome, relevance, and contribution to the outcome.

After the completion of in-country outcome harvesting processes, substantiation plans were drafted per country by identifying the outcomes to be validated through key informant interviews. The global consultants suggested to select 8 outcomes for substantiation per country through an average of 24 interview per country. Some countries with for example many partners or many geographical sites, opted to have more outcomes substantiated to fully cover all geographical areas and all partners. Criteria for the selection of outcomes for substantiation were provided during the country outcome harvesting workshops and include the quality of the outcome statement, the substantiation plan providing a representative sample of the districts of operation, the partners implementing the PtY programme, the four different pathways and the ability to find qualified substantiators. **In total 71 outcomes were validated.** Per pathway the numbers are provided below:

*Table 2: Number of outcomes substantiated*

| Country          | Stakeholder group |      |                 |              |
|------------------|-------------------|------|-----------------|--------------|
|                  | Youth             | CSOs | Societal actors | State actors |
| <b>Ethiopia</b>  | 4                 | 3    | 4               | 1            |
| <b>Ghana</b>     | 2                 | 4    | 3               | 6            |
| <b>Indonesia</b> | 3                 | 2    | 2               | 6            |

|                |    |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>Kenya</b>   | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| <b>Malawi</b>  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 2  |
| <b>Senegal</b> | 4  | 4  | 1  | 2  |
| <b>Uganda</b>  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 2  |
| <b>Total</b>   | 18 | 19 | 15 | 21 |

#### 2.1.4 Appreciative Inquiry

In addition to other methods and in order to promote inclusive youth engagement including diversity and equality, appreciative inquiry was used. Appreciative inquiry (Ai) is a participatory approach that engages individuals in self-determined change. AI focuses on what is working or has worked before rather than what isn't working while helping individuals to co-design their future with the aim of them approaching change and growth from a problem-solving perspective.

The 5-step AI process was used in the evaluation focusing on stories from the youth. In each country two Youth Champions were trained in collecting stories. Each Youth Champion collected 5 stories from other Youth Champions. In each country therefore 10 stories were generated.

1. Dawn-this step builds trust and supportive relationships with youth. The youth develop skills and knowledge in anticipation for their participation in the programme.
2. Discovery-this step identifies and appreciates the best of what the different youth in the different countries have to offer. This was done by gathering positive and success stories from the youth.
3. Dream-together with the youth, this step identifies what could be and envision new possibilities for the future. Using information from the "discovery stage", youth created a set of aspiration statements that will drive their future state.
4. Design-this step identifies the actions the youth and other stakeholders need to do to support the new possibilities in the "dream stage". The youth needed to create and commit to these actions
5. Delivery-this step identifies ways to support and sustain actions identified in the "design stage". The youth need to implement and uphold the positive changes and work together with other stakeholders to sustain them.

The stories of youth provided insights for evaluation question 3 and 4. The stories were analysed to establish the impact the programme has had in ensuring that the youth are engaged and participate meaningfully in making decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health as well as the policy changes to support youth inclusion in decisions on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. **In total 69 stories were collected.**

#### 2.1.5 Advocacy Maturation Tool

In order to promote contextual learning and understanding of interventions within the programme, the team used a tool that takes into account contextual (geography, politics, policy environment, youth engagement etc.) issues. As part of the data collection process, the consulting team developed an Advocacy Maturation Tool to establish how each country's programme implementing stakeholder has progressed against each advocacy objective. It was used as an interviewer-administered tool that identified gaps that should be addressed and provided opportunities to implement interventions and improve country ratings in future maturity assessments. In summary, the tool helped to determine:

- I. At what stage are the countries regarding adolescent girls and young women rights advocacy?
- II. What are the gaps in each country that hinder progression of the programme to the sustenance stage of maturation?

- III. What are the challenges and possible critical interventions per country needed to address the gaps towards improvement of the programme?

The advocacy maturation assessment per country contributed to answering evaluation question

1. **In total 56 advocacy maturation assessments were conducted.**

#### 2.1.6 Alliance Thermometer Partnership (Self-)Assessment

The PtY consortium developed a governance model based on the two PtY core principles of Southern leadership and Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation. To assess the research question on the effectiveness of the programme partnerships, the consulting team used the Alliance Thermometer Partnership tool. The Alliance Thermometer is a tool developed for participatory, or self-assessment of the quality of work in alliances. The following partnership criteria were assessed through the Alliance Thermometer:

1. Strategy – the quality of the Power to You(th) programme strategy
2. Connection and Cooperation – the strength of connection and cooperation amongst partners and the capacity to constructively work together.
3. Steering structure - quality of the programme structure in terms of its usefulness for communication and steering
4. Processes – effectively and efficiently steps were taken to deliver quality results.
5. Learning and innovation – joint learning within the alliance took place and the extent to which learning stimulated change in the programme activities.

**In total 85 partnership surveys were collected.** The Alliance Thermometer Tool was used for the assessment of the quality of the partnership and answering evaluation question 5 (How is the partnership functioning (in – countries between the CSOs, between consortium partners and countries, between consortium partners at the regional and global levels), what are its weaknesses and strengths, and how could it be improved to enable the (better) achievement) of results?.

## 2.2 Sampling Strategy

The Consulting Team applied a purposive sampling approach. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is different from convenience sampling and is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. This type of sampling can be very useful in situations when you need to reach a targeted sample quickly, and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern.

The purposive sampling approach was used in the selection of geographical sites and in the identification of key informants for KIIs.

The total number of key informants interviews, advocacy maturation assessment and interviews with youth representatives conducted is presented in the table below.

*Table 3: Number of respondents per tool*

| Country          | Key Informant Interviews |      |                 |              | Advocacy maturation assessments | Youth stories | Partnership surveys |
|------------------|--------------------------|------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
|                  | Youth                    | CSOs | Societal actors | State actors |                                 |               |                     |
| <b>Ethiopia</b>  | 21                       | 10   | 12              | 10           | 1                               | 1             | 6                   |
| <b>Ghana</b>     | 7                        | 11   | 14              | 16           | 1                               | 9             | 5                   |
| <b>Indonesia</b> | 6                        | 2    | 8               | 13           | 5                               | 12            | 23                  |
| <b>Kenya</b>     | 18                       | 14   | 10              | 8            | 4                               | 9             | 8                   |

|                |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| <b>Malawi</b>  | 6   | 6   | 7   | 15  | 1   | 9   | 8  |
| <b>Senegal</b> | 49  | 18  | 9   | 10  | 27  | 10  | 14 |
| <b>Uganda</b>  | 2   | 8   | 3   | 3   | 1   | 10  | 6  |
| <b>Other</b>   | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 15 |
| <b>Total</b>   | 109 | 69  | 63  | 75  | 40  | 60  | 85 |

## 2.3 Data Analysis

In general, data from the desk review and study of secondary data was systematically assessed against new primary data collected during this evaluation. The detailed analysis frameworks are outlined below.

### 2.3.1 Contribution analysis

To assess the contribution of the PtY programmes to PtY programme goals, we used Contribution Rubrics, a method which combines Outcome Harvesting and Contribution Analysis.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of contribution aims at making evidence-based causal claims about a contribution made by a programme or intervention to an observed change. Although it does not yield absolute certainty about these causal relations, it serves to map factors that contributed to this change. Contribution Analysis also aims at mapping other major influencing and possibly rival explanation factors and therefore is very demanding in terms of time, efforts, and skills. Since such an exercise is not the goal of this assignment, we have opted for a lighter method which does also substantiate contribution, but aims at defensible claims. However, Contribution Rubrics goes further. Rubrics generally refer to a qualitative scale of levels of performance. In Contribution Rubrics, levels (high/medium/low) are rated with regard to three dimensions: not only the significance of contribution, but also the level of contribution and strength of evidence. So, this method has allowed us to formulate defensible contribution claims in a robust way as follows: a) the significance of an outcome in contributing to PtY programme goals; b) the level of PtY contribution to those changes; c) strength of evidence of this contribution of the PtY programmes to the PtY programme goals. This tool has enabled us to develop defensible claims also about significant signs to which the Alliance has made a less prominent contribution.

As a result, we arrived at conclusions on contributions that are summed up as follows:

*Table 4: PtY Outcome areas*

| PtY Outcome areas                                                                                                           | Significance of contribution | Level of contribution | Strength of evidence |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| PW 1: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on key issues (Strengthening young people to claim civic space) | Low /Medium /High            | Low /Medium /High     | Low /Medium /High    |
| PW 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space (Strengthening Civil Society)             | Low /Medium /High            | Low /Medium /High     | Low /Medium /High    |
| PW 3: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms (Changing social norms)                 | Low /Medium /High            | Low /Medium /High     | Low /Medium /High    |

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Aston, *Contribution Rubrics*.

|                                                                                                                          |                   |                   |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| PW 4: State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues (Improving policies and policy implementation) | Low /Medium /High | Low /Medium /High | Low /Medium /High |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|

We conducted the contribution analysis in two steps:

#### Step 1: Analysing programme data

Firstly, we analysed signs of change based on the available programme documentation. Content analysis was performed on the data collected based on themes and topics that relate to PtY ToC, using predefined themes that were refined during the inception phase and that are based on the PtY outcome areas and key evaluation questions. The findings were analysed and triangulated with data/information from document and literature review and key informant interviews with external stakeholders. When analysing, rating, and interpreting the collected data, we categorised these according to the four PtY outcome areas. More concretely, signs in Outcome Harvesting (OH) reports were rated (high/medium/low) using Contribution Rubrics, first of all, as to their level of significance in contributing to the PtY outcomes. Subsequently, this selection of signs was rated using the two other dimensions of Contribution Rubrics, that is: level of contribution and strength of evidence. The rating was done in the OH Excel template by adding three extra columns. The qualitative approach enabled to formulate defensible contribution claims about aspects of the PtY programme towards achieving PtY intended results.

#### Step 2: Formulating contribution claims

The analysis has led to conclusions on the relevance of PtY programme interventions in achieving programme goals. As described above, the Contribution rubrics were applied to conduct a qualitative analysis on three dimensions: significance of contribution, level of contribution and strength of evidence using a variety of data sources such as outcome harvesting logbook, secondary data and primary data collected during the MTE.

For the assessment of significance of the contribution, a detailed scale overview has been outlined per PtY outcome area containing a qualitative description for a low, medium or high score. In the table below these scales are presented.

*Table 5: Scales of rating significance of contribution*

| PtY Outcome Area                                                                                                            | Rating significance of contribution |                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PW 1: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on key issues (Strengthening young people to claim civic space) | +++ High                            | Young people participate in decision making processes and influence social norms, policies and systems accordingly                                 |
|                                                                                                                             | ++ Medium                           | Young people collectively speak up for their rights through engagement with decision makers                                                        |
|                                                                                                                             | + Low                               | Young people have more knowledge of harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies                                                             |
| PW 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space (Strengthening Civil Society)             | +++ High                            | CSOs amplify young people's voices by influencing decision making processes                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                             | ++ Medium                           | CSOs take collective action by playing political roles (idem)                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                             | + Low                               | CSOs have increased legitimacy                                                                                                                     |
| PW 3: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms (Changing social norms)                 | +++ High                            | Societal actors involve young people as equal partners in decision-making                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                             | ++ Medium                           | Societal actors express a commitment towards the rights of young people and the need to address harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies |

|                                                                                                                          |           |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                          | + Low     | Societal actors have increased knowledge and skills to act on key issues                                                                                         |
| PW 4: State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues (Improving policies and policy implementation) | +++ High  | State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                          | ++ Medium | State actors engage with youth representatives on rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices through expressing their commitment |
|                                                                                                                          | + Low     | State actors recognize the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies                           |

Next to the assessment of the significance of the contribution, the level of contribution of the PtY programmes to changes brought about, has been assessed. We have based our assessment on outcome harvesting data of the PtY consortium, which provide an indication on that level of contribution. During the outcome harvesting process of the PtY programme, the contribution of the PtY programmes to signs of change has been identified and documented. The qualitative analysis made use of the following contribution ratings:

1. Low contribution: In this category, the change was strengthened by the project's intervention(s), but it may have happened to some extent even without PtY involvement. Essentially, the PtY intervention(s) played a supportive role, enhancing the change that was already occurring.
2. Medium contribution: This rating signifies that PtY intervention(s) made a significant contribution to the change or even accelerated the pace at which the change occurred. PtY played an influential role in bringing about the desired outcome.
3. High contribution: Here, PtY intervention(s) played an indispensable role in facilitating the change. Without PtY involvement, the change either would not have happened at all or would have progressed much more slowly. PtY was instrumental in achieving the outcome.

Finally, for the assessment of the strength of evidence underlying the desk review and the assessment of the contribution of PtY programme to the changes brought about, the evaluation team considered the substantiation process that was part of the outcome harvesting methodology applied by the PtY consortium as well as applied by the evaluation team during this MTE. The outcomes/signs that were internally validated and subsequently externally validated by the MTE team, have been rated as having a high strength of evidence. Outcomes/signs that were internally validated but not further validated externally have been considered as medium level strength of evidence. Finally, outcomes/signs that were not included in the MTE substantiation plan and neither were internally substantiated, were rated as having a low strength of evidence. In order to provide a nuanced contribution analysis, all outcomes were included in the analysis, even the ones with a low significance or contribution rating or outcomes for which the strength of evidence is low.

### 2.3.2 Indicator analysis

Given the quantitative nature of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) basket indicators, after qualitative data collection, a quantitative data analysis was conducted. This was done by assessing and validating quantitative indicators reports submitted by the PtY consortium to the donor on an annual basis. Furthermore, a quantitative data analysis was conducted on qualitative data collected during this evaluation through a quantification analysis. The results of advocacy efforts (e.g., SCS1 # of laws and policies for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement) and SRHR service delivery initiatives (eg SRHR indicator A.2 # of youth who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful) were derived from SMART outcomes harvested in the outcome harvesting processes in each country. Key Informant Interviews sought to validate both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the consortium and data collected by the evaluators.

### 2.3.3 Analysis stories

Data analysis for appreciative inquiry was conducted by typing verbatim all the interview responses; grouping each response as per the evaluation question it responds to; categorising responses as per the most important factors that create, maintain, or strengthen empowerment; and summarising results into clear findings for use to make conclusions and recommendations.

### 2.3.4 Analysis advocacy maturation assessments

Analysis of advocacy maturation data was conducted using the appropriate ranked data approaches. Ranking refers to the transformation of data in which numerical or ordinal values are replaced by their rank when the data has been sorted. In the PtY case, data scores for each indicator variable were used as the rank. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to analyse the ranked data.

### 2.3.5 Research Ethics

We recognise that we have a responsibility as researchers to ensure that we do no harm when implementing the programme. This has implications in two, interrelated, areas – safeguarding and data protection - which are both covered below.

#### **Safeguarding**

The Power to You(th) consortium is working on topics which are often of a sensitive political or cultural nature. Ensuring that civil society representatives, programme partners and ultimate stakeholders are not put at risk through participating in this MTE exercise was therefore essential. Safeguarding issues was built into the training for the National Consultants and the Global consulting team.

Explanation and reassurance on the exercise (including how data will be treated) was provided to all respondents at the start of any interviews or engagement, with ultimate stakeholders given the added option of non-participation if they did not feel comfortable with proceeding. Additional safeguards included single-gender interviews on sensitive topics and careful formulation of questions. Any data collection involving children were subjected to additional safeguards, such as the presence of an appropriate responsible adult and/or a PtY safeguarding focal point.

#### **Data Protection**

We ensured that appropriate data protection safeguards were employed in line with the EU's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and relevant national legislation across the seven countries. All consultant team members engaged on the MTE were subject to strict confidentiality clauses in their contracts of employment and data protection was emphasised during the training to be provided to the team ahead of the fieldwork.

We were also observing strict confidentiality protocols at all stages of the assignment including during the fieldwork. Data collection was administered in such a way that personal data was collected, analysed, and stored in a secure manner on secure servers, which was subsequently deleted after the completion of the assignment in compliance with the PtY's contractual provisions. We will not use USB sticks (a major source of data breaches) for the transferral of data and laptops will all be password-protected. The anonymity of ultimate stakeholders and, to the extent possible, partner staff was guaranteed in the reporting. No data was shared by us with government representatives across the seven countries.

### 2.3.6 Potential bias

- Selection bias: The purposive approach chosen for the selection of respondents implied that practically only people who actively participated in the PtY programme were approached, and very few people who left the programme (for reasons we do not know, such as potential dissatisfaction or other priorities such as education or employment.). This bias was mitigated by applying triangulation of data by using different data sources. The evaluation team gave partners equal opportunities to express themselves through alliance thermometer, maturation tool, KIs and stories (quantitative control).
- Respondent bias, also understood as 'courtesy bias', social acceptability, or political correctness. We ensured bias control at three stages. During tool design, we used

different question types (open-ended, closed ended, multiple choice, scale) and carefully compared the responses during data analysis. In addition, during the preparation training provided by the global evaluation team to country consultants on data collection including safeguarding measures and ethical research principles, we discussed the importance of a neutral and impartial attitude of the survey collector and/or the interviewer. Also during data analysis, we were alert on vague formulations that conveyed more socially desirable messages than new information (qualitative control).

- Subjectivity of Outcome harvesting data: Finally, the MTE used outcome harvesting data of the PtY consortium that was collected during monitoring of the programme, as one of the many data sources. In addition, the global evaluators facilitated a process of collecting new outcomes during participatory workshops. Subjectivity of data collected as part of outcome harvesting is inherent to the methodology. Potentially positive biases in outcome harvesting data only pointing at results achieved, were mitigated through the design and implementation of an extensive validation process.

### 2.3.7 Triangulation

Triangulation is considered an important quality criterion of the evaluation team and has received ample attention during the PtY Mid Term Evaluation process. For data collection at country level as well as for data collection at the global level, different evaluation methods were applied resulting in data from a variety of sources. The different methods applied include a desk review of internal and external documents, the use of internal monitoring data and the collection of external primary data such as KIIs, stories, advocacy maturation assessments and a partnership survey. In addition, the monitoring data consulted and used for the analysis consists among other Outcome harvesting data. Part of the outcomes/signs harvested by the PtY consortium have been validated with external stakeholders.

### 2.3.8 Limitations of the study

Overall, the PtY Mid Term Evaluation was very well organised and facilitated by the consortium partners. Nevertheless, some limitations were encountered which include the following:

- Management of National Consultants: While the wealth of data and insights would not have been possible without national consultants' untiring involvement, this also came with some challenges. First of all, the consultants were managed by country teams and agreements on deliverables and quality were discussed between NCs and country teams. Secondly, the global evaluators designed the tools and the general approaches and provided technical guidance to NCs. In some occasions it was not quite clear for NCs whom to account to. Also quality expectations between the global evaluators and PtY country teams did not always fully align. Furthermore, the quality of the reports prepared by national consultants varied considerably per country and a lot of time and effort was needed to support national consultants in completing their reports along the established requirements.
- Timelines: Also linked to the working with national consultants is the fact that timelines of country teams and timeline of the global evaluation team did not always align. Country level data feeds into the synthesis report and therefore data was supposed to be delivered to the global consultants well in advance of the report writing phase. This is not feasible in most of the countries.
- Security and Natural Disasters: In Ethiopia specifically, security was an issue and data collection in certain sample sites was delayed considerably. Also, for security reasons, the context in Uganda hampered the inclusion of LGBTQ+ youth in PtY data collection. Further, the cyclone in Malawi and demonstrations in Kenya further caused a delay.

### 3. Context of the PtY programme

Below the country contexts related to SRHR and Youth rights of each of the seven countries of the PtY programme, is described. This provides for a setting of the programme evaluation and results identified during the MTE.

#### 3.1 Ethiopia

With a growing population of over 110 million, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa after Nigeria<sup>2</sup>. Adolescents and youths 10 to 29 years are estimated to constitute 42% of the total population<sup>3</sup>.

In view of this, adolescent and youth development initiatives, including those focusing on health and sexual and reproductive health (SRH), have gained traction in Ethiopia over the last two decades to satisfy the requirements of this population group, particularly following the 2005 election in Ethiopia. Different policies were enacted and ministries were established despite their frequent reshuffling and restructuring. The 2004 NYP recognized youths as



change agents and sought to ensure ownership and involvement in the country's development initiatives.<sup>4</sup> The revised family code in 2000 and the revised criminal code of Ethiopia in 2004 that has liberalised abortion in Ethiopia; Development Package for Urban Youth of 2006 and the Ethiopian Youth Development and Transformation Package of 2017 contributed to efforts underway to adolescent and youth development. By imposing a minimum marriage age, the amended family code, for example, has rescued thousands of adolescents from child marriage. Other strategies include the 2007 national adolescent and youth reproductive health (AYRH) strategy, and the more comprehensive national adolescent and youth health (AYH) strategy of 2016<sup>5</sup>. As a result of these policies, laws, strategies, and packages, remarkable changes have occurred in a number of health outcomes including in harmful traditional practices, unintended pregnancy and sexual and gender-based violence.

According to a 2018 UNICEF report on child marriage trends, Ethiopia's overall prevalence rate of child marriage has dropped dramatically by one-third in the past ten years. Between 2011 and 2016, the percentage of young women marrying before age 18 has declined from 63% to 58% (CSA and ICF, 2017). In the Amhara region, there has been an increase in the average median age of marriage between 2000 and 2016. The age of first marriage has risen from 14.4 to 16.2 between 2005 and 2016 (Jones et al., 2020). However, even if the age of first marriage has increased in the region, it is the lowest in the country (UNICEF, 2019)<sup>6</sup>. Afar region has the second-lowest median age at first marriage, reported as 16.4 years in 2016 (CSA and ICF, 2017)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.knowyourcountry.com/ethiopia>

<sup>3</sup> Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF. Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Addis Ababa: CSA and ICF; 2016. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR328/FR328.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Culture. National Youth Policy.

2004. [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ethiopia\\_2004\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ethiopia_2004_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Admassu, T.W., Wolde, Y.T. & Kaba, M. Ethiopia has a long way to go meeting adolescent and youth sexual reproductive health needs. *Reprod Health* 19 (Suppl 1), 130 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-022-01445-3>

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF (2019) 'Situation analysis of children and women in Amhara'. Available at:

<https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/2551/file/Amhara%20region%20.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF. 2016 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey Key Findings. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. CSA and ICF.

Furthermore, FGM/C has sharply decreased by 24 percentage points (from 71 to 47%) between 2000 and 2016<sup>8,9</sup> but at least 28% of adolescent girls aged 10–14 years had experienced FGM/C in 2016. EDHS reports prevalence of FGM/C being highest in Somali at 99% followed by Afar at 91%. The prevalence of FGM/C in Amhara region was reported at 62% (CSA & ICF, 2017).

Concerning sexual and gender-based violence, 23% of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical violence and 10% have experienced sexual violence (CSA & ICF, 2017). It was also indicated that intimate partner violence (IPV) is especially common, with one in three AGYW who had ever been married experiencing IPV. Of women who responded to the EDHS, 27% reported experiencing physical violence, 22% reported experiencing emotional violence and 10% reported experiencing sexual violence at the hands of their spouse within the last 12 months (CSA & ICF, 2017). Regarding seeking help after experiencing violence, the EDHS 2016 reports that only 26% of women who experienced sexual or physical violence sought help and 66% of women never sought help nor told anyone about their experience of violence (CSA & ICF, 2017). However, it is generally accepted that statistics around SGBV are underestimated due to it being under-reported and also because certain types of violence, such as IPV, are widely accepted and not considered a form of violence by some people. Furthermore, has been reported that the Violence Against Children surveys in Africa have reported higher rates of sexual violence than the rates reported in the national DHS data for adolescent youth (Jones et al., 2018).

EDHS 2016 also indicated that in Amhara, 24.5% of women reported that they had ever experienced physical violence, IPV was reported to be 35%, physical violence was reported to be 22%, emotional violence 26% and sexual violence 10% (CSA & ICF, 2017). The same report indicated that of women who had ever experienced violence in Amhara, 64% never told anyone and never sought help. In Afar, 12.5% of women reported in the EDHS that they had ever experienced physical violence. The prevalence of IPV reported by ever married women aged 15–49 in the region was 20% with physical violence being reported by 12%, emotional violence by 13% and sexual violence by 3%. Of women in Afar who had ever experienced violence, 82% never told anyone and never sought help (CSA & ICF, 2017).

The other SRHR problem with AGYW in Ethiopia was teenage pregnancy. About 13% of Ethiopian AGYW aged 15–19 have begun childbearing, with teenage childbearing being the highest in Afar at 23% and followed by Amhara (8%) (CSA & ICF, 2017). In terms of SRH, modern contraceptive use among currently married women has increased dramatically from 4% in the 1990s to 35% in 2016. On the other hand, 39.8% of unmarried adolescent girls ages 15 to 19 reported an unmet need for modern contraception methods (DHS, 2016). It also revealed that 23% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence with 10% of them experienced sexual violence.

### 3.2 Ghana

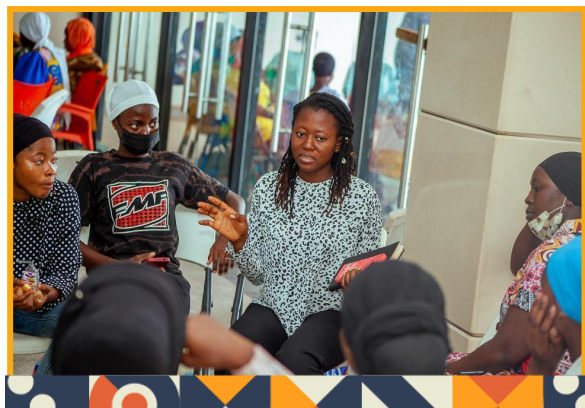
Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and unintended pregnancies are ongoing issues in Ghana. Despite the country's progress in implementing policies and laws to address these challenges, there are still gaps in their implementation. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a comprehensive understanding of these issues in the Ghanaian context.

SGBV is a pervasive problem in Ghana, with women and girls being the most vulnerable. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 13.6% of women aged 15–49 have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (GSS, 2018). The justice system's weak response to SGBV has led to low reporting and high levels of impunity (UNFPA, 2019). There is also a lack of comprehensive services for survivors, including access to healthcare and counselling (UN Women, 2018). SGBV remains a pressing concern in Northern Ghana, with women and girls experiencing various forms of violence, including domestic violence, rape, and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Deep-rooted gender inequalities, cultural norms, poverty, and limited access to justice and support services contribute to the perpetuation of SGBV (USAID, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> Central Statistical Authority/Ethiopia and ORC Macro. *Ethiopia demographic and health survey 2000*. Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Authority/Ethiopia and ORC Macro; 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Central Statistical Agency/CSA/Ethiopia and ICF. *Ethiopia demographic and health survey 2016*. Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Agency and ICF International, USA; 2016.

Child marriage is a significant issue in Ghana, with an estimated 21% of girls aged 15-19 being married or in union (GSS, 2018). The practice is more prevalent in rural areas and among poor families. The government has demonstrated some commitment to addressing the issue, including the passing of the Child and Family Welfare Policy in 2015 and the establishment of a National Plan of Action to end child marriage in 2017 (UNICEF, 2020). However, implementation and enforcement remain weak, and social norms and poverty perpetuate the practice. Child marriage remains a significant challenge in Northern Ghana, with a high prevalence compared to other regions in the country. Poverty, limited educational opportunities, traditional and cultural practices, and gender



inequalities contribute to the persistence of child marriage. Girls who marry at a young age often face adverse health consequences, limited life choices, and increased vulnerability to domestic violence (Girls Not Brides, 2021).

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a harmful traditional practice that is still prevalent in some parts of Ghana. The most commonly practiced form is Type I, which involves the partial or total removal of the clitoris (UNFPA, 2019). The prevalence of FGM in Ghana is declining, with an estimated 3% of women aged 15-49 having undergone the procedure (GSS, 2018). However, in some communities, it is still seen as a rite of passage into womanhood, and social norms perpetuate the practice (UNFPA, 2019).

Unintended pregnancies are a significant challenge in Ghana, with an estimated 38% of pregnancies being unintended (GSS, 2018). This can result in unsafe abortions, which are illegal in Ghana, leading to maternal mortality and morbidity (UNFPA, 2019). The government has taken steps to reduce unintended pregnancies, including the development of a national adolescent sexual and reproductive health policy (UNFPA, 2019). However, access to contraception and comprehensive sexuality education remains limited, particularly among young people.

### 3.3 Indonesia

Indonesia put special attention to youth development because of the demographic bonus, since 2018 Indonesian productive age reached the highest proportion 69,3% of total population (Government of Indonesia, 2022), therefore through Government strategic plan, Bappenas included youth KPI called Youth Development Index. Youth Development Index builds from 6 variables, the last two variables are relevant to PtY programmes namely (i) Youth Participation & Leadership and (ii) Gender discrimination. National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024 also put specific targets for child marriage (8.74%) and SGBV (Decreased).



In recent two years GoI issued two important Laws which relevant to PtY programme namely Eradication of Sexual Violence (UU Number 12 Year 2022) and Penal Code (UU Number 1 Year

2023), However Penal Codes laws raised conflict of interest issues which criminalize consensual same sex relation and extra marital sex. Penal Codes may contradict Eradication of Sexual Violence Laws as well.

District East Lombok put obvious problem statements to Child protection and woman empowerment and even SRHR and SGBV is part of 4<sup>th</sup> mission of Bupati (District Lombok Timur, 2018). District East Lombok also provided an obvious KPI namely “decreasing percentage of SGBV cases against women and children” and set an annual target. PtY supports East Lombok disseminate and implement the policy through village level youth-led CSOs.

District Jember addressed the problems against child protection and woman empowerment issues, however no strategy on how to address these problems can be found. The funding support to child protection and woman empowerment is difficult to be traced because the document refers to a block grant to DP3AKB. Unlike East Lombok, The Jember strategic plan didn't mention anything about KPI to assess progress to Child protection and woman empowerment (District Jember, 2021). District Jember is the only district which has a mobile app of accountability mechanism (SGBV reporting and handling system). The system was awarded as a national innovation government initiative in 2021.

District Garut strategic plan mentioned a problem statement of child protection and woman empowerment, however the strategy on how to solve the problem is not available in the document. Like District Jember, the district fund is not broken down into sub-sectors, which makes it difficult to know a proportion for each sub-sector. The KPI to assess progress of child protection is not listed in the monitoring assessment framework.

### 3.4 Kenya

The Constitution of Kenya 2010, guarantees the right to health care including reproductive health. It further provides that no one shall be denied emergency medical treatment and that the State shall provide appropriate social security to persons who are unable to support themselves and their dependents. (Article 43(1) (a) (2) and (3)). The Government of Kenya has also developed a number of policies and established various institutions that seek to promote and protect the sexual and reproductive health rights of Kenyans. As such, Kenya is obligated to work towards the fulfilment of this right in line with these international and domestic standards. In spite of these elaborate measures, violations of the right to sexual and reproductive health continue to be experienced throughout the country.

Harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), as well as access to safe abortion have a major effect in the lives of girls and this last to their womanhood. While there has been a reduction in the incidence of these practices, they are still widely practised in some communities and remain major barriers to improving the health and wellbeing of adolescent girls and women in Kenya. Harmful practices are both underpinned, and perpetuated by, gender inequality and harmful social norms that value girls less than boys. According to the June 2020



UNFPA report, girls who are married early are also more likely to perpetuate stereotypical gender roles and to transmit these norms to their own children – making it very difficult to end such practices. Without intervention from governments, organisations, and activists, many more young girls in Kenya will continue to be subjected to harmful practices

In sum, young people face significant challenges in accessing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services with one of the biggest challenges being the judgmental attitude of health workers and non-functional youth-friendly centres, which are supposed to be safe spaces for young people to access SRH services without feeling judged or discriminated against. Additionally, many youth-friendly centres are not well equipped with commodities that can meet the diverse needs of young people, such as different birth control methods or contraceptives.

According to UNICEF (2021), 21% of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years and 3% of girls under the age of 15 in Kenya have undergone FGM. This is an estimate of about four million, however, in 2020, the then Kenya president, Uhuru Kenyatta, put the figure at 9.3 million. The Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) 2022 Report, The FGM prevalence rate declined nationally among women 15-49 years old from 21% in 2014 to 15% in 2022. The most common type of FGM is flesh removal and the most severe form of FGM, in which the vaginal opening is sewn closed is practised among certain ethnic groups. Young women and girls living in the rural areas, in poor households, with less education or and those from the Muslim communities are at a greater risk.

The North-Eastern region is considered a hotspot for the practice, and it is very high in some ethnic groups such as the Somali, Kisii, Samburu and Maasai (UNICEF 2021). In the South-Western region, the Kuria community has one of the highest rates of prevalence of FGM, affecting 84% of women<sup>10</sup>. While communities believe that FGM is needed for social acceptance and it increases marriage prospects, the World Health Organisation shows that there is no conceivable benefit of FGM as it causes severe bleeding and other health issues, infections, infertility, and complications in childbirth. Limited access to affordable healthcare is another major challenge for young people. Many young people are unemployed and cannot afford health services. Moreover, limited budget allocation from governments and weak health systems mean that there is limited access to services that meet the needs of young people. This can be particularly challenging for young people living in rural areas, where access to services may be limited.

### 3.5 Malawi

The prevalence of early sexual activity in Malawi is high. The 2015-16 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) indicated that one in eight adolescent girls have engaged in sex before the age of 15 hence contributing to early pregnancies and childbearing. The MDHS also revealed that 29% of girls aged 15 – 19 years had begun childbearing with 22% having had a pregnancy and 7% pregnant with the first child<sup>[5]</sup>. This is exacerbated by poor access to contraceptive information and services by even those girls and young women in need of them. It is estimated that only 13% of young people access Youth Friendly Services. Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are the age group that has the highest unmet need for contraception among sexually active women of reproductive age now estimated at 22.0%. In addition, coverage of youth programmes tends to be disproportionately focused on late adolescent girls (15-19 years), with young girls (10-14 years) not adequately covered. Information from 2015-16 MDHS also shows that HIV cases are rising faster among young people than the general population. Adolescent girls account for almost a third of new HIV infections, with HIV prevalence higher than among boys of the same



<sup>10</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/8926/file/Kenya-Case-Study-FGM-2021.pdf>

age group. For example, prevalence among adolescents (15-19 years) stands at 3.3% among girls and 2.1% among boys.

In addition, millions of adolescent girls are burdened by gender discrimination and inequality. They are subject to multiple forms of violence, abuse and exploitation and harmful cultural practices that precipitate early sexual debut and marriage. They are also exposed to initiation rites that expose them to sexual abuse, which in turn increases their risk of HIV infection. Sixty-five percent of school girls as compared to 35% of boys report experiences of some form of abuse and 24% report experiencing some form of sexual violence. Malawi ranks 12<sup>th</sup> Country in the world with highest prevalence rates of child marriages according to the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare and Social Welfare. 42% of women are married before the age of 18 and 12% before the age of 15. Despite many adolescent girls' preference to remain in school, they are married off by their families both to collect the bride price (lobola, in areas where it is practised) and to save the family reputation from having an unmarried pregnant daughter.

There have been efforts to increase access and use of modern contraceptives to prevent pregnancy and STIs among the youth. Malawi started providing contraceptives to youth as early as the year 2000 and created its first Youth Friendly Services (YFHS) programme in 2007. Youth Friendly Services (YFHS) are meant, among other needs, to provide youth with equitable, effective, accessible, acceptable, and appropriate modern contraceptive information and services methods and increase access to a wide range of methods that otherwise would not be possible under generic family planning services. In addressing the problems, the Government of Malawi has adopted the Marriage, Divorce, and Family Relations Act of 2017 which set 18 as the legal minimum age for marriage and provides protection for all children born whether within or outside marriage. It has been in effect for the past four years but dissemination and sensitisation especially in rural areas ( Malawi is predominantly rural with 84 percent living in rural areas) where the PtY programme is operating have been sporadic and limited hence not well known and respected. The National Plan of Action (NAP) to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Malawi 2014-2020 was also developed to deal with all forms of Gender based violence (GBV) and promote human rights particularly among girls and young women by dealing with cultural beliefs and traditions, poor access to the information and services and promotion of gender equality and empowerment of girls and young women. The NAP is undergoing review so the country still refers to the 2020 one until the new comes into effect. The PtY consortium has made strategic partnerships with Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare and the Malawi Law Commission to review Gender Equality Act (Amendment) of 2022; Child Care Protection and Justice Act (Amendment) of 2022; National Youth Friendly Health Service Strategy 2015–2020 and Community Victim Support Unit Operating Guidelines to support the challenging and eradicating the Harmful norms in the country.

### 3.6 Senegal

Senegal, a West African nation with a rich cultural heritage, faces significant challenges in the realm of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). While the country has made progress in recent years, numerous factors continue to shape the SRHR landscape.

Senegal's predominantly Muslim population, coupled with deeply rooted cultural norms, can pose barriers to SRHR. Conservative views on premarital sex and contraception often hinder access to comprehensive SRHR services. Also, Senegal has laws criminalising abortion except to save a woman's life, limiting reproductive choices for women and girls. Comprehensive sexuality education is lacking, and young people's access to contraception is limited by parental consent requirements. Inadequate healthcare facilities, particularly in rural areas, hinder access to SRHR services. Maternal mortality remains high due to limited access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care. Gender disparities persist in Senegal, affecting women's decision-making power regarding their SRHR. Harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation and child marriage continue to undermine women's autonomy. Youth in Senegal face challenges in accessing SRHR information and services. Comprehensive sex education programs are essential to equip them with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions.

NGOs and civil society organisations play a crucial role in advocating for SRHR in Senegal. They work to raise awareness, challenge harmful norms, and promote policy changes.

These contextual factors impact on the following SRHR issues prevailing in the country.

**Child Marriage:** Child marriage remains a pervasive concern in Senegal. Despite legal reforms setting the legal marriage age at 16 for girls and 18 for boys, the practice persists in rural areas where traditions and poverty often compel families to marry off their daughters at a young age. Child brides are at increased risk of early pregnancies, limited education, and poor health outcomes, further perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

GBV, including domestic violence and sexual harassment, remains a significant challenge in Senegal. Sociocultural norms often tolerate violence against women, and underreporting is common due to stigma and fear of retaliation. Limited access to support services and a lack of legal enforcement exacerbate this issue. Addressing GBV requires a multi-pronged approach, including legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and the establishment of safe spaces and support systems for survivors.

FGM persists in some communities in Senegal, particularly in the Casamance region. Despite legislation criminalising the practice, deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and the lack of enforcement contribute to its continuation. FGM poses severe health risks to girls and women and violates their SRHR. To combat FGM, efforts must include community education, awareness campaigns, and collaboration with religious and traditional leaders to change social norms.

Teenage pregnancies are a pressing concern in Senegal, often linked to limited access to SRHR education and services. The absence of comprehensive sexuality education in schools and social taboos around discussing sex contribute to the lack of awareness among young people. Early pregnancies have serious health risks for both mothers and babies and can limit girls' educational and economic prospects.

### 3.7 Uganda

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are crucial entitlements relating to women and girls' sexual and reproductive health. These rights address the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, gender-based violence, harmful practices, unintended pregnancies and provision of essential health services (UNFPA, 2020). Since the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), national SRHR policies have been demonstrated to support societies and contribute to a country's wealth. The importance of SRHR is further underscored by section 5.6 of Sustainable Development Goal 5, dedicated to achieving SRHR for all (UNFPA 2019; McGranahan et.al., 2021; UN, 2015).

Teenage pregnancy has existed in Uganda for several decades. According to UBOS 2018, almost a quarter (one in four or 25 per cent) of Ugandan women age 15-19 have given birth or are pregnant with their first child by the age of 18. The 2020 national survey on violence revealed that over the last 45 years, more than half of the girls have experienced childhood sexual abuse, which may also explain the unchanging level of teenage pregnancy (UNICEF 2021). In 2020, there was a marked increase in teenage pregnancy in 67 out of the 136 districts in the country (UNFPA 2021). The period between March and September 2020, when schools in Uganda were partly closed due to Covid-19 lockdown, registered a 366 per cent increase in pregnancies among girls aged 10-14 years (UNICEF, 2021). Teenage pregnancy has far reaching implications not only for the girls themselves but also on their children, their families and society at large. It denies girls their childhood, disrupts their education, limits opportunities, increases their risks of violence and abuse and has profound effects on the health and lives of young women (UNFPA 2020).



In Uganda, 8.9 million girls aged 10–19 are at risk of harmful practices, including child marriage despite the legal provisions under the 1995 Constitution of Uganda and the global community's

pledge to end child marriage and other forms of violence against girls (UNFPA, UNICEF 2019). The practice of child marriage was exacerbated by the two years of school closure as UNESCO (2021) projections show that school closure increased the risk of child marriage by 25 per cent per annum. Child marriage is one of the significant drivers of adolescent pregnancy. Ninety percent of adolescent pregnancies occur to girls who are married before the age of 18 and who have little or no say in decisions about when or whether to become pregnant (UNFPA 2020). Arranged marriages for adolescent girls without their consent are also common in Uganda especially in the rural areas (UNFPA 2020).

Addressing all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a priority globally. For instance, the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) include a specific target on the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls (i.e., targets 5.2 and 5.3) on which member states will have to report. In Uganda, VAWG remains particularly widespread. According to the 2016 Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS), more than one in five (22 per cent) women have ever experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes (UBOS & ICF, 2018), further, nearly 10 per cent of girls age 15–19 years and close to 20 per cent of women age 20–24 reported ever experiencing sexual assault. VAC is also pervasive in many settings including homes, schools, and communities. According to the National Violence Against Children Survey, one in four girls (25 per cent) and one in ten boys (11 per cent) reported sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. VAW deprives women of their ability to enjoy fundamental freedoms and represents a substantial obstacle to equality between women and men. The prevalence and serious impacts of VAW/G, therefore, make it one of the most significant issues to be addressed in our time.

Despite enforcement of the Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2010 and the East African Community Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, FGM remains widespread in some districts in Uganda. For example, according to the 2017 FGM survey report, the average prevalence rate among women aged 15–49 across six districts in eastern Uganda (Kween, Bukwo, Kapchorwa, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, and Amudat) was 26.6 per cent (UNICEF and UBOS, 2017). Although DHS data showed reduced overall prevalence among girls and women aged 15–49, from 1.4 percent in 2011 to 0.3 percent in 2016, prevalence in practising communities is still alarming. The Sebei region has a high prevalence, with Bukwo district at 28 percent, Kween district at 21 percent and the Kapchorwa district at 13 percent. Although women support discontinuation of the practice, traditional gender and social norms undermine their efforts to decide for themselves whether or not to undergo FGM/C. 95% of women in eastern Uganda support abandonment of FGM but strong social influences and peer pressure limit women's ability to abandon the practice and influence others against it (UNICEF and UBOS, 2020).

## 4. Evaluation findings

The evaluation findings are presented per OECD DAC evaluation criteria this study has been focusing on. Firstly, the findings on effectiveness are presented in this chapter. Subsequently, the findings on relevance and sustainability are outlined.

### 4.1 Effectiveness

This chapter presents the findings on effectiveness. The definition of effectiveness for this MTE is: *The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results.*

#### 4.1.1 Quantitative indicator analysis

As outlined in the methodology chapter, this MTE included an assessment of PtY outcome indicators (linked to SCS MFA basket indicators). The table below presents the consortium aggregated indicator targets and actuals so far.

Table 6: PtY key indicator targets and actuals

| PATHWAY                                                                | CORE INDICATOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2022 Targ | 2021-2022 Actual |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| PATHWAY 1:<br>Strengthening youth decision-making to claim civic space | # of youth advocates with an improved understanding of decision-making processes and power dynamics regarding k topics                                                                                                                                                              | 2644      | 3893             |
|                                                                        | # of young people (disaggregate by gender identity (f/m/x)) w participate in policy and decision-making bodies (disaggrega type and level) and perceive their participation as meaningful (SRHR A)                                                                                  | 741       | 764              |
| PATHWAY 2:<br>Strengthening civil society                              | # of CSOs participating in Power to You(th) (SCS 6)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 171       | 169              |
|                                                                        | # of communities, CSOs, and advocacy networks with increased lobbying, advocating, thematic and/or research capabilities (SCS 5, SRHR J)                                                                                                                                            | 470       | 416              |
|                                                                        | # and type of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs for, by or with their membership / constituency                                                                                                                                                                              | 166       | 234              |
|                                                                        | # of CSOs who have advanced on using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth (SCS 8)                                                                                                                         | 116       | 137              |
|                                                                        | # of times government at all levels include CSOs in decision making processes related to our advocacy issues, react to CSO positions by adopting their argumentation or putting our advocacy issues on the agenda                                                                   | 165       | 195              |
|                                                                        | Description of effective use of accountability mechanisms by citizens/communities and CSOs towards SRHR of all people (SRHR I)                                                                                                                                                      | Qual*     | Qual             |
| PATHWAY 3:<br>Changing social norms                                    | # of media reports on PtY key issues that influence public and political debate                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 115       | 346              |
|                                                                        | Level of public support for family planning and prevention of harmful practices and SGBV                                                                                                                                                                                            | Qual*     | Qual*            |
|                                                                        | Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce, implement and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex                                                                                                                                         | Qual*     | Qual*            |
| PATHWAY 4:<br>Policies and policy implementation                       | # and type of (inter)national laws and policies blocked, adopted, maintained, improved including the number of detrimental policies which are prevented or blocked from adoption or development to decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices and SGBV (SCS 2, SRHR H) | 20        | 26               |
|                                                                        | # of (inter)national laws, policies, norms and practices implemented to decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices, and SGBV (SCS 1)                                                                                                                                   | 30        | 27               |

\* See page 44 under outcomes harvested for pathway 3. The qualitative indicator descriptions can also be found in the country IATI publications.

The monitoring data shows that apart from one indicator in pathway 2 (SCS 5, SRHR J), all targets for all indicators have been achieved. As also confirmed by the outcome harvesting and contribution analysis, results of young people (disaggregated by gender identity (f/m/x)) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies, has been impressive. Indicators linked to outcome 2 are mostly related to enhanced capacity of CSOs which is a condition for CSOs actively engaging in policy influencing processes. Although the outcome harvesting analysis showed slightly less prominent results on pathway 2, the enhanced capacities seem to be in place and may help to advance changes on higher level goals in the next two years.

On pathway 3 There are outcome indicators under pathway 3; it's just that they are not linked to any of MoFA's basket indicators.

One indicator in pathway 4 has achieved its target while the other hasn't achieved.

Therefore, the MTE concludes that, with 7 out of 11 quantitative indicators achieved, and the remaining 4 on course to be achieved, PtY should develop slightly more ambitious targets for 2025.

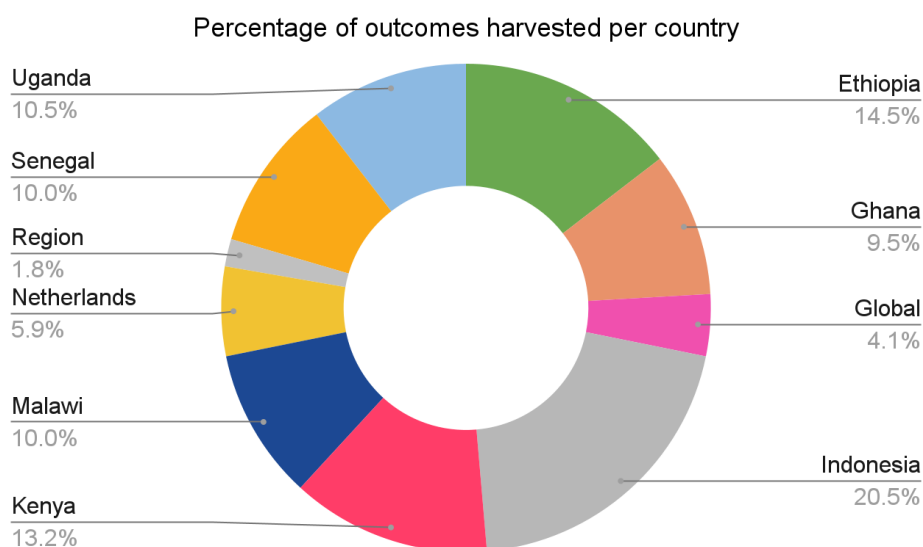
#### 4.1.2 Outcome pathway analysis

The following section aims to assess the extent to which the programme (design and implementation) contributed to achievement of the programme outcomes.

The outcome pathway analysis started with a quantitative analysis of the outcomes harvested since the beginning of the PtY programme. In total, 220 outcomes were collected. Firstly, the outcomes harvested were categorised per PtY outcome result. The following can be concluded from this outcome harvesting analysis.

Of the total 220 outcomes harvested, 45 were from Indonesia, 32 from Ethiopia, 29 Kenya, 23 Uganda, 22 from both Senegal and Malawi, 21 from Ghana and 13 from the Netherlands, and 9 from the Global level programme.

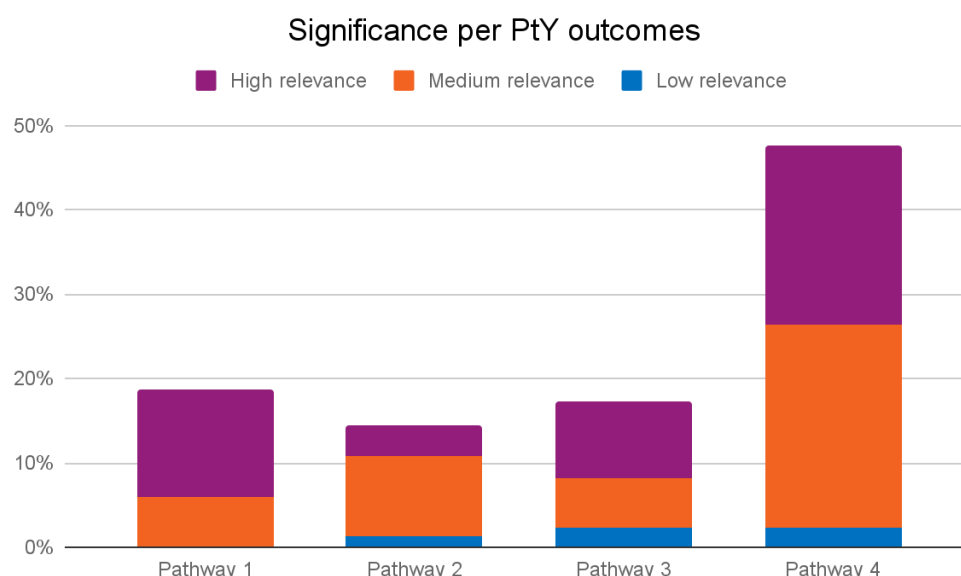
Figure 1: Percentage of outcomes harvested per country



In terms of the division of outcomes harvested per PtY outcome result, we see that most outcomes are harvested for outcome 4 State actors (105 outcomes out of 220). Subsequently, outcome 1 related to Youth has 45 outcomes followed by 38 outcomes for outcome 3 Societal actors and 32 outcomes for outcome 2 related to CSOs.

Looking at the significance of the outcomes harvested, the analysis shows that 71% of the outcomes harvested are of high significance (156). This points to important achievements. Twenty-four (24%) are of medium significance (53) and 5% are of low significance (11 outcomes). If we correlate the significance of the outcomes harvested per each of the four PtY outcome results, we find the following overview.

*Figure 2: Significance per PtY outcomes*



What stands out is that most outcomes are harvested for pathway 4 and also a large portion of these outcomes are rated as highly significant. For pathway 1 most outcomes are rated as highly relevant while for pathway 2 this is less so the case and most outcomes are of medium relevance.

Below, these findings are triangulated with other data sources for each outcome area.

#### 4.1.3 Pathway 1

The main thrust of the PtY programme was based on addressing the problem that harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies, adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities are unable to claim their rights, address inequalities, challenge social norms and advocate for inclusive decision-making. In order to address this challenge, PtY invested in multiple levels at which young people, especially AGYW, are involved at grassroots or community level where the young people were encouraged and empowered to engage in discussions and decision-making processes on SRH services, to understand and challenge harmful social norms and embrace young people's voices and knowledge of their own issues and lives was expected to guide the implementation of Power to You(th), including in the work of CSOs and the Consortium itself. Creative, participatory methods such as photo voice, participatory video and/or documentary making were employed.

In order to structure the PtY work and engagement of youth, the envisioned goal of the PtY pathway 1 is formulated as follows: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on key issues (Strengthening young people to claim civic space).

Table 7: Rating the 45 outcomes of pathway 1

| Objective                                                                                                             | Significance of Outcomes         | Level of contribution            | Strength of evidence             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Young people demand accountability and responsiveness on key issues (Strengthening young people to claim civic space) | High: 28<br>Medium: 13<br>Low: 4 | High: 32<br>Medium: 12<br>Low: 1 | High: 18<br>Medium: 22<br>Low: 5 |

**Significance:** the majority of outcomes were considered highly relevant for the achievement of PtY goals of young people demanding accountability and responsiveness on key issues as 28 out of the 45 outcomes were considered highly relevant. The highly relevant outcomes demonstrate that young people start to collectively speak up for their rights as they examine and question social norms, policies and systems. Only 13 are considered of medium significance (Young people have increased agency) and 4 were found to be of low significance.

**Contribution:** In terms of contribution, 32 outcomes harvested are considered having a high contribution to the PtY pathway 1 outcome, meaning that PtY intervention(s) under this pathway played an indispensable role in facilitating the change. Without PtY involvement, the change either would not have happened at all or would have progressed much more slowly. PtY was instrumental in achieving the outcome. 12 of the outcomes harvested were considered having a medium contribution implicating that PtY intervention(s) made a significant contribution to the change or even accelerated the pace at which the change occurred. Finally, 1 outcome was rated as having a low contribution meaning that the change was strengthened by the project's intervention(s), but it may have happened to some extent even without PtY involvement.

**Strength of evidence:** In terms of the strength of evidence for the contribution claim, for 18 outcomes the evidence is strong as these were externally validated through KIIs, 22 outcomes were validated through documents only and thus the evidence was rated as medium and for 5 outcomes no evidence was available.

The outcomes harvested and validated under the pathway 1 demonstrate the impact of the PtY programme in empowering and mobilising young people to act on thematic issues and engage in decision-making processes at the local and regional levels. Overall, the validated outcomes highlight the importance of investing in youth empowerment programmes like PtY, which not only strengthen the capacity of young people in PtY issues but also promote their active participation and engagement in shaping their communities and society as a whole.

Let us now look at the three sub-outcomes under this Pathway:

- A. Young people have more knowledge of harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies
- B. Young people collectively speak up for their rights through engagement with decision makers
- C. Young people participate in decision making processes and influence social norms, policies and systems accordingly

Here are the main findings per sub-outcomes:

- A. Youth now have more knowledge of HP, SGBV and unintended pregnancies: Overall, the evaluation established that youth were informed about different SRHR issues. Youth feel more informed about FGM/C and early marriages, SGBV, menstrual hygiene, prevention and testing of HIV and methods of family planning. This was evidenced by information gathered from KII where respondents asserted that:

*“My experience with PtY was like on the gender-based violence practices and child marriage like PtY what it does it changes the mind of the youth so when the youth are sensitized their minds change then they can even know these methods of preventing early pregnancies”*

#### KII, Youth Champion Uganda

In all countries such results have been witnessed. To demonstrate an example from Ethiopia: The PtY project conducted various kinds of capacity development training, especially key PtY issues, risks of girl's circumcision, life skill, Advocacy, MIYP and other related concepts. Fortunately, Zerihun Tensitu is a member of Biruh Tesfa Youth Club and participated in all capacity development training. At one point, Zerihun's parents facilitated circumcision for the small sister of Zerihun. At that time Zerihun refused the infant girl's circumcision. After a long discussion and dialogue among the infant's father, mother, circumcise practitioners, neighbourhoods and other community members, they reached consensus on the circumcision process and events were cancelled. After the cancellation of circumcision, Zerihun reported the occurrence to Biruh Tesfa Youth Club and followed his sister day to day movements and progress with his club member youths (Ethiopia MTE report).

- B. Young people engage with decision makers: With the knowledge on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy that youth gained, the evaluation noted that youth increasingly start to engage with decision makers. Youth are more aware of their rights and are becoming increasingly engaged in social and political issues that affect their lives. Many factors have contributed to this shift, including access to capacity enhancement activities, technology, and social media platforms. The PtY programme facilitated collaboration and engagement between young people and government officials, promoting a culture of youth participation and inclusion in decision-making processes. This trend towards increased youth agency is positive for society, as it helps to ensure that the needs and perspectives of young people are considered in matters that affect them. An example from Kenya shows how agency of youth is increasing: Youth mainstreaming can be seen as a transformative process that is inclusive and consciously proactive, placing the capabilities and rights of young men and women alongside those of other marginalised community members in development planning. It is transformative because it radically improves young people's wellbeing and rights by translating co-created visions into youth-centric policies and programmes. In October 2022, AGYW participated in such a process as various stakeholder groups participated in local development planning processes in Kenya. PtY Kenya Consortium and other like minded CSOs engaged the Adolescent & Youth in a series of capacity strengthening sessions for the networks especially those in TWG capacities in Kuria East-Migori County where various technical working groups were supported to develop and submit a memorandum to the local County Government of Migori with proposals for the 3rd generation of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) (2023-2027) (Kenya MTE report).
- C. Young people participate in decision making processes: The outcomes harvested show that the programme started to facilitate opportunities for young people to act together and engage in decision making processes on key issues. This is illustrated by an example from Ghana: *a number of AGYWs have also actively led advocacy to call on duty bearers at the regional level to abolish taxes on sanitary pads, which have been identified as a major contributory factor to the cost. Through this process the duty bearers have given the AGYW more space and commitment to communicating their concerns to the national level. These activities were still focused at the community level and in some situations at the regional and district levels (Ghana MTE report).*

As the three levels of change in pathway 1 are designed to be progressive and young people participating in decision making processes are seen as closest to youth demanding accountability, changes at this higher level are only expected to be witnessed in the last years of the programme. Therefore, the PtY progress on pathway 1 is considered high. Nevertheless, lessons can be learned as it is not very clear which specific policies and social norms are specifically being targeted in each country. Current actions are also driven largely by PtY partners without independently organised and initiated actions from youth.

#### *Conclusion: contribution claim about Pathway 1:*

The PtY programmes have substantially contributed to the PtY pathway 1 of getting Young people to demand accountability and responsiveness on key issues (Strengthening young people to claim civic space) by working directly with youth, providing awareness raising, capacity strengthening, service provision and networking to youth, their families, and service providers. All three outcomes' subareas have been effectively targeted by the PtY programmes, with the following nuances. First of all, but least prominently, young people have more knowledge of harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Secondly, the analysis shows that youth are capacitated to engage with decision makers, and they do so successfully. Thirdly, it is witnessed that the engagement with decision makers starts to already bear fruits in the sense that youth are often directly involved in the decision-making processes related to SRHR and youth. It is commendable that most results are witnessed already in the higher-level outcomes.

#### **4.1.4 Pathway 2**

In line with this pathway, the PtY programme aims for the sustainability of targeted CSOs particularly as lead actors on AGYW programming. PtY started by working with the CSOs that are vital in the ToC to assess their capacities and develop action plans for capacity strengthening. Using tried and tested self-assessment tools, PtY supported CSOs to analyse their general organisational capacity as well as capacity in relation to lobby & advocacy, MIYP (using tools developed by CHOICE and Y-ACT) and GTA (using tools developed by Rutgers and Sonke Gender Justice). CSOs developed action plans through strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analyses.

The envisioned goal of pathway 2 is formulated as follows: CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space (Strengthening Civil Society).

*Table 8: Rating the 32 outcomes in pathway 2*

| Objective                                                                                                 | Significance of outcomes        | Level of contribution            | Strength of evidence            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space (Strengthening Civil Society) | High: 8<br>Medium: 21<br>Low: 3 | High: 18<br>Medium: 13<br>Low: 1 | High: 17<br>Medium: 8<br>Low: 7 |

Significance: Overall, less outcomes have been harvested for pathway 2. From the countries in the MTE. The outcome harvesting data collected for pathway 2 shows that the majority of outcomes are considered medium relevance for the achievement of PtY goals of CSOs amplifying young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space, as 21 out of the 32 outcomes were considered medium relevance and indicate that CSOs start to join forces and take collective action by playing political roles. Only 8 are considered of high significance (CSOs amplify young people's voices by influencing decision making processes) and 3 were found to be of low significance.

Contribution: In terms of contribution, 18 outcomes harvested are considered having a high contribution to the PtY pathway 2 outcome meaning that PtY intervention(s) under this pathway played an indispensable role in facilitating the change. Without PtY involvement, the change either would not have happened at all or would have progressed much more slowly. PtY was instrumental in achieving the outcome. 13 of the outcomes harvested were considered having a medium contribution implicating that PtY intervention(s) made a significant contribution to the change or even accelerated the pace at which the change occurred. Finally, 1 outcome was rated as having a low contribution meaning that the change was strengthened by the project's intervention(s), but it may have happened to some extent even without PtY involvement.

Strength of evidence: In terms of the strength of evidence for the contribution claim, for 17 outcomes the evidence is strong as these were externally validated through KIIs, 8 outcomes were validated through documents only and thus the evidence was rated as medium and for 7 outcomes no evidence was available.

This pathway 2 contains three sub outcomes:

- A. CSOs have increased legitimacy. NB: in the context of this programme, CSO legitimacy refers to the increased credibility and recognition of CSOs due to their enhanced capacity to include adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities in their programming and advocacy efforts.
- B. CSOs take collective action by playing political roles
- C. CSOs amplify young people's voices by influencing decision making processes

The findings for these three sub-outcomes are the following.

- A. In terms of CSOs having increased legitimacy, CSOs are now seen more and more as legitimate actors by policy makers and the community in policy and decision-making spaces in addressing PtY related issues at the sub-national and community levels, as they are better able to represent the needs and perspectives of marginalised and underrepresented groups. This has enabled CSOs to more effectively lobby and advocate for policies and programmes that are responsive to the needs of AGYWs, and as a result, they are seen as more legitimate and credible representatives of these groups. An example from Ghana demonstrates how CSOs are increasing their legitimacy: Through PtY advocacy in December 2022, four communities (Buipe, Yapei, Sankpala, and Bonyenasi) in Central Gonja District have included 4 young people in their health management committees because of the lobbying efforts of The Rural Connect, a Youth Initiative Small grants (YISG) grantee. The YISG empowering women-led, youth-focused and youth-led CSOs in conducting community and district level advocacy initiatives and created an opportunity for the young people to directly engage societal actors and other duty bearers. Additionally, Norsaac and Songtaba because of their work at the subnational level were seen by both state actors and young people as being very legitimate and the AGYWs and societal actors interviewed indicated that they were their point of call when it comes to challenges related to the key PtY issues (Malawi MTE report).
- B. It is also perceived that CSOs take collective action by playing political roles: There were some collective actions by the PtY partners and other CSOs to create opportunities for young people to engage state actors like the engagement with the Members of Parliament (MPs). These were typically carried out in collaboration with other CSOs using the CSOs Learning Hubs and network of youth groups. An example from Uganda shows how CSOs are willing to take collective actions but also challenges persist in doing so: In September 2022, 20 CSOs in the PtY implementation districts of Kalangala, Isingiro Mbale, Busia, Bukwo committed to form a loose district-based advocacy coalition to advance the PtY agenda. This was done in one of the advocacy and lobby meetings organised by PtY. The evaluation noted that CSOs made the commitment, however the coalition was not formed. This was attributed to the fact that PtY did not provide the technical and financial support required to form the coalition (Uganda MTE report).
- C. CSOs amplify young people's voices by influencing decision making processes: The national and regional-level CSOs and YLOs learning hubs have been designed and operationalized in all countries, and joint advocacy opportunities have been documented with other CSOs and YLOs networks. The PtY programme has engaged a large number of CSOs and YLOs, leading to the birth of approaches for enhancing the inclusion of AGYW in CSOs, YLOs, and advocacy interventions directed at governments. As a result, CSOs have increased their lobby and advocacy capacity, including their ability to include adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities. This has led to increased legitimacy for these organisations. An example from Senegal illustrates how CSOs are applying innovative and inclusive lobby and advocacy methods: The evaluation shows that youth civil society organisations are increasingly involved in advocacy and

lobbying. Indeed, out of 11 CSOs surveyed, 5 CSOs have a degree of maturity in development stage in advocacy and 4 CSOs have a level of maturity in advocacy and lobbying to be consolidated. These result from the investment in capacity strengthening of more than 50 CSOs trained in advocacy and lobbying techniques (Senegal MTE report). However, the PtY programme makes provision of financial support to a few CSOs through the YISG grant, leaving the majority of the CSOs without funding support. For example, the members of the CSO learning hubs brought together a number of CSOs and trained them but the action plans developed by these CSOs are not funded by the PtY programme. This makes it very difficult for PtY to hold the CSOs accountable if they do not carry out the actions agreed in their action plans.

*Conclusion: contribution claim about Pathway 2:*

The PtY programme has contributed to the PtY pathway 2 of getting CSOs amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space (Strengthening Civil Society) by working directly with CSOs in assessing and developing their organisational and lobby and advocacy capacities. To some extent all three outcomes' subareas have been effectively targeted by the PtY programmes, with the following results. First of all, and to a limited extent, increased credibility and recognition of CSOs is seen due to their enhanced capacity to include adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities in their programming and advocacy efforts. Secondly, and most prominently, strengthening capacities of CSOs, especially achieving that CSOs take collective action by playing political roles resulted in CSOs conducting joint advocacy actions. And thirdly, and to a limited extent, CSOs show some success in amplifying young people's voices by influencing decision making processes. Again, more progress is expected on this higher level of change in the next few years.

#### 4.1.5 Pathway 3

On pathway 3, PtY engaged with key societal stakeholders in promoting SRHR for youth and the inclusion of youth in SRHR decision making at community level. Furthermore, PtY employed methods to measure and monitor changes in social norms. These included national/regional opinion polls, community-level panels providing real time responses to polling questions, and/or community-level participatory social norm assessment tools.

The envisioned goal of pathway 3 is formulated as follows: Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms (Changing social norms).

*Table 9: Rating the 38 outcomes of pathway 3*

| Objective                                                                                             | Significance of outcomes         | Level of contribution            | Strength of evidence             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Societal actors support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms (Changing social norms) | High: 20<br>Medium: 13<br>Low: 5 | High: 26<br>Medium: 10<br>Low: 2 | High: 16<br>Medium: 18<br>Low: 4 |

**Significance:** The outcome harvesting data collected for pathway 3 shows that the majority of outcomes is considered highly relevant for the achievement of PtY goals of societal actors supporting and promoting youth rights and progressive social norms as 20 out of the 38 outcomes were considered highly relevant. The highly relevant outcomes demonstrate that societal actors start to involve young people as equal partners in decision-making. Another 13 outcomes are considered of medium significance (societal actors express a commitment towards the rights of young people and the need to address harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies) and 5 were found to be of low significance (societal actors have increased knowledge and skills to act on key issues).

**Contribution:** In terms of contribution, 26 out of 38 outcomes harvested are considered having a

high contribution to the PtY pathway 3 outcome meaning that PtY intervention(s) under this pathway played an indispensable role in facilitating the change. Without PtY involvement, the change either would not have happened at all or would have progressed much more slowly. PtY was instrumental in achieving the outcome. 10 of the outcomes harvested were considered having a medium contribution implicating that PtY intervention(s) made a significant contribution to the change or even accelerated the pace at which the change occurred. Finally, 2 outcomes were rated as having a low contribution meaning that the change was strengthened by the project's intervention(s), but it may have happened to some extent even without PtY involvement.

Strength of evidence: In terms of the strength of evidence for the contribution claim, for 16 outcomes the evidence is strong as these were externally validated through KIIs, 18 outcomes were validated through documents only and thus the evidence was rated as medium and for 4 outcomes no evidence was available.

Pathway 3 contains three sub outcomes:

- A. Societal actors have increased knowledge and skills to act on key issues
- B. Societal actors express a commitment towards the rights of young people and the need to address harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies
- C. Societal actors involve young people as equal partners in decision-making

Here are the findings for these sub-outcomes:

- A. Societal actors have increased knowledge and skills to act on key issues: The MTE evaluation findings show that combination of the different approaches used to engage the societal actors has contributed to the societal actors getting a better understanding of key PtY issues. The knowledge level of those who received direct training was significant. For instance, in Malawi, PtY introduced the programme to media houses and formalised partnerships through the Africa Media Network for Health-Malawi chapter. As a result, journalists and media practitioners were oriented on programme themes and trained in SGBV reporting. Higher frequency and better quality of reporting in both print and electronic media has been the landmark since then.
- B. Societal actors express a commitment: The evaluation findings regarding the attitudes of societal actors showed that some community leaders demonstrated more positive attitudes and started to express a commitment towards the rights of young people and the need to address harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Others were also concerned on how harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies addressed by PtY were affecting youth in their communities. Some of them got actively involved in addressing the issues and promoting reporting. For example, in Ghana, the Chief of Kayoro visited schools in this area, interacted with the AGYWs and encouraged them to report any person who attempted to harass them in any way (Ghana MTE report). A finding from Indonesia shows that in three targeted districts, religious leaders are strongly positively influencing the community. The phrase “the community obeys more to religious leaders than to the state apparatus” is the most common statement the interviewer heard during discussions. Religious leaders engaged in specific PtY activities such as child marriage prevention and handling. Although religious leaders had limited knowledge, skills and attitudes toward SGBV and SRHR, they contributed to decrease child marriage cases in targeted districts (Indonesia MTE report).
- C. Societal actors involve young people as equal partners in decision-making: the programme has opened a channel for young people and community leaders to engage specially on PtY issues. Some societal actors are working with chiefs to rescue girls from elopement and so on. For example in Ghana, a 16 year old girl was rescued from elopement as a result of efforts of a trained legal literacy volunteer in the Kayoro community in Kassena Nankana district in October 2022. A Chief however indicated that in the traditional setting the channel for AGYWs was limited because they had no organised groups of AGYWs in the community, so were advised to send their views through their mothers. Overall, there is some progress towards these results but more

needs to be done around the traditional decision-making structure to get the young people at the table, especially AGYW.

*Conclusion: contribution claim about Pathway 3:*

The PtY programme has contributed to the PtY pathway 3 of getting societal actors to support and promote youth rights and progressive social norms (changing social norms) by engaging with key societal stakeholders in promoting SRHR for youth and the inclusion of youth in SRHR decision making at community level. All three outcomes subareas have been effectively targeted by the PtY programmes, with the following outcomes. First of all, to some extent, societal actors have increased knowledge and skills to act on key issues. Secondly, engagement with societal actors such as community leaders and religious leaders in several cases resulted in societal actors expressing a commitment towards the rights of young people and the need to address harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. And thirdly, as a result of the engagement societal actors start to involve young people as equal partners in decision-making..

#### 4.1.6 Pathway 4

Finally, for pathway 4 state actors were engaged in order to promote SRHR for youth and the inclusion of youth in SRHR decision making at community level. Simultaneously, PtY consortium mapped and tracked legislation and budget arrangements concerning the key issues, using methods such as context analysis and budget tracking, complemented by key informant interviews to gain insight from both resisting and supportive actors.

The envisioned goal of pathway 4 is formulated as follows: State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues (Improving policies and policy implementation).

*Table 10: Rating the 105 outcomes of pathway 4*

| Objective                                                                                                          | Significance of outcomes         | Level of contribution            | Strength of evidence              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues (Improving policies and policy implementation) | High: 47<br>Medium: 53<br>Low: 5 | High: 58<br>Medium: 40<br>Low: 7 | High: 22<br>Medium: 66<br>Low: 15 |

**Significance:** The outcome harvesting data collected for pathway 4 shows that in this pathway the most outcomes were harvested and also the largest portion of the outcomes are of medium significance. The majority of outcomes is considered medium relevance for the achievement of PtY goals of state actors improving policy making and implementation on key issues as 53 out of the 105 outcomes were considered to be of medium relevance. 47 are considered of high significance (state actors engage with youth representatives on rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices through expressing their commitment) and 5 were found to be of low significance (state actors recognize the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies).

**Contribution:** In terms of contribution, 58 outcomes harvested are considered having a high contribution to the PtY pathway 4 outcome meaning that PtY intervention(s) under this pathway played an indispensable role in facilitating the change. Without PtY involvement, the change either would not have happened at all or would have progressed much more slowly. PtY was instrumental in achieving the outcome. 40 of the outcomes harvested were considered having a medium contribution implicating that PtY intervention(s) made a significant contribution to the change or even accelerated the pace at which the change occurred. Finally, 7 outcomes were rated as having a low contribution meaning that the change was strengthened by the project's intervention(s), but it may have happened to some extent even without PtY involvement.

Strength of evidence: In terms of the strength of evidence for the contribution claim, for 22 outcomes the evidence is strong as these were externally validated through KIIs, 66 outcomes were validated through documents only and thus the evidence was rated as medium and for 15 outcomes no evidence was available.

Pathway 4 contains three sub outcomes:

- A. State actors recognize the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies
- B. State actors engage with youth representatives on rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices through expressing their commitment
- C. State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues

The findings for pathway 4 are the following:

- A. State actors recognize the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies: The MTE concludes that state actors more and more recognize the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. We have two examples from Ghana. On September 13th 2022, the District Chief Executive of Builsa South District pledged to fast track the gazettement of a by-law on teenage pregnancy during an inception meeting of a YISG grantee. Furthermore, based on follow ups made on a petition by AGYW, in December 2022, the Northern Regional Minister invited representatives of the AGYW to extend their petition to members of the general assembly of the NRCC. In Uganda, in November 2022, the District Community Development Officer indicated that the Kalangala district technical team committed to examine the national gender policy to develop guidelines that would inform the development of the district gender strategic plan (before engagement, no single guideline related to SRHR). In this regard, the outcome validation exercise found that before the engagement with PtY, Kalangala district did not have any bi-law related to SRHR or gender; but as a result of PtYs' mobilisation of state actors, young people, CSOs, for a meeting, where they strengthened their capacity in gender transformative approaches (GTA), lobbying and advocacy, meaningful youth participation, the Kalangala district technical team made the commitment to examine the national gender policy, and develop guidelines that would inform the development of the district gender strategic plan.
- B. State actors engage with youth representatives on rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices through expressing their commitment: The programme has contributed to get more people to participate in discussion on strategic documents of the Ministry of Gender. For example, PtY facilitated the participation of 25 young people in the review of the Ghana Child marriage framework. In Homa Bay County, Kenya, PtY Kenya consortium *was able to mobilise the Department of Gender Inclusion, Sports, Culture and Social Services to address the high cases of SGBV and teen pregnancies in the County by supporting the launch of the SGBV Policy in March 2023. The launch of the policy was the culmination of many months of lobbying by the youth, postponement of the event and interruption by the election calendar that slowed down momentum for many months, but the youth remained resilient.* By launching the policy during the International Women's Day celebrations, Homa Bay County joined counties that have adopted a county-level policy on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) while simultaneously making a watershed statement on the County's commitment to support programmes that address women's rights (Kenya MTE report).

*"I am thrilled to launch our county's SGBV Policy Framework that provides guidance on minimum standards and critical elements needed to tailor the responses of local authorities to the specific SGBV challenges faced,"*  
Kenya MTE report.

- C. State actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues: Through various workshops organised by PtY and other programmes, state actors have gathered knowledge and skills to design and implement policies. For example, to raise awareness of the importance of mental health among the young people, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the

PtY Malawi consortium organised the commemoration of the International Mental Health Day where the Minister of Health made a commitment to prioritise mental health issues, particularly among the young people. Another example from Ghana shows that on September 13th 2022, the District Chief Executive of Builsa South District pledged to fast track the gazetting of a by-law on teenage pregnancy during an inception meeting of a YISG grantee. The main challenge hindering their effective implementation has to do with limited budgetary allocations from the central government or the ministry of finance. These state actors will therefore need more financial support to aid the implementation of policies effectively. The evaluation shows that the Consortium leveraged on other national and international days to amplify PtY advocacy initiatives (which included the International Youth Day, World Contraception Day, 16 Days of activism on ending Gender based Violence), with some tangible changes.

*Conclusion: contribution claim about Pathway 4:*

The PtY programme has considerably contributed to the PtY pathway 4 of getting state actors improve policy making and implementation on key issues (Improving policies and policy implementation) by engaging with key state actors in promoting SRHR for youth and the inclusion of youth in SRHR decision making at local and national government level. All three outcomes subareas have been effectively targeted by the PtY programmes, with an emphasis of state actors now engaging with youth representatives and state actors starting to enhance policy making. Concretely, the following contribution claim is made. First of all, to some extent engagement with state actors resulted in state actors recognizing the rights of young people and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Secondly and most prominently, state actors involve young people as equal partners in policy processes. And thirdly, as a result of the engagement, state actors have increasingly designed effective policies and laws and budgets for them.

*4.1.7 Effectiveness of strategies*

Another component of the effectiveness of the PtY programme is an analysis of strategies in terms of their effectiveness to bring about change. The PtY programme has used different strategies to ensure that it is effective, and that its programme goals are achieved. Six effective strategies are described below.

One of the effective strategies that has been used in the programme is meaningful and inclusive youth participation (MIYP). Through this there is engagement of the target group and the beneficiaries in the project implementation. MIYP has been very effective, empowering the youth, giving them the voice, but also ensuring that whatever needs they have, they need to start fighting, start claiming for their rights, demanding what belongs to them, and hold duty bearers accountable. The PtY programme has focused on strengthening the capacity of its partners on MIYP through CHOICE, who are the technical partners supporting country teams in implementing MIYP in the program. The consortium partners and the country teams have discussed and unpacked meaningfulness and inclusiveness of these strategies for the youths.

According to the key informant respondents, through the MIYP approach the programme has created a platform where the older adults and the youths can engage especially in the decision-making structures at the community level. Often, the opinions of the youths are disregarded, and in some instances, it is considered as disrespectful to speak where older people are speaking, and this has continued to thwart the voices of the youth in advocating for the issues that affect them. However, through PtY and its approach of MIYP, the youth are mobilised and encouraged to engage in decision making. Through the MIYP strategy, the programme has built and developed the capacity of young people and youth-led organisations (YLOs) to ensure that they can raise their voice and fight for their rights as well as hold the duty bearers accountable on issues that affect them.

*“And now we can see especially at community level, in Malawi chiefs or even the elders, for them to start taking the opinions of the youth it's a nonstarter but this time around in areas where we are implementing, we have seen the youth taking lead, even the grown up people in the community itself are accepting that the youth is an important part of that community.”*

*-Country manager Malawi*

However, despite MIYP being an effective strategy, it has faced implementation hiccups, especially in the structure of country teams. In the programme, Partner B of every country must be a youth-led organisation; however, the programme did not consider the maturity in terms of organisational capacity of the youth-led organisation. Due to capacity issues, this has posed a challenge in some countries in terms of YLO maturation. Specifically, around Part B issues: the countries that had issues with partner B's organisational system issues like finance, M&E, HR etc. were Ghana and Indonesia. Uganda had challenges with partner B in terms of capacity of staff but they are now addressing it.

Another strategy that has worked for the PtY programme is the Inter-generational dialogues. Intergenerational dialogues between young people and societal actors like religious leaders, traditional leaders and elders took place with the aim of changing harmful social norms for example intergenerational dialogue with youth panels and experts around the topic SGBV and digitalization. Through these dialogues the cultural norms underlying harmful practices are now discussed by people from different ages. Such dialogues help identify and address issues about persisting norms.

Co-creation is another effective strategy that has been applied by the PtY program. The programme has ensured that in planning, decision making and implementation a co-creation approach is adopted that involves all the parties, rather than a top-down approach. Co-creation started from the proposal development stage, whereby everyone was brought on board as the programme was clear on their vision for Southern leadership. In the implementation, there is still co-creation where the programme country teams come together for cross learning and to create joint activities that address key issues in the countries and region. The Coordination Lab has observed co-creation across all phases:

*“Instead of sitting somewhere and constructing the problem, a lot of capacity needs assessment were done a lot of co creation where everyone was involved within the proposal writing including the countries that are in it, and we've seen co-creation taking part in all the processes that we're doing so from proposal, baseline to operations research and implementation,”*

*-Coordination Lab*

Capacity strengthening is another key strategy that has been effective for the PtY program. The PtY partnership was formed based on the strength that different partners bring into the partnership and how experienced or skilled the partners were to tackle all issues within Sexual reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). To ensure capacity strengthening was very effective, the programme conducted a needs assessments to understand the countries and consortium partners and their specific capacity needs which informed the tailoring and contextualization of capacity strengthening plans. This process led to the formation of technical working groups (TWGs) which are responsible for the strengthening of capacity strengthening areas based on technical expertise. The country teams and the youth-led organisations have increased their capacity in different areas, especially those that are cross cutting, including MIYP, GTA, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), communication and advocacy. In PtY capacity strengthening/strengthening did not only focus on training but also organisational development for CSOs to ensure they can manage funds and implement the project effectively.

*"I would say one of the components that I find that is really working for us is empowering the youth-led organisations in terms of how they do their financing, the organisation development and systems strengthening. For me, I feel I've seen growth in organisations that we are sub granting in terms of the Human Resources, procurement systems being put in place, how they conduct their activities.,"*

*-Country Coordinator Kenya*

To support capacity development across the program, the formation of TWGs is another strategy that has been effective. The five TWGs in the PtY programme include Lobby and advocacy, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Research (PMELR), communication, GTA and Global Youth Group (GYG). Each TWG has a role in capacity strengthening the country teams to support advocacy on SRHR issues and harmful practices. The TWGs have been structured and put systems in place to ensure consistent touchpoints between the consortium partners and the country. This has supported a feedback loop within the technical working groups that maintains consistent feedback. The TWGs also have supported the linking and learning aspect of the programme where countries get opportunities to share with each other on different implementation strategies, the different results, challenges, as well as brainstorm on various supporting cross-learning.

Another strategy that has supported effective implementation and created ownership of the programme intervention across countries is working with the existing community structures. The PtY programme did not create new parallel structures at the community and local government level but engaged the existing structures in the interventions. The PtY programme focused on strengthening the existing structures in communities and only created structures where they were non-existent.

*"Using already existing structures for implementation because when we went to the communities, we didn't want to create new structures. We wanted the people not to feel like this is a standalone program. We wanted them to integrate whatever we were bringing into their already existing lifestyles.,"*

*-Country Manager Malawi*

Regarding the effectiveness of strategies, it can be concluded that core strategies like GTA, TWGs, Southern Leadership, PMEL, Communication among others are highly effective and should be continued. Specifically, GTA is more effective in some countries than in others depending on the level of understanding of CMTs on the issue.

The intergenerational dialogues could be expanded more as MIYP would benefit from more attention to the maturity of youth-led CSOs involved in country programmes and organisational development initiatives to be incorporated in the engagement. The inter-communication and synergies between TWGs isn't as effective as it should be-it was noted that the individual TWGs go about their work diligently but there is no structured way of sharing information between respective TWGs. The research component of the programme to enhance informed activities and boost information gaps identified in areas like GTA and effective implementation of the Southern Leadership model need have not been fully exploited within PtY. Funding constraints to the TWGs have also limited their plans to working through country and global activity plans (and not independently).

#### **4.1.8 Key enablers and barriers**

The evaluation has unravelled a number of key enablers and barriers contributing to achieving the intended outcomes included in the Theory of Change. These are presented below.

## Enabling factors

Several factors have contributed to the successful implementation of the PtY programme and its achievement of goals so far:

- Open collaboration, transparency in the partnership with mutual support and shared goals and values across the PtY partnership
- Involvement of the youth and youth-led organisations in programme implementation. For instance, in Malawi the programme has a pool of more than 1000 youth advocates supporting awareness creation and who are accepted at the community level as advocates for SRHR.
- Development and review of policies, laws, and regulations by the national government to support the fight against harmful practices. For example, the government of Malawi is making steps in revising the gender equality bill and the Child Protection Act bill, which takes up the issues that PtY has been advocating. Further, development of certain strategies, such as youth-friendly health services strategy in countries that include issues such as safe abortion, support the achievement of programme goals.
- Working closely with government, community structures and community leaders. The government and community leaders have proven to be gatekeepers in different sectors and therefore working with them as a primary structure for implementation of PtY intervention not only supports achievement of the goals but also creates ownership of these interventions.

*“Working closely with government and community leaders is crucial and key enablers as they are gatekeepers.”*  
-National Coordinator, Uganda

- The PtY governance structure and co-creation aspect are success factors in terms of how the work is done at the global level, and with the country teams. The governance structure ensures that the country teams are represented inside the global structures, and they have created a structure to handle issues and crises within the partnership. The project has different platforms where different members of the partnership converge to address issues in implementation. For example, the Global Management Team (GMT), is a platform where issues are discussed and the way forward is communicated back to the countries. At the country level, there are country management teams (CMT) who discuss country issues and resolve these. Therefore, issues are being brought upwards from the CMT to the GMT and if they cannot be handled by GMT they are taken to the Global Supervisory Board (GSB).
- The PtY partnership has different partners who have vast experience and offer capacity strengthening based on their expertise and skills. Through this the TWGs have been able to address different issues of capacity strengthening within the partnership and in different countries.

*“We have different partners who have vast experience in terms of the experts so they, for example, within the GYG we have three partners and each partners offers capacity strengthening based on their expertise and skills and capacity”*  
GYG Act

For the remainder of the PtY programme period, it is suggested to build on enabling factors and to adapt strategies to these supportive factors in the programme.

## Barriers:

Despite PtY being successful in implementing the programme in the 7 countries, there have been challenges that hinder the achievement of the programme goals.

Several factors have jeopardised meaningful and inclusive participation by youth in the decision-making processes. One of the key barriers is lack of political goodwill, which in some countries such as Ethiopia has hampered PtY from doing advocacy for a long time due to the restricted civic space; however civic space in Ethiopia is now opening up to allow advocacy towards MIYP. Furthermore, some countries do not have a really friendly policy environment that enables young people to meaningfully and inclusively participate.

Another key barrier identified is culture and religion as well as the patriarchal traditions in society. In countries like Indonesia there is a lot of opposition stemming from different actors such as religious leaders and cultural institutions. Culture has exacerbated ageism: the older generation feels the youth should not have an opinion and are not experienced enough to make decisions.

*"I think culture in Africa still has that respect for old people in some way, so young person, in most of these communities should not speak in front of an old person or even make a decision when an older person is there."*

*-Coordination lab.*

Also, the lack of understanding of what meaningful and inclusive youth participation (MIYP) is, is a barrier as adult policymakers and adult led CSOs do not understand its importance and relevance for society. Therefore, adult policymakers need capacity strengthening to understand meaningful and inclusive youth participation and its importance. Further, the technicality of the MIYP concept may hinder its understanding among the larger public. Also the lack of a consistent definition of MIYP in the country teams and the changing definitions from MYP to MYPE or MIYP and MIYE may create confusion among the programme stakeholders across the implementing countries:

*"Sometimes the issue around MIYP is not as fully understood as we would want by all the organisations which implement it because, you know, meaningful youth participation shouldn't just be put to youth-led organisation. And so, they need to understand what it means that it's not just having a young person joining a meeting, but also that young person, being able to share their views and being able to be a part of decision-making processes."*

*-GYG Sonke Gender Justice*

There is a need for the programme's TWG focusing on meaningful and inclusive youth participation to clearly elaborate on this and ensure that country teams are using the same concept and abbreviation for uniformity and ease of understanding. This also applies to GTA.

Language was also noted as a barrier to meaningful engagement of the youth in decision making. Although some of the youth advocates are articulate and vocal on issues being addressed by the programmes, their participation at national, regional, and global level may be hindered by their limited capability in speaking out in languages like English. In such instances, there is a need for interpreters, especially for participants who do not speak English well and for whom English is not their national language, such as Senegal which is a French speaking country.

*"You find out that those that are actively participating, education wise, they cannot articulate issues in English and when you go at global level or at regionally, they always require somebody who is able to sit at a panel discussion and articulate issues."*

*-Country Manager Malawi*

Respondents also noted that unequal power relations between young people and the older generations are a barrier to meaningful and inclusive youth participation. The power imbalance leads to the exclusion of young people from the decision-making process at the community level. In the PtY program, the respondents noted that the country management teams have both older and younger people to ensure the imbalance is corrected.

More barriers include:

- Shrinking civic space affects advocacy against the harmful practices in the communities. In some countries such as Uganda, the government has come up with policies that shrink the civic space to advocate for SRHR such as the LGBTQ+ bill. Such policies not only hinder achievement of the project goals, but also create an environment that encourages violation of human rights which the PtY programme is advocating for. Further, lack of clear laws on age of consent continues to be a challenge especially in countries like Malawi:

*"We're also dealing with conflicting laws, age of consent, you know, age of marriage, age of a child or these are still in conflict. So, we sensitise the community on what they should do when somebody marries an underage, she's over 16 is pregnant. It will not be like defilement, when reported and the police say the girl is old enough to consent, it discourages people from the ground because it deters people on the ground to start reporting."*

*-Sonke Gender Justice, Malawi*

- Staff turnover within the programme as well as the local structures that the programme works with cause implementation gaps. For instance, when a key person in the programme leaves, this creates a vacuum that needs to be filled. Onboarding the new person can take a while before they acclimatise with the programme which is already complex. Also, the knowledge gap created by staff turnover causes delays in implementation.
- PTY does not have a SRHR services provision aspect to it and still at the community level the programme is creating demand and cannot provide services. For instance, in fighting teenage pregnancy, there is a need for contraceptives, which is also a huge gap impacted by the health system issues such as stock outs. PtY has been working with the local government structures, but there are systemic challenges such as lack of adequate health financing, commodities stock outs and Human Resources for Health (HRH) shortages. that hinder effective service delivery thus impacting on achievement of programme goals.

The barriers listed above need to be addressed in order to enhance programme impact. Some barriers in the context such as limiting political context, unfavourable cultures and traditions, shrinking civic space and unequal power relations, will need to be accepted and mitigated and PtY staff needs to be made aware of how these constrain the PtY programme's impact.

Other barriers such as language barriers within the consortium, lack of understanding of MIYP and staff turnover, require efforts to be implemented within the consortium.

## 4.2 Relevance

This chapter presents the evaluation findings on relevance. The definition of relevance for this MTE is: *The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.*

### 4.2.1 Relevance in addressing the needs of the youth and their inclusion in decision-making processes

When assessing the relevance of the PtY programme in addressing the needs of the youth and their inclusion in decision-making processes regarding harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies it is found that the youth are affected by different harmful practices such as FGM, teenage pregnancy and child marriages which create the need to curb them. They further have limited access to knowledge to SRHR services. Collectively, the voice of the youth has not been united or amplified enough for them to be heard at all levels to proactively engage in decision-making processes like policy and advocacy on matters that affect their SRHR. The MTE confirmed that the involvement of the youth is critical in addressing their needs in terms of curbing harmful practices such as FGM, teenage pregnancies and child marriages because they are the groups which are most affected. The MTE found that the youth are most affected because they do not have the voice and lack the ability to negotiate safer sexual intercourse. To enhance the young people's voices, the PtY programme created a governance structure that shows that young people's voices are important, from a country level right up to a global level. The consortium partners assess and evaluate the programme work plans to ensure there is presence of meaningful and inclusive youth participation in the activities. For example, in Uganda, the evaluation noted that the youth in all the implementation districts were engaged in different decision-making processes like cross-border dialogues, intergenerational dialogues, and district council meetings. This could be the result of PtY forming youth advocacy groups in the implementation districts and training the youth on district decision making processes. However, the evaluation also noted that youth in all the PtY implementation districts in Uganda were least involved in policy and law making at national level. So, the step from participation in processes to participation in decisions still has to be made, in the case of Uganda. In other countries like Senegal, Malawi and Kenya, youth did participate in decision-making.

*, "The youth have now built more courage and are able to go out and and speak in spaces such as public barazas, interact with leaders, submit memoranda to Ward Administrators of the county government and actively call for an end to FGM. The youth speak on radio (Togotane Radio), in churches and are now more organized and deliberate in the way they go about their roles on their own".*

*Bukira East Member of County Assembly-Kenya*

Furthermore, the evaluation revealed that PtY is an evidence-based programme. Indeed, lessons from the 'Yes, I do programme' implemented from 2016 to 2020 informed on relevant issues to focus on. The youth form the central focus of the programme. This contrasts with policies, which often are not in favour of the youth perspective; nor are policy-makers siding with the youth. To increase involvement of the youth in addressing harmful practices in the community, PtY brings in the aspect of young people's involvement in decision-making processes which is critical in addressing them. Moreover, for changes to occur especially at policy level regarding harmful practices, young people must have the capacity to advocate for these issues at different levels, and prior to that, to understand the criticality of policy advocacy. The following quote confirms this.

*"If we need to bring change, especially policy changes, young people need to understand what policy advocacy is, you know, because one of the challenges that they face is capacity."*

*-GYG Act*

Here are two positive examples of youth engagement in policy processes in Malawi. First, youth are now lobbying for a larger variety of contraceptive methods to ensure that there is availability of different contraceptive options at facilities which increases the number of choices youths have. Initially, community mobile services only provided short term contraceptive methods. Girls and young women who prefer long-acting reversible methods still must present themselves to a static Health Centre (15 kilometres away) where all the tests can be done. Secondly, through community dialogue meetings with community leaders in Traditional Authority Tambala in Dedza on child marriages and early child bearing cases that were being fuelled by harmful cultural practices, the youth champions successfully engaged parents of those children on the dangers of early marriages and of the newly passed law that outlaws those below 18 years to get married:

*“Another case of child marriage was in TA Tambala where a 16-year-old boy impregnated an 18-year-old girl. Both were in Primary Standard 6. The parents were advised that the boy is underage hence can not be married according to the currently passed law. The marriage was dissolved at a meeting involving traditional leaders, parents of the married and youth advocates. The couple is no longer staying together.”-*

*Youth Champions Malawi*

Another successful case, from Ghana this time, shows that the programme was relevant in addressing the needs of youth and their inclusion in decision-making processes, particularly on issues related to harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies. PtY focused on empowering young people and building a youth-adult partnership that prioritises their needs beyond the programme period. The programme interventions improved awareness and education, increased participation, and engagement of young people. The interviews with young people and social actors showed that before PtY in Ghana young people were not actively involved or consulted when decisions were being made on issues that affect them. For example, a youth Legal Literacy Volunteers (LLV) in Kayoro indicated that before the PtY programme youth in their community had limited interactions with the community leaders and they could not discuss their challenges with the community leaders. Since PtY this is now happening in the communities they are well recognised and play a critical role in working with the community leaders to address PtY issues. This was corroborated by the Kayoro chief during interviews.

#### **4.2.2 Thematic relevance**

The MTE revealed that SRHR issues like child marriage, teenage pregnancy and FGM are prevalent in the countries as well as different forms of GBV across different people in different regions. Based on the statistics at national level and regional level, these issues are a priority in the countries' SRHR framework hence it is critical to address them and, in the process, involve the people who are most affected by them, in other words, the youth:

*“If you look at the topics, they are mainly affecting young people, especially adolescent girls, and young women. So as long as it's affecting their life, they should be part of the process.”*

*- Amref Ethiopia*

Furthermore, the findings show that the programme thematic areas or priority areas are relevant to the communities because the issues are very prevalent. For example, female genital mutilation often is highly prevalent in the borderlands between Kenya and Uganda. People either migrate from Kenya to have the FGM performed in Uganda when Kenya is strict, or Uganda to Kenya or Tanzanian side. The migration impacts highly on the community adapting to change when it comes to these harmful practices and therefore the project has embarked on engaging community structures as well as the young people to create awareness and advocate against such practices. There is evidence that the programme is having an impact in the reduction of these issues such as teenage pregnancies where even religious leaders are coming out now to denounce child marriages and refusing to officiate marriages. In Uganda within Isingiro, Kalangala, Busia and Mbale districts youth were least informed about FGM/C and this could be attributed to the fact that FGM is not practiced in those districts. Further, KII respondents in Uganda stated that although FGM is illegal and unwanted, it is perceived by some as allowing some benefits ranging from improved marriage prospects and passage to adulthood. Although

people are informed about the hazards of FGM/C, still the practice prevails due to strong cultural ties attached to FGM/C.

In Ghana, implementation has helped AGYWs increase their understanding of the key PtY issues. As a result, the AGYWs are beginning to increase their agency and want to act. Therefore, the AGYWs champions having moved their priorities towards receiving support to engage their colleagues, societal and state actors on the key PtY issues:

*“I think I have knowledge of the issues. Our network [Young Urban Women] just needs some support now so that we can engage the communities and help get other young people to our level.”*

*- AGYW, Youth Leaders, Ghana*

#### **4.2.3 Relevance of capacity strengthening of youth**

The MTE found that the PtY programme has greatly contributed to increase knowledge of the youth on harmful practices. For instance, in Senegal the level of knowledge of young people interviewed about harmful practices (unwanted pregnancies, child marriages and female genital mutilation) is very high (75%), further 92% of the young respondents approve denunciation, which means that young people are sensitized to fight against harmful practices. The respondents from Ghana stated that through capacity enhancement, advocacy training, and platform creation, PtY has supported young people in developing the skills and confidence to advocate for their rights and create positive change in their communities. Youth are also more aware of their rights and are becoming increasingly engaged in social and political issues that affect their lives. Many factors have contributed to this shift, such as access to capacity enhancement activities, technology, and social media platforms. The PtY programme also facilitated collaboration and engagement between young people and government officials, promoting a culture of youth participation and inclusion in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, in Malawi, the young people's confidence and agency has also been boosted and consolidated by their inclusion into various governance structures particularly at district and community levels (Area Development Committees and Village Development Committees etc). In this respect, they have the opportunity to directly speak to those with power and make decisions that are in the best interest of the youth. This will need to be consolidated so that the youth can have access to decision making platforms, boost their agency and persistence to challenge harmful practices in the community and lobby for access to SRHR services.

In conclusion, the relevance of the PtY programme is confirmed by the MTE.

### 4.3 Sustainability

This chapter presents the evaluation findings on sustainability. The definition of sustainability for this MTE is: *The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.*

Regarding measures taken to enhance the sustainability of the Power to Youth programme in the 7 implementing countries, PtY has ensured that there is an exit strategy to ensure continuity of programme interventions and gains beyond the programme period. The MTE revealed that working with the community was one of the sustainability measures that the programme has in place:

*“So, we are strengthening structures at community level but also, we are using community already existing structures to ensure that the community owns the issue. Like for us as CHRR, we work through volunteers, and we have a pool of volunteers that are community based.”*

*-CHRR Malawi*

Two key strategies have been used: working with community structures, which strengthen their capacity to handle the key thematic issues being addressed by the Power to Youth programme; and ensuring appropriation and buy-in of the programme by the community members and other target groups such as the government. Moreover, the programme works with local governments, or the national governments to be accountable in addressing SRHR issues. This ensures that ownership of the intervention by the community and the government will secure continuity and that the community will hold the duty bearers accountable for addressing harmful practices and SRHR issues in the countries.

Engaging government stakeholders has also proven relevant. The Power to Youth programme has been focusing on advocacy at different levels that are global, regional, and country level. The MTE found that the country programmes have been working to influence the development, review, operationalization and implementation of laws and policies that create a favourable environment to address the harmful practices that are a priority for the PtY program. The programme engages parliamentarians and ministries and ensures they are working on these issues as programme champions. They are trained on different issues by the programme to ensure that they can continue working on these issues but also especially for the parliamentarians to hold the government accountable on implementing policies and passing laws that support this cause.

Another strategy employed is strengthening the capacity of local youth-led Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and CSOs. If the programme closes, the strengthened capacity of several youth organisations in the community ensures the continued implementation of the activities or programmes. Since the youth-led organisations are part of the CMTs, the consortium leads in different countries are ensuring that they strengthen their capacity on resource mobilisation. So the organisations are supported to develop proposals to respond to donor calls which are aligned to the objectives of the Power to You(th) program:

*“We're able to liaise with the YLOs to see how we can support them in developing proposals and to do resource mobilisation.”*

*-Sonke Gender Justice Gender Justice.*

The organisations who get their proposals funded ensure the continuity of interventions addressing the harmful practices in the community that the PtY programme is focusing on.

Sustainability is also a matter of knowledge management. According to the respondents, documentation that has been done throughout the implementation is a key sustainability measure. Based on that, it is suggested that the PtY programme continues to build a support repository of different processes and different success stories which could be replicated. Knowledge production, and management in the programme ensure that the key processes and successes are documented, and an evidence base is created to be used not only in resources

mobilisation for scale up, but also so that other organisations can pick up best practices as well as lessons learnt and therefore continue addressing issues that were a priority in the program:

*“Documenting all the things, all the work that we are currently doing so that it can be used by the partners. After this project if they need to solve those things, if they need good practices, learned lessons, what challenges they can relate to, they can access it.”*

*-Amref Senegal*

Furthermore, respondents noted that the programme has created linkages with other programmes in different countries that are addressing the same issues. The MTE confirms that collaboration with other Dutch funded programmes or consortium partners programmes that are keen to address harmful practices and SRHR issues as well as fostering meaningful youth participation ensures that there is continuity beyond the programme timeline.

*“So, in advocacy in the PTY program, you will find we have other programmes in Amref such as Y-Act who are representative there in the MIYP choices or technical partner and all that and so, whenever they go there with to the other programmes, which are funded as an extension they carry the Power to You(th) work that has been there. So, this tread ensures that the work that has been done by Power to You(th), whether we are there or not, when it comes to youth can still be carried forward with other programmes.”*

*-Coordination Lab*

Creating platforms for the youth, adolescent girls and young women is also a sustainability measure that was noted during the MTE. The programme in the implementing countries has created forums and empowerment groups where the youth can be engaged meaningfully and raise their voice on issues that are affecting them. Through these platforms the different groups have built their capacity through training as well as mentorship. This ensures they have the knowledge and skills to continue advocating for their rights and holding the duty bearers accountable on these issues.

Beyond PtY’s current implementation described above, there are other enablers of the project sustainability. First of all, PtY could engage new TWG, tools, and advocacy as follows:

- The Power to You(th) programme has different organisations with different expertise and different tools thus they set up new Technical Working Groups and sub-groups like the Engage for Change (within the GYG TWG), whose objective is specifically to mainstream meaningful and inclusive youth participation within countries. Through the TWGs the programme can strengthen the capacity of YLOs to address the priority PtY issues. Further, the programmes leverage the partnerships within the consortium to create linkages with other programmes that support continuity of PtY interventions.
- Availability of tools that support incorporation of sustainability strategies at proposal development stage. For example, Amref has a tool they use called Projects Grant Management Information System (PG MIS) that enables the team to understand how they will carry out their interventions. The tool is used to come up with a sustainability model on how to implement up to the point of exit and way forward.
- Advocacy through showcasing the programme results and achievement in different global and regional events garners the attention of donors and other development partners to support the PtY vision.

*“Some of the members within Power to You(th) are trying to come up with different ways to showcase some of the PtY results to different audiences and potentially new donors who will help advance beyond 2025, especially when we’re attending, for example, international events, where we have these key stakeholders who could help us with advancing the*

*programme beyond 2025.”*

*- Coordination Lab*

- Good partnership with the national government, local government, communities, and young people who have embraced the programme and support the interventions especially on changing societal norms around harmful practices. For example in Kenya, the Governor of Homabay County, which is one of the implementation areas, is proactively leading on the implementation of the youth policy which contains youth involvement and decision making against harmful practices.
- Furthermore, there are external enablers to PtY sustainability. One key enabler is the commitment from national and regional governments to eradicate the harmful practices despite them facing challenges in terms of human resource and budgets. For example, in Ethiopia there is a commitment aiming to end FGM by January by 2025 and the rest harmful practices are aimed to end by 2030. Kenya, Ghana, Malawi and Senegal have had a good political environment where the government is committed to ending harmful practices.

Despite the programme employing different sustainability strategies, the respondents noted some disablers to sustainability of the PtY program. These include:

- The changing political and shrinking civic space in some countries such as Uganda. The shrinking civil space has seen some of the youth-led organisations working with the PtY programme close, thus posing a challenge to continuity of these interventions beyond the project lifetime. Also, opposition against some of the PtY advocacy initiatives from the government such as Indonesia poses a challenge to the sustainability of the programme gains as it impacts on advocacy on PtY thematic issues.

*“In Uganda some of the CBOs that we had built their capacity have been shut down, so they can’t operate pending the outcome of whether this bill (Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2023) will be signed into law.”*

*- Sonke Gender Justice*

- The sensitivity of the issues being addressed especially around the GTA approach as well as SRHR issues. Some countries such as Uganda have laws such as the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2023 that criminalise certain issues such as the LGBTQ+. This has increased scepticism especially in schools where the programmes support comprehensive sexual education for adolescents, and it is viewed as normalising LGBTQ+. This notion not only hinders implementation but also curtails the sustainability of comprehensive sexual education for adolescents in the school system as well as fosters resistance from the community.
- Advocacy on policies and laws is a long process that requires time and thus the programme may end before some of the laws and policies are adopted and implemented to address the PtY priority issues. Political reshuffles and changes impact on sustainability as the programme must start the advocacy process every time there is a change at the ministry or there is a new government. The respondents also noted that staff turnover at the local government offices and ministries impact on the sustainability of the program. Any strides made with a previous duty bearer is thwarted by the interest of the current duty bearer; besides, training them is time consuming.

*“Staff turnover of the District Council, at the moment, after two years, we were used to working with a certain group of people, we had oriented them on the program, thematic areas and project needs. And now, all of them will be transferred so it means we’ll have to start all over again.”*

*- CHRR Malawi*

- Global trends on issues that PtY is advocating for such as safe abortion impact on advocacy on policies and laws at the country level. For instance, the Roe vs. Wade case in the US impacted on the advocacy of the termination of pregnancy bill in Malawi, whereby the opposers gained the ground and the bill -that would allow abortions when a woman’s mental or physical health is in danger, in cases of rape and incest, and when there are serious foetal abnormalities- was never presented in Parliament.

- The illiteracy levels within the community as well as social and religious norms around harmful practices. In the communities PtY is being implemented there are normalized norms around the harmful practices as well as youth participation which take time to change.

The MTE concludes that sustainability is embedded in the PtY programme design and processes. To further strengthen the sustainability of the programme in the coming years, it is recommended to carefully navigate contextual barriers identified during the MTE as well as leverage the sustainability enabling factors such partnerships within the consortium to create linkages with other programmes and using the sustainability models derived from the PG MIS to develop and implement sustainability strategies that are even more context-responsive.

#### 4.4 Partnership

The partnership assessment surveys were based on self-assessment and thus indicative of the respondents' perceptions to the survey questions. A total of 84 interviews were completed in the 7 countries with a majority (23-27%) from Indonesia partners, 14 (17%) from Senegal and 9 (11%) from Netherlands with one participant not indicating their location.

*Table 11: Number of partnership survey responses by country*

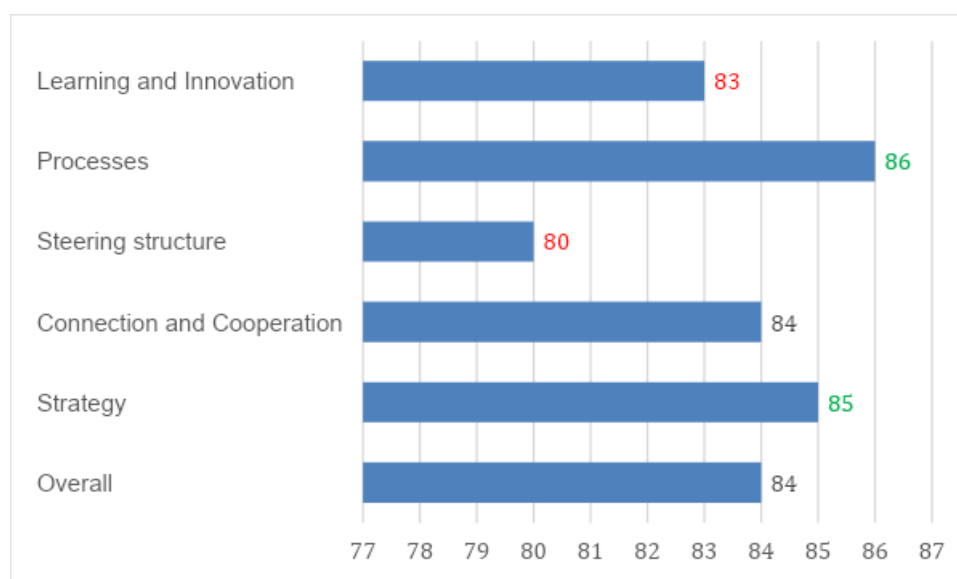
|                 | <b>n</b>  | <b>%</b>   |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Indonesia       | 23        | 27%        |
| Senegal         | 14        | 17%        |
| The Netherlands | 9         | 11%        |
| Kenya           | 8         | 10%        |
| Malawi          | 8         | 10%        |
| Ethiopia        | 6         | 7%         |
| Uganda          | 6         | 7%         |
| Ghana           | 5         | 6%         |
| South Africa    | 3         | 4%         |
| Botswana        | 1         | 1%         |
| Not indicated   | 1         | 1%         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>84</b> | <b>100</b> |

##### 4.4.1 Overall performance by building blocks.

The self-assessment of overall performance across all building blocks is captured by Fig 1. From the graph, there is a strong indication of high-quality work perceived across all building blocks with the overall score at 84. The block with the highest score of 86 is 'processes' which indicates

a strength in execution of a job effectively and efficiently. Learning & innovation (83) and steering structure (80) scored below the overall average.

Figure 3: Overall performance by building block



#### 4.4.2 Strategy building block.

The overall score for all countries under the strategy building block was 85. Areas that scored the lowest compared to the overall strategy score were on collective adjustment of strategies during the programme implementation for which the score was 83 and a common understanding and application of Gender Transformative Approach (81). Most of the respondents (98%) indicated that the strategy development process was inclusive as there was co-creation and consultations done with joint planning involving different country teams. However, despite the strategy being scored highly, some respondents indicated that whilst the process was collaborative and inclusive, at the inception some CMTs were not formed hence they were not actively involved which affected alignment of the strategy vision especially on understanding MIYP aspects.

*“For MIYP, currently the discussion has remained very siloed - mainly restricted to the global level (CHOICE) and to some extent regional level (Y-ACT, Sonke Gender Justice), but we have from the beginning of the programme struggled with how we want to approach MIYP as a partnership. Although we are now halfway through the partnership, a lot of country partners are either not aware of CHOICE's role as a technical partner or are carrying out MIYP related activities in silos.”*  
*-Netherlands.*

Some of the challenges noted under the block include competing initiatives and activities hinder country teams from participating in global and regional activities; lack of a joint vision and strategy and clear role of each partner in the programme regarding MIYP and staff changes and turnover within organisations in the consortium.

Despite the challenges, some of the opportunities for strategy development as noted by the respondents include collaboration between the local government and local CSOs as well as setting up of the regional platforms that are mainly working around youth issues such as women clubs or girl's clubs where young women leaders are trained and supported to raise their voices in decision making processes at the region at national level.

To improve the PtY strategy development, there is a need to support collaborative implementation of the program, bring all the consortium partners on board and ensure that the MIYP component of the programme is not only left to the YLOs but is a joint responsibility among the partners. Also, PtY should align more with other strategic partnerships that share in the vision and values, working in the same regions to enhance implementation of core programme strategies and include lessons learnt from countries such as Ethiopia and Uganda who are already engaging in exchange between strategic partnerships.

#### 4.4.3 Connection and Cooperation block

The overall country score was 84 with Ethiopia (92), Uganda (91) and Senegal (88) scoring highest and partners from Ghana and Netherlands scoring lowest (79 and 72 respectively). The respondents noted there was cooperation and collaboration of partner organisations in the implementation of the PtY programme at the country level with roles of each organisation in the consortium clearly defined. They also noted the need to involve the government and community stakeholders as it increased the buy in and the ownership of project interventions.

*“A good opportunity would be sharing work plans or Inception meeting, and whenever you have an activity with the government departments just to make sure that these that are strengthened, strengthened*

*partnership and collaboration.”*

*GYG Act*

The respondents from Malawi identified some challenges associated with connection and cooperation in the PtY programme. These included late disbursement of funds constraining their time to implement joint activities as well as the consortium having many technical working groups hence the useful information produced within these groups tends to be lost.

To enhance collaboration and connection the programme should consider some identified opportunities such as having value clarification workshops at different levels as well as joint capacity strengthening on MIYP. Such workshops have been conducted by CHOICE for MIYP value clarification. In order to further expand on this opportunity, investing in team building at all levels and team training is recommended as to create spaces in which partners can showcase and appreciate each other's effort and see how the partnership is more than the sum of the different parts. Also, youth-adult partnership and ensuring partners share risks and costs to catalyse resources to develop new innovations, products, and services could be considered.

Furthermore, it is recommended to allocate specific budget for joint activities in countries and scheduling such joint activities in work plans, establishment of a dissemination strategy especially through the quarterly update and reflection meeting where different TWGs share information as well as leveraging the relationship other partners have with the government to push their advocacy agenda and leverage the relationship to push policies and agendas that are their priority.

#### 4.4.4 Steering structure block

Partners from Senegal, Ethiopia, Uganda, Indonesia, and South Africa gave a relatively higher score compared to the overall score, with Kenya at 80% while those from Ghana, Malawi and Netherlands gave a relatively low score compared to the overall score which was 80%. The structures within the PtY programme are clear, with each structure's role such as GMT, CMTs, Coordination Lab and partners being understood by consortium members across the consortium as indicated by 77% of the respondents. The PtY consortium aims to have young people at all levels at the centre of programme implementation and the team has made it a practice to remain accountable to young people through feedback as indicated by 88% of the respondents.

*“The governance structure of the PtY is good and members of the CMT in Ghana incorporate youth participation in decision making. For instance, in Ghana there is a young person representing the CMT and taking active part in all decision-making processes of the CMT. ”*

*-Ghana*

However, the respondent also noted some challenges in the steering of the PtY programme. One of the challenges is the power struggles within the partnership at the country level as well as the

complexity of the structures. Further the internal communication and the clarity of southern leadership were also a challenge to the steering structure block. The survey respondent reported that within the Southern Leadership model there are many structures which often may lead to duplication as the partners in country teams are not even aware of these structures

Some opportunities to explore in the steering block include learning and sharing partnership best practices among country teams and political good will and buy-in on sharing power with the youth.

Moreover, to further improve the steering structure block, it is suggested to strengthen internal communication and to improve the coordination of activities; conduct discussions and sensitization sessions at the country level on Southern Leadership and how it functions and what their role is within this approach as well as continue listening to young people's voices and incorporating them in activity plans in the development process.

#### 4.4.5 Processes block

South Africa, Senegal, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi gave a relatively higher score compared to the overall score while those from Ghana, Indonesia and Netherlands gave a relatively low score compared to the overall score which was 86%. In general, the respondents expressed high satisfaction with the PtY consortium processes. According to the respondents, CMTs have dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and financial staff from the consortium partners who offer technical support. On knowledge management, the programme has made deliberate effort to create a folder that is accessible to all teams for programme documents.

*"I completely agree that the consortium in Ghana has a very strong system of implementation and measuring outcomes and ensuring compliance. Young people are also involved in the PMELR activities in Ghana. For instance, in Ghana, we have youth PMELR representative who take active part in monitoring, evaluation and learning activities."*  
-Ghana

Some of the challenges noted by the respondents are around clarity and inadequacy of budget and delayed disbursements (Malawi) which impact on implementation.

The PtY processes can leverage joint planning of initiatives throughout the implementation of the program. Also, continuous engagement, reflection and honest feedback is considered an opportunity to explore further which creates an opportunity for the programme teams to align their goals and expectations.

To enhance the programme processes, the MTE revealed that there should be adequate allocation of funds to support the YISG grantees, youth groups/networks, champions of change, Legal Literacy Volunteers (LLVs) and, youth PMELR team. This will ensure that the programme interventions are implemented effectively and efficiently. In addition, it is expected to support needs assessment and contextualization of the capacity strengthening for institution programmes and finance teams based on the assessment.

#### 4.4.6 Learning and Innovation Block

The overall score for the block was 83% with Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, South Africa, Ghana, and Indonesia giving a relatively higher score compared to the overall score while those from Malawi and Netherlands gave a relatively low score compared to the overall score. 86% of the survey respondents felt that lessons learned are documented and integrated in new activities which are incorporated in annual work plans and budgets.

*"Learning occurs at different levels in the different groups, this has been a big focus for PtY, however documentation is still something that needs to be worked upon, especially on lessons learnt and best practices, as PtY and not individual organisations."*  
-Uganda

The respondents note that there is a challenge in joint documentation on learning and best practices as well as the programme teams have to follow the programme plans hence less freedom to make innovations. Learning questions have been developed by the consortium but regular reflection on the learning questions would be recommended. Joint reflection with other

stakeholders at country level, district level and community level, helps the programme to learn and reflect on the changes that are required to improve programming. Further, documentation of achievements is another opportunity to showcase the programme results.

Therefore, to further improve on learning and innovation, the programme should jointly review set learning questions during the planning meetings and at the end of the year during harvesting outcomes to assess attainment of outcomes and identify lessons for partners in the consortium. The programme can also involve AGYW (through CSOs) in events and documentation of their stories. Documentation of best practices to provide visibility in what PtY does should reach as many stakeholders as possible.

#### *4.4.7 Collaboration with the Dutch Embassy*

In all 7 countries, collaboration with the Dutch embassy occurs at the country level. The respondents reported that at the TWG level, GSB and the GMT level, collaboration with the Dutch embassy takes place through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). At these levels the MFA and different TWGs such as the advocacy TWG organise events together.

*“And we have had contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and doing side events together for example. So, they would organise these but that's really what the ministry does, not with the Embassies. For example, we had a report launch that women would deliver at the residence of the Dutch ambassador in Rwanda. So, there is collaboration with the ministry as a member of the partnership”*  
*-Lobby and Advocacy TWG*

The respondents reported that at the country level, the PtY project has a good relationship with Dutch embassies. For example, in Uganda, Sonke Gender Justice initiated the first meeting, then the country team conducted regular meetings to update the programme commitments to MFA. The country teams are tasked to give the embassies briefs on the progress. The Dutch embassy also collaborates with the country teams to implement activities such as celebration of national days that are relevant to the program. Even countries like Malawi that do not have a Dutch Embassy have managed to meet with the emissaries from the embassy and continue to work with them on the programme.

*“I can confidently speak about Kenya, where they're using the Dutch embassy as a partner. And so, at some point, even the Dutch embassy was part of the consortium as a silent CMT member and hence cannot make decisions.”*  
*-Coordination Lab*

The MTE reveals that through the relationships created with the Dutch embassies in the countries, the PtY programme works with other Dutch funded programmes to implement activities that contribute to their shared goals. For example, in Malawi the programme works with projects such as She Leads, Generation G and other Dutch funded projects to implement activities as they are in the same thematic area. In Ethiopia, the programme is part of the Dutch funded programmes in the SRHR alliance, and they collaborate with programmes such as Break Free, Right Here Right Now and She lives. The Dutch embassies in the countries also support reflection and review meetings where the country teams present their experiences, progresses and challenges.

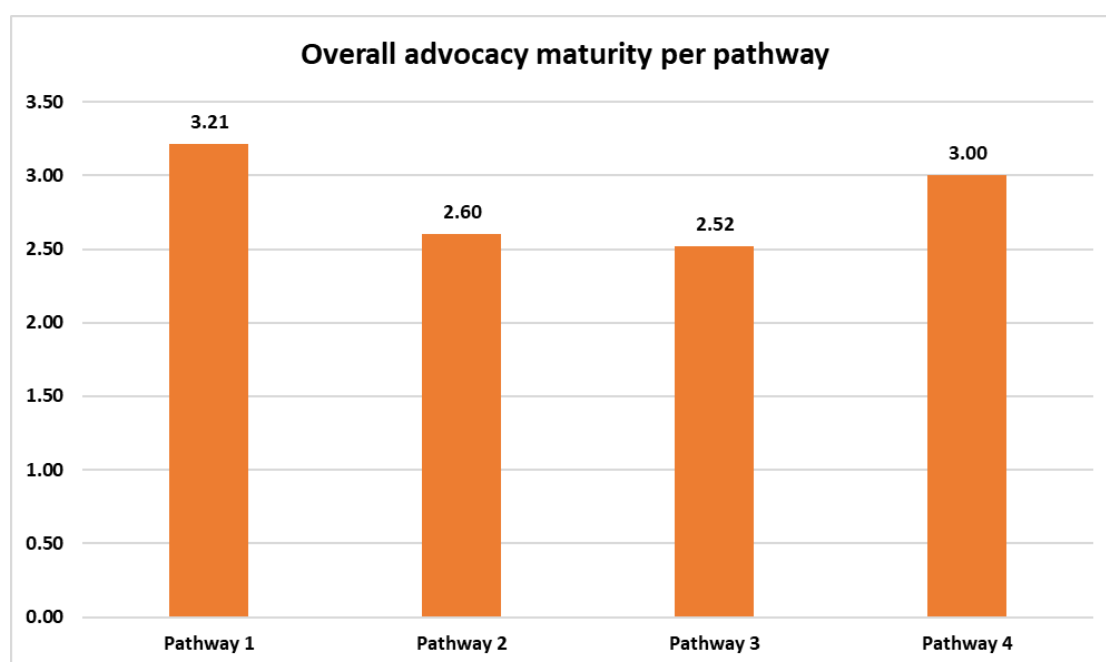
However, in some countries like Ghana, the PtY country teams view the Dutch embassy as a donor and not really as a partner. This is unfortunate as the embassies as representatives of MFA are strategic partners to the PtY consortium and they are very much informed about the country's development, opportunities for harmonisation with other SRHR and youth engagement initiatives and advocacy windows for the programme. The relationship with the embassies can also be reinforced through frequent meetings to ensure that the embassy is in the know of what PtY is doing and at the same time the countries could update the embassies on their progress and the challenges they are facing.

## 4.5 Reflection on the state of advocacy

Since every country programme has different geopolitical and sociocultural contexts, an advocacy maturation assessment was done for each country to assess the stage of advocacy efforts. The evaluation team has ranked each pathway based on whether the components in the pathways were at stage 1 (starting), stage 2 (developing), stage 3 (consolidation) and stage 4 (sustaining)<sup>1</sup>. For a country to be at different levels of maturity in advocacy, different parameters were considered for each component in the pathways as indicated in the document. A rating of 1 (starting) is indicative of a lack of systems, capacity, structures and mechanisms to support advocacy initiatives. This stage requires urgent and heavy investment of time, capacity development and or strengthening, financial support, technical support and lobbying. A rating of 2 (developing) is indicative of the existence of some aspects of advocacy mechanisms, but not well institutionalised to support advocacy initiatives. This stage requires a lot of support to strengthen systems as they may have the basic advocacy structures in place. A rating of 3 (consolidating) is indicative of systems and structures in place that can support advocacy. However, there may be some elements that are lacking that need to be strengthened to sustainably support advocacy. This stage requires support to ensure that the gains made to reach here can be sustained by strengthening the few parameters that are not yet supporting sustainability. A rating of 4 (sustaining) is indicative of a mature advocacy system that can sustainably hold on its own. Such a system has adequate staff (number and skills), policies and procedures, funding, stakeholder goodwill and ownership as well as the backing of legal frameworks.

Overall, in advocacy maturation, pathways 1 and 4 were best performing scoring 3.21 and 3 respectively indicating they are both at consolidating stage while Pathway 2 was the least scoring at developing stage with a score of 2.60 followed by pathway 3 at 2.52 as indicated in Figure 4.

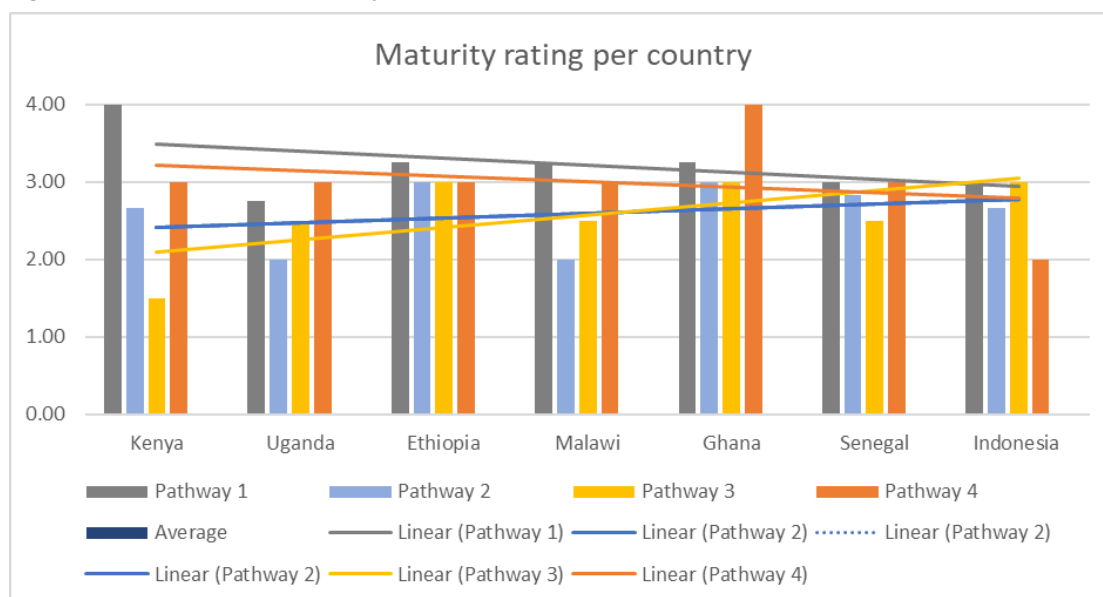
*Figure 4: Overall Advocacy Maturity*



According to Figure 5 below, In Kenya, pathway 1 was the best performing at 4 followed by Pathway 3 at 3 while Pathway 3 was the least performing at 1.50. In Uganda all the pathways were below 3 with Pathway 4 being the highest scoring at 3 while pathway 2 was the least performing at 2.00. In Ethiopia, Pathway 1 was the best performing in advocacy maturity at 3.25 while Pathway 2 and 4 were least performing at 3. In Malawi, Pathway 1 was the best performing at 3.25 followed by Pathway 4 at 2.63 while Pathway 2 was the least performing at 2.00. Pathway 4 was the best performing at 4.00 in Ghana followed by Pathway 1 at 3.25 with Pathway 2 being the least performing at 3.00. In Senegal, two pathways were at a score of 3 while the others were

below 3: with Pathway 1 and 4 being best performing at 3.00 while Pathway 3 was least performing at 2.50. In Indonesia, Pathway 1 was the best performing with 3.00 while Pathway 4 was the least performing at 2.00.

Figure 5: Maturation Per Country



In Pathway 1 (Strengthening youth to claim civic space), the project is at a consolidating stage with an average rating of 3.21. Kenya had the highest scoring under pathway one with a rating of 4 followed by Ethiopia, Malawi, at 3.25 while Uganda was the lowest scoring under with an average rating of 2.75. Further, Youth perspectives against harmful practices e.g., SGBV, unintended practices component of pathway 1 was the best performing at 3.29 with Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia scoring 4 while Youth meaningful engagement in Policy and decision making in SRHR was the lowest scoring 2.86 as indicated in the table below.

Table 12: Pathway 1

| Component                                                                    | Stage of advocacy maturation |        |          |        |       |         |           | Average Rating |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-----------|----------------|
|                                                                              | Kenya                        | Uganda | Ethiopia | Malawi | Ghana | Senegal | Indonesia |                |
| PATHWAY 1: Strengthening youth to claim civic space                          |                              |        |          |        |       |         |           |                |
| Youth sensitized on claiming civic space                                     | 4                            | 2      | 3        | 4      | 3     | 3       | 4         | 3.29           |
| Youth perspectives against harmful practices e.g. SGBV, unintended practices | 4                            | 4      | 4        | 3      | 3     | 3       | 3         | 3.43           |
| Youth actions against harmful practices e.g., SGBV, unintended practices     | 4                            | 3      | 3        | 3      | 4     | 3       | 2         | 3.14           |

|                                                                   |   |      |      |      |      |   |   |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---|------|------|------|------|---|---|-------------|
| Youth meaningful engagement in Policy and decision making in SRHR | 4 | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3 | 3 | 3.00        |
| <b>Average Rating</b>                                             | 4 | 2.75 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3 | 3 | <b>3.21</b> |

Ghana, Malawi, Indonesia, Kenya and Ethiopia had all its components in stage 3 and 4. For Uganda 2 out of the 4 components reached stage 3, and 2 components were at stage 2, that is youth being sensitised on claiming civic space and Youth meaningful engagement in Policy and decision making in SRHR. Senegal had all its components in stage 1 and 2. The respondents noted that to ensure the components under pathway 1 reach the sustaining stage, the countries should:

- Emphasise continuous capacity strengthening and training for the youth advocates/champions on sexual and reproductive rights and other sensitive SRHR issues
- Plan comprehensive parent and young people conversations, to change the perceptions, attitudes, and practices of the parents on SRHR issues that young people are facing.
- Support the establishment of safe spaces in communities that don't have any and support the operationalization of already existing safe spaces in communities that have them.
- Increase sensitization at community levels and in so doing also increase the engagement, and participation of the community champions (i.e., religious, and cultural leaders) in PtY activities at community level.
- Support the youth to intensify advocacy and lobbying with duty bearers and demand SRHR services.
- Facilitate forging of stronger partnerships with government agencies and other service delivering CSOs.

Under pathway 2 (Strengthening civil society), The PtY programme was at developing stage with an average rating of 2.45 with Ethiopia and Ghana leading with a scoring of 3.00 while Malawi, Uganda and Senegal were the least performing at respectively 2, 2 and 1.83 followed by Indonesia and Kenya at 2.67. The Youth Meaningful Engagement by CSOs And Improved lobbying advocacy and research capability of CSOs were the best performing components of pathway 2 with an average rating of 2.86 with Ghana scoring highest at 4 in both components. The Effective Accountability mechanisms component was the least performing with a rating of 1.83 with the majority of the countries being at the starting and developing stage with only Ethiopia being at the consolidating stage.

Table 13: Pathway 2

| Component                                                  | Stage of advocacy maturation |        |          |        |       |         |           | Average Rating |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-----------|----------------|
|                                                            | Kenya                        | Uganda | Ethiopia | Malawi | Ghana | Senegal | Indonesia |                |
| PATHWAY 2: Strengthening civil society                     |                              |        |          |        |       |         |           |                |
| Youth Meaningful Engagement by CSOs                        | 3                            | 2      | 3        | 2      | 4     | 3       | 3         | 2.86           |
| Improved lobbying advocacy and research capability of CSOs | 4                            | 2      | 3        | 2      | 4     | 3       | 2         | 2.86           |

|                                                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| CSO use of Gender and Social Inclusion lens in programming cycle | 1    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | N/A  | 2.33 |
| Gender Transformative Approach                                   | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | N/A  | 2.50 |
| CSO inclusion in Government decision making on SRHR              | 4    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 2.86 |
| Effective of Accountability mechanisms                           | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 1    | 2    | N/A  | 2.00 |
| <b>Average Rating</b>                                            | 2.67 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.83 | 2.67 | 2.60 |

Only Ghana, Indonesia, and Kenya had more than 2 components at stage 3 and 4. Ethiopia, Uganda, Senegal, and Malawi had most components in stages 1 and 2. The respondents in the advocacy stated that for the countries to move to the sustaining stage of advocacy under pathway 2, they should do the following:

- Make an effort to put in practice all the new advocacy and lobbying skills acquired through the PtY programme.
- Continue to make policies on GESI and safeguarding known to all staff and stakeholders.
- Provide innovative reporting channels to encourage reporting of cases of UP, SGBV, CM and FGM/C.
- Popularise reporting mechanisms for gender inequalities and safeguarding issues and support the CSOs to build linkages with institutions within the districts that support gender related issues such as the probation office, health facilities, police, and GBV shelters.
- Focus on increasing the capacity strengthening for the rural based CSOs in resource mobilisation, partnership building, and meaningful engagement of youth among others.
- Develop guidelines beyond safeguarding and disseminate them, and support interventions towards continuous capacity and awareness creation on the importance of acting on gender related issues.

Under Pathway 3 (Changing Social Norms) had 2 components. The PtY programme is at developing stage as indicated by the scoring of 2.50 with Ethiopia, Ghana and Indonesia scoring the highest at 3.00 and Kenya being the lowest at 1.50. PtY influence on public and political debate on SRHR issues component had the highest scoring at 2.57 with Kenya scoring the least at 1 followed by public support for family planning and prevention of harmful practices and SGBV component at 2.33 with only Ethiopia and Ghana being at consolidating stage as indicated in the table below.

Table 14: Pathway 3

| Component                                                                       | Stage of advocacy maturation |        |          |        |       |         |           | Average Rating |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-----------|----------------|
|                                                                                 | Kenya                        | Uganda | Ethiopia | Malawi | Ghana | Senegal | Indonesia |                |
| PATHWAY 3: Changing social norms                                                |                              |        |          |        |       |         |           |                |
| PtY influence on public and political debate on SRHR issues                     | 1                            | 3      | 3        | 3      | 3     | 3       | 3         | 2.71           |
| Public support for family planning and prevention of harmful practices and SGBV | 2                            | 2      | 3        | 2      | 3     | 3       | N/A       | 2.5            |
| Average Rating                                                                  | 1.50                         | 2.50   | 3.00     | 2.50   | 3.00  | 3.00    | 3.00      | 2.64           |

All countries except Indonesia had one or both components in stage 2 and 3, while Malawi and Uganda also had 1 component at stage 2. To ensure all components reach the sustaining stage of maturity, the respondent reported that the countries should:

- Develop sustainability plans to ensure continuation of PtY activities beyond the Programme period.
- Invest in generating more public debate from social media posts and use top radio stations to generate public and political debate.
- Increase young people's involvement and engagement in the implementation of the programme activities.
- Prioritise continuous capacity strengthening and sensitization for community members, as well as the young people.
- Improve coherency with local government (district) through the integration of accountability mechanisms to address HP and SGBV at all levels.
- Develop a strategy to work with the police to ensure SGBV perpetrators are prosecuted.

The PtY programme under pathway 4 was at the consolidating stage as indicated by the average rating of 3.0 with Ghana leading at 4 and Indonesia scoring the lowest at 2 as shown in the table below.

Table 15: Pathway 4

| <b>PATHWAY 4: Policies and policy implementation</b>                                                                                                               |       |        |          |        |       |         |           |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-----------|---------|
|                                                                                                                                                                    | Kenya | Uganda | Ethiopia | Malawi | Ghana | Senegal | Indonesia | Average |
| Legal frameworks to promote, enforce, implement, and monitor equality and non-discrimination and decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices, and SGBV | 3     | 3      | 3        | 3      | 4     | 3       | 2         | 3       |
| <b>Average</b>                                                                                                                                                     | 3     | 3      | 3        | 3      | 4     | 3       | 2         | 3       |

Under pathway 4 (policies and policy implementation), all countries other than Indonesia (stage 2) were at stage of maturity 3 and only Ghana being at stage 4. To aid all countries move to stage 4, the MTE revealed that the countries need to do the following:

- Identify some key policies and laws and monitor their implementation in the PtY districts and communities.
- Maintain strong partnerships with government, CSOs, and other stakeholders to ensure continued promotion and implementation of SRHR policies and programmes.
- Support and strengthen the capacity of the district, as well as CSOs to oversee and monitor frameworks in place, and ensure the implementation of the policies.
- Focus on replication of best practices.

#### 4.6 Reflection on the PtY Theory of Change

The Power to Youth (PtY) Theory of Change (TOC) was developed through a co-creation process. Amref was implementing other programmes in a consortium in which they brought the partners on board to develop the project proposal with the TOC. For instance, in the Dutch funded 'Yes, I Do programme', from 2015 - 2020 Amref was in an alliance with Plan Nederland, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, KIT, and Rutgers whose aim was the elimination of child marriage (CM) and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and the reduction of teenage pregnancy (TP). The programme created a platform to co-create the PtY programme and continue implementing the learnings from this project as well as other projects. In the initial stages, the partners and the countries were identified and other partners such as Sonke Gender Justice were invited to join the process.

In each country, co-creation workshops were conducted involving local partners (CSOs), Ministry of Health, youth-led organisations, and young people. However, because the programme had not chosen the country-based partners, the workshops were consultation meetings with youth organisations of various backgrounds like youth with disability, to contribute to the overall TOC. The draft TOC and the framework were already in place before the consortium members consulted with the country level partners. At the global level, the TOC was consolidated including programme activities and interventions based on the other project learnings.

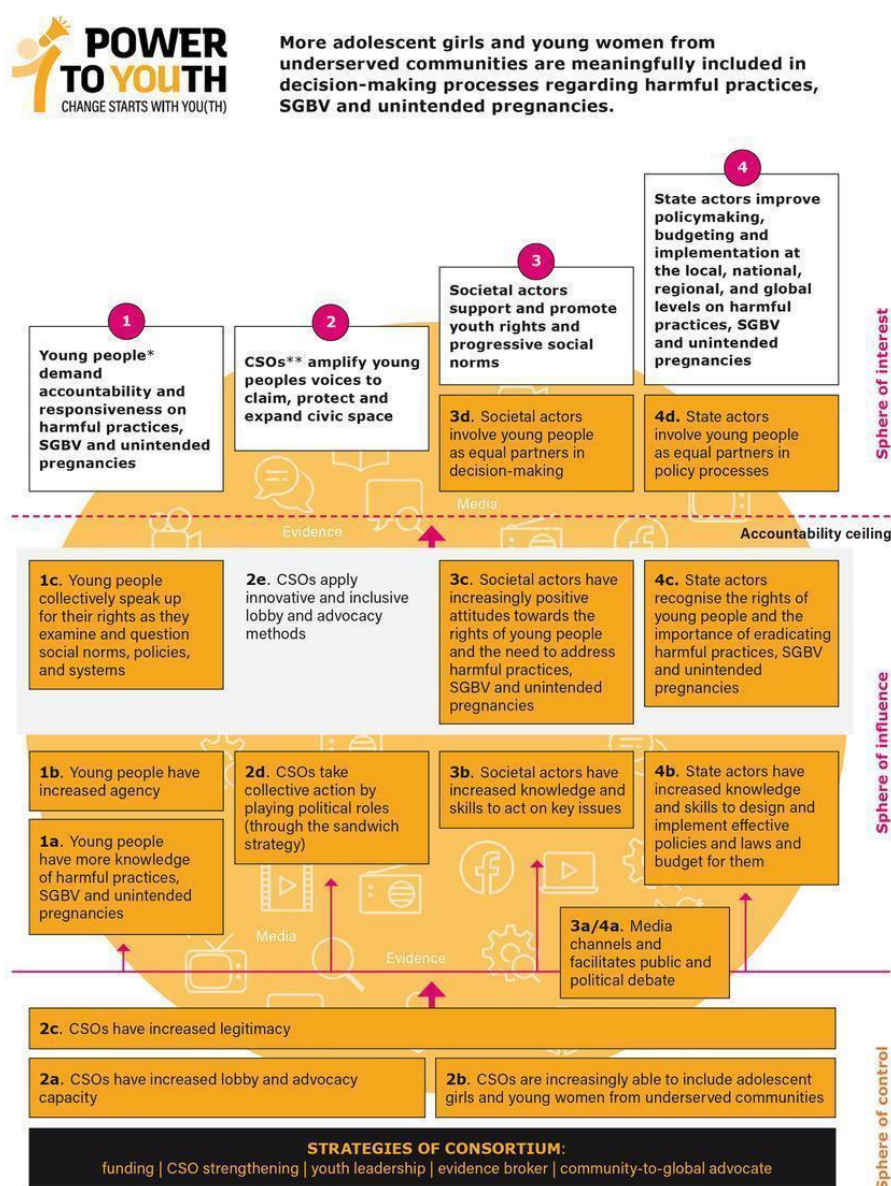
*"During design or co-creation time for the TOC, the PtY involved all the stakeholders like local CSOs, young people, implementing organisations and so on. So that just we could have different perspectives. Especially really, we were very interested like to have young people"*  
-Amref Ethiopia

The involvement of the country level partners during the consultation process supported the contextualization of the PTY programme to address the pressing needs of each country. The KII respondents noted that each country was able to identify one harmful practice that they could focus on and become an entry point for the programme in that country. Contextualization of the programme by involving stakeholders and by identifying priority issues in each country has allowed for more ownership.

The Power to Youth (PtY) Theory of Change (TOC) is built around desired behavioural changes across four groups of stakeholders. The programme addresses three key issues: harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage, unintended pregnancies, and SGBV. The partnership aims to raise public support, advocate for improved policies and laws, and strengthen civil society to amplify young people's voices to claim, protect and expand civic space. To do so, PtY engages an innovative gender-transformative strategy that equips youth leaders and civil society organisations (CSOs) to address the key issues. Next to a gender-transformative approach, the PtY partnership has fully embraced the principle of meaningful and inclusive youth participation. As young people are our key actors and key impact group, they are actively included in decision-making processes, as well as the design and implementation of key strategies.

The figure on the next page shows the ToC.

Figure 6: PtY Theory of Change



\*Young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, from underserved communities

\*\*CSOs include Youth-Led Organizations (YLOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Women-Led Organizations (WLOs)

The MTE included reflections on the Theory of Change. Partly, the reflection was done by PtY stakeholders and guided by the global consultants while on the other hand the reflection on the ToC resulted from the extensive outcome harvesting analysis described in the beginning of the effectiveness chapter. The review shows that most progress is witnessed in pathway 1 and 4. Pathway 2 and 3 remain equally valid but so far less progress is seen. It has also been concluded that pathway 1 and 2 sometimes overlap as the work conducted by CSOs led by youth could either be categorised under pathway 1 or 2.

When assessing the likelihood that all four pathway outcomes will be achieved in 2025, the PtY country teams generally feel that all pathway outcomes could be achieved except for the outcome

linked to pathway 3. The work with mobilising community stakeholders is found to be the most challenging across the countries.

Furthermore, the outcome harvesting analysis shows the high relevance of the ultimate pathway outcomes as goals of the PtY programme. However, from the outcome harvesting data some proposed changes to the pathways could be considered. For example, on pathway 1, there are no outcomes harvested that illustrate youth having increased agency. At the same time there are numerous examples of youth engaging with decision makers and even of youth participating in decision making processes.

Similarly, for pathway 2, there are no concrete examples of CSOs using innovative lobby and advocacy methods. However, CSOs have clearly enabled youth to influence decision making processes.

For pathway 3, societal actors demonstrating positive attitudes are witnessed in various forms of verbal or written commitments and could be considered to be reformulated as such.

Finally, for pathway 4, it could be considered to distinguish between the level of youth engagement with state actors and the result in terms of policy changes of the said engagement.

The envisioned change processes in the ToC pathways rely on assumptions, which participants in the OH workshops reflected upon. The validity of each assumption has been confirmed through desk review, outcome harvesting and key informant interviews, and qualified as follows.

#### Pathway 1: Youth

1. It is assumed that strengthening the capacities of a diverse range of young people and addressing the power dynamics among them increases support for inclusivity and gender equality.

##### *Reflections:*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

The PtY project has improved and strengthened the capacity of young people on a broad range of topics such as budget making process, policy, communication, lobby and advocacy skills, safeguarding knowledge, gender transformative approach, etc.

However, there is a need to investigate key activities that promote youth-adult engagement, including with the duty bearers and key community elders.

2. It is also assumed that empowered and organised young people, including AGYW can claim civic spaces because they have power in numbers and can influence social discourses.

##### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

PtY has continued to empower young people who are now in organised groups/platforms including key decision-making spaces at the national, county and local level TWGs, sector working groups and leadership positions. They are now influencing key youth development decisions and agendas. Although there is a need to continue supporting/empowering more grassroots youth who will continue to create a solidarity and youth movement to accelerate change in their spaces.

#### Pathway 2: CSOs

Originally there were no assumptions formulated for pathway 2 in the PtY Theory of Change. Based on OH participants' input, the Global consultants propose to add the following three indicators for pathway 2 CSOs:

- CSOs have legitimacy to work on behalf of AGYW
- CSOs have access to decision-making platforms and spaces to influence SRHR and youth related decision-making
- Organised and networked CSOs can have more impact

### Pathway 3: Societal actors

3. We assume that increased knowledge and societal debate will contribute to societal actors having more positive attitudes towards young people's rights.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

The PtY project has trained and engaged societal actors such as community leaders and religious leaders on how to improve and ensure community wellbeing as they create favourable community spaces for the youth. To some extent some societal actors still don't consider young people as equal partners in key decision-making platforms, hence limiting their meaningful participation for development.

4. We expect that increased positive attitudes lead to an increased willingness to involve young people as equal partners in decision-making.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

### Pathway 4: State Actors

5. It is assumed that state actors' recognition of young people's rights and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies will come easier when social norms are changing in society, when evidence-based and enhanced media reporting contributes to social and political debates, and when reformists or progressive actors within governments are changing the system from within.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid**.

However, the condition for social norms change to take place before state actors recognize the rights of YP and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, seems far-fetched and difficult. Nevertheless the elements in the assumption regarding the evidence base contributing to enhanced recognition remains certainly valid.

### General

6. When informed, persuaded, or pressured by CSOs, state and societal actors change their laws, policies, norms, and practices to be more sustainable, equitable, and inclusive.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries..

Examples are Youth charters and the subsequent advertisement of the position of youth coordinator. Another example is MoUs being established between state actors and youth.

7. Compliance with laws and policies is not exclusively related to state actors but also involves societal actors.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

Societal actors play an important role as gatekeepers and can either influence community compliance to laws/policies and hence their involvement is key. A multi sectoral approach is key in enforcing laws eg FGM and GBV laws enforced by cultural and religious leaders.

8. Exposure to alternative discourses and values, including through young peoples' voices, contributes to changes in gender norms and attitudes.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

Alternative discourse and values provide an opportunity for community members to reconsider some norms. Youth utilise innovative approaches to contribute to change in gender norms e.g. art

for advocacy on SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Other examples include inter-generational dialogues and community debates conducted.

9. Involving young people in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and follow-up enhances policies' effectiveness in addressing harmful practices.

#### *Reflection*

This assumption is deemed to be **still valid** for all countries.

Young people have been involved in policy formulation. Also, through advocacy platforms established in each country level, youth monitor and follow up on policies. This has led to youth-responsive bills being developed and implemented in some countries.

## 4.7 Cross cutting issues

### 4.7.1 Meaningful Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP)

The very core of the Power to You(th) programme is that it is youth-centric and that the voice of young people is heard at all levels of decision-making (individual, family, neighbourhood, school, community, state, regional and international level). That means that young people from various backgrounds (interests, hobbies, age, city-village, etc.) are involved and engaged from the beginning of Power to You(th) decision-making processes throughout programme implementation, evaluation and continuous adaptation. So instead of young people being consulted after initial decisions are made, the consortium believes that young people's voices and understanding of their own needs and issues should be embraced right from the start. This guiding principle was taken to heart when forming the core decision-making bodies of the programme: CMTs are established as youth-adult partnerships between Partner A and Partner B (B being a youth-led organisation).

Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation has been integrated both internally in the PtY consortium governance structures, as well as externally in the advocacy programmatic work as noted by the respondents. A technical working group was established from the start to generate and disseminate knowledge of PtY internal stakeholders on MIYP and how to integrate it in internal governance processes and external advocacy work. Regarding MIYP in the PtY governance, the MTE found that the structure for meaningful youth participation in the consortium is very clear and needs to be continued, with measures put in place to strengthen the voices of young people to influence crucial decisions that directly affect them. The MTE found that PtY should continue listening to young people's voices and incorporating them in activity plans in the development process. Internally in the consortium's governance, the voice of strategic youth led partners in the consortium could be enhanced at country and global level.

Meaningful and inclusive youth participation has been a key strategy in external advocacy as well. For example, in Malawi, the PtY programme placed emphasis on strengthening the capacity of young people to lobby for meaningful inclusion and participation in community interface and dialogue interactions. Hereby PtY aims at ensuring that issues that affect the youth, more importantly girls and young women, are taken into consideration and right decisions about them are made. The capacity of District and Community levels, Youth networks, Youth Advocates, Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) and duty bearers have been built in a variety of areas of skills and knowledge in MIYP, Gender Transformation Approaches (GTAs), Sexual Gender Based Violence reporting, referral pathways, and social accountability monitoring. This was meant to raise a cadre of youth champions and advocates and improve youth led and focused advocacy and accountability; and increase young people participation in political and civic spaces and deal decisively with issues that affect them.

*"First of all we are a youth- lead organisation, meaning that the organisation is purely led by young people. We want them to lead the change and let young people live their dreams. I think when we see PtY programme, we are in the right company and right place to champion meaningful participation of the youth in all spheres of life"*  
-KII with Leader of Youth NGO Ghana

The youth advocates realised that there was no youth representation in the community structures of village development committees, area development committees and other governance structures. It was also found that unlike other programmes which focused on SRHR, PtY ensured the active and meaningful participation of youth at all levels of project implementation.

In Uganda, the findings from the MTE revealed that there was a slight increment in knowledge of child protection risks and behaviours among community members. At midterm 667 young people who participated in policy and decision-making bodies perceive their participation as meaningful (from 0 at baseline). This tremendous increase was attributed by the respondents to training and mentorships provided by the PtY programme, which helped youth realise the importance of their participation in policy and decision-making bodies. As a way of ensuring Meaningful Inclusive Youth Participation, EREWO, a CSO in Mbale, passed a resolution to have young people as part of their governance board. EREWO has put this resolution into practice and now has youth representatives on its board.

In Ghana, the involvement of youth-led and women-led organisations through the YISG initiative shows a perfect example of operationalization of meaningful youth participation by the youth and young people themselves. The CSOs are supporting meaningful and inclusive youth participation through community dialogue sessions and discussions where the youth are able to demand for action from societal actors. They have also supported young people to draft petitions which were presented to state actors. Additionally, youth are fully engaged in all aspects of the PtY programme and other activities being implemented by the partners. Based on this, the partners were found to be at the sustaining stage when it comes to meaningful and inclusive youth participation.

Further in Senegal, training on young people's participation empowered the youth to get involved in the political life of their community.

*"It was through Power to You(th) that I discovered the Meaningful Youth Participation approach that I decided to get involved in the decision-making bodies of my neighbourhood and to join the Neighborhood Council, which is a body that implements local citizen actions in the neighbourhood"*  
- KII with Leader of Youth NGO Senegal

This involvement of new social actors in social mobilisation for meaningful participation of young people, as well as the fight against harmful practices and family planning, will be done in consultation with the organisers of the programme.

In Kenya, PtY has created a platform for young people to hold duty bearers accountable on issues affecting them. Cases of unintended pregnancies, school dropout, mental health, SGBV and FGM were common, but the programme has enabled adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in the villages to start talking about and address these issues. The programme directly engaged the AGYW and built their capacity to speak out on issues affecting them. The formation of AGYW cycles has helped to bring together many girls and young mothers to advocate for ending FGM and improving SRHR. The facilitation of transport allowance in activities has helped some young people to start their own income generating initiatives. Further, PtY empowers and inspires the youth to have a voice to defend themselves and gives them the courage to express challenges they are passing through in the community where there is youth involvement in parliamentary sittings.

*"My actions when PtY came, personally I did not know many things concerning law/policy, budgeting issues, authorities around me-my enlighten changed to know what is happening, it has changed my attitude on making noise, hence I know the right protocol to be followed and meaningful and inclusive youth participation"*  
-KII with Leader of Youth CBO, Kenya

In Indonesia, youth have gained soft skills, especially in public speaking, effective oral & written communication, SRHR literacy, digital literacy, leadership, teamwork, and negotiation. The youth

have gained a deep understanding of child marriage cases, what causes child marriage such as gender roles bias, child engagement, poverty, religious texts interpretation and local culture. The combination of knowledge on key issues and new skills acquired through training has enabled them to engage in the decision making process at village and district level.

Although meaningful and inclusive youth participation was generally implemented in a most effective way, some barriers are also encountered in doing so. According to the respondents, these are for instance unequal power relations between young people and the older generations. To address this, PtY has ensured that the country management teams (what is called a Partner A which is typically an organisation which does not focus on youth), are staffed by the older generation in terms of the scales of age, while the partner B is a youth-led organisation. Further, the programme has continuous capacity strengthening to strengthen the youth led CSOs structures which addresses the unequal power relations. This facilitates their cooperation and integration of youth-led organisations in the decision-making process within the PtY project in the country.

Another barrier is formed by some religious and cultural beliefs and the harmful practices emanating from these, as stated by the respondents. To address this, the programme has focused on gender transformational approaches, which focus on working with social structural drivers like the gatekeepers of communities to influence the switch from harmful norms and practices.

*"We see that sort of contributes to the leaders understanding just how harmful these practices are, understanding the issue around human rights and how these harmful practices go against human rights. So, we try and work with those, those particular people"*

*-GYG Sonke Gender Justice*

The programme is also working closely with the media to change the narratives around perception of young people and the perceptions of these harmful practices. The TWGs leverage on calendar days the International Youth Day to conduct webinars, which creates a platform to continue cross learning with these young people.

## **Youth Voices through change stories**

The MTE has captured the impacts and outcomes among the youth being engaged in PtY through their stories, voices and experiences, which convey a powerful picture of both their empowerment and their evolving needs in each country. In Indonesia, youth learned from interaction with PtY some essential skills they need to be successful in supporting PtY and their future, which we call soft skills. They also have a deep understanding of what causes or perpetuates CM, such as gender roles bias, poverty, specific interpretations of religious texts and local culture. Thus, they can engage with decision making processes at village & district level and have strong commitment to support PtY key issues. One story even mentioned the sacrifice by a girl to sell the family cattle to fund her participation in a youth innovation event (competition). However, there is a lack of capacity by youth to plan activities to bridge the gaps between what they dream and reality.

In Uganda, based on the youth stories, the MTE established that the youth actively, and meaningfully participated in PtY activities such as capacity strengthening, sensitization, and dialogue meetings. This has not only increased their level of awareness, and knowledge, but has also boosted their confidence to stand up and raise their voices against harmful practices and demand for their SRH rights as noted by youths in Mbale, Bukwo and Kalangala. Youth also pointed to an improvement in their awareness, and knowledge, of harmful practices such as S/GBV, FGM, and UP etc., their rights, and how to access the necessary SRHR services:

*"Through PtY I got to know where to report the cases for instance I got to know that the probation office is one of the places I can report cases of S/GBV, and harmful practices, and that I can seek more help from different people or offices such as police, LC 1 chairman and district leaders to give a hand. I also got to know the entire process of how to*

*handle the perpetrators where he/she should be taken and to follow up on those files opened against them.”  
-Youth in Kalangala Uganda*

The capacity strengthening and sensitization contributed to the positive change by youth, societal actors, and community members on SRHR, and harmful practices. The youth noted that they were more empowered and confident; and were increasingly acting against harmful practices, and raising their voices to demand for their SRH rights. The youth champions flagged their need to be provided with transport to enable them to sensitise fellow youth, and follow up on cases as well as provide platforms where the young people can give feedback, and actively participate in decision making. To further be impactful, the youth identified the need to involve survivors of GBV and teenage pregnancy to talk to fellow peers, and share their stories of success to help change the young people's perception, and attitudes towards SRHR, and harmful practices increasing their confidence to stand against harmful practices in the community.

In Ghana, the youth noted that through the LLVs' efforts to sensitise and educate the community on the importance of education and reproductive health, teenage mothers have been encouraged to resume their studies, which was not the case before the PtY interventions. Sensitization is helping teenage mothers overcome social stigma associated with being a young mother. The youth trained by PtY are on the forefront as champions who educate adolescents in school and speak on SRHR, which was previously considered a taboo. Being members of platforms such as Movement of Youth (MoY) and Young Female Platform has given the youth advocates an opportunity to use their skills in peer-to-peer education and sensitization:

*“As a member of Movement of Youth (MoY) in Kpandai district, I got the first opportunity to do this in December 2022 when I visited the Kpandai Girls Model School and sensitised adolescent girls on SRHR after receiving training from PtY tea. The adolescents found me relatable and approachable as I spoke openly about my experiences and used examples that girls in the schools and in community could relate to”-  
Female Youth from Kpandai*

Through advocacy by the Youth Initiative Small Grant (YISG) grantees, the youth in different communities in Ghana such as Buipe, Yapei, Sankpala, and Bonyenasi are part of health management committees, so they have a say in how health services are delivered in their communities. The youths engaged through the YISG have continued to advocate for the inclusion of more youth-friendly services in the health centre within the community to increase access to SRHR services. Further, the youth champions are sensitizing the communities on harmful practices such as FGM which has seen some of the community members abandon the practices.

In Kenya the formation of the Youth Parliament has been a great way for the youth to air out their issues and charter their way forward as well as demand for accountability from duty bearers regarding PtY thematic areas. The multi-sectoral and intergenerational approach as well as the Youth Parliament has created an avenue where the youth and adults come together to discuss key issues in the community. The PtY programme has trained champions who are also conducting peer to peer and adult education on SRHR and harmful practices.

*“I played the part of the youth aspect especially in political part of the programme because we were able to educate people about certain programmes that would change the community in the near future so my role was to educate people and awaken that call to the youth so they can understand what they can do and what they need to do. There was a time we engaged the MCAs, and we were able to develop frameworks including the teachings to the county assembly; one on sand harvesting and another one on paid internships for the interns working under the county level. We had another meeting with the area advisory chaired by the county commissioner and we were able to engage them and, we were able to link them to the Power to Youth project.”- Youth Senate Member, Kajiado County-Kenya*

Further through sensitization, people got knowledge on GBV and policies that regulate the same and youth got enlightened by knowing their rights and self-esteem has been built to an extent that they can speak out to fight for their rights. The youth in Kenya highlighted the need for the programme to incorporate more CSOs through capacity strengthening and network building, to develop a manual on child marriage, unintended pregnancies for community mobilizers to use during their outreaches. Further it should engage young males, spouses of the young mothers as well as the parents of the AGYW on their roles, facilitate provision of sanitary towels, economic empowerment, and knowledge on contraceptives. Also, the programme should document the success stories, create forums for storytelling, use different media to share these stories.

Youths in Malawi who had chosen to be youth advocates were trained on advocacy and lobbying, lobbying for police involvement and response to issues of gender-based violence. Further, the youth advocates in different districts in Malawi are now advocating for improved SRHR services especially on offering youth-friendly services to increase their utilisation among the youth.

*“On 26th June, the District Health office launched mobile outreach Youth Friendly Services whereby health workers’ teams move from one corner to another providing youth friendly SRH information and services. Many youths (figures not compiled yet) are now receiving information to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health lives and have access to services to prevent pregnancies and STIs. Currently the youth are lobbying for a greater contraceptive method mix as community mobile services are only providing short term contraceptive methods that do not require a test before a lot of requirements”- Youth in Machinga.*

The youth advocates in Malawi were trained on advocacy and sexual and reproductive health have continued to engage the community through community leaders such as the traditional chiefs on the issue of child marriages especially on rampant harmful practice of betrothal (local name chitomero) as girls are leaving school to get married. The community members and leaders have recently declared that the practice of betrothal to minors should be illegal, and culprits will be charged and pay heavy fines. Also, through training on MIYP, the youth have been involved in governance structures as currently the majority of the community governance and development structures have youth representation.

In Senegal, the youth reported that the programme was timely in raising awareness in the community on harmful practices such as SGBV and Child marriages, which are rampant in the community. The youth and community members have increased knowledge and people are abandoning harmful practices. The project has also increased knowledge on SRHR, and youth are seeking these services and increased uptake of contraceptives to prevent teenage pregnancies. The youth noted that the programme should continue supporting youth advocacy, sensitization and education by peers which is critical in influencing community on harmful practices.

*“Improved access to family planning has allowed me to continue my studies. Moreover, it is thanks to the awareness sessions on family planning and its advantages that I made the firm resolution to go to family planning in order to continue my studies and not to get pregnant and to devote myself to my future. Information, awareness raising and training of whistle-blowers are areas that can considerably improve the results of the Power to Youth program”-Female Youth Senegal*

In conclusion, the youth stories testify to youth feeling their access to SRHR services has increased because of the PtY programme. They also highlight how PtY has supported them to amplify their voice at community and state levels whilst addressing intergenerational challenges, meaningful youth involvement and decision making.

#### 4.6.2 Gender transformative approach (GTA) from Global KIIIs

The gender transformative approach is a cross-cutting theme in the PtY programme that focuses on the roles of men and women, boys, and girls and how these affect PtY outcomes. The analysis has revealed that in the PtY program, GTA has been mainstreamed in all aspects of the programmes, including advocacy and meaningful inclusive youth participation (MIYP). For example, if a country team is conducting an advocacy activity, the team must consider transformative advocacy messaging. According to the respondents, the GTA is in every single activity at every organisation within the partnership. The programme firmly intends to ensure that all genders and key stakeholder groups are represented. GTA is incorporated in capacity strengthening training, advocacy on SGBV as well as in the fight against child marriages. The GTA approach is also considered in the management and governance structure of the programme to ensure that there is gender sensitivity across the PtY program: So far the PtY programme achieved one of the GTA indicators where in 2022 the target was 120 and the actual result for # of CSOs who have advanced on using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth and the marginalised was 123.

*“So, we asked each organisation to always have one male and one female as focal points. And when we are organising our activities within the community for decision makers, if the structures have to be represented in those activities, if you have two people representing one entity, we always ask them that they send us one man and one woman or young person, depending on the nature of the activity”*  
-Amref Senegal

The programme further set up gender commissions within the regional platforms with the aim of incorporating the GTA component in the program. The gender commissions support gender sensitivity in implementation of project activities and operationalization of the program.

According to the respondents, despite GTA being embedded in all the pathways of the project there are some barriers that hinder effective implementation of GTA. Language is a key barrier: often when one says gender people automatically relate it to LGBTQ+. Most community members are not aware that gender is broader than LGBTQ+ and due to cultural backgrounds of the communities, one must be careful on GTA as it will be regarded as promoting LGBTQ+ especially in countries like Senegal and Uganda where tolerance of LGBTQ+ is low.

Another key barrier to effective implementation of GTA is that members of the partner organisations lack an understanding of what GTA is. Some of the organisations do not clearly understand what the GTA approach entails and are having a hard time distinguishing it from gender mainstreaming.

*“The idea of putting gender in our programme is not actually something new. And somehow, we are trying to see what the difference between gender transformative approach and gender mainstreaming approach is, for example, and that's what we are still trying to look at, even at the third year of the program”*  
-Rutgers Indonesia

#### 4.6.3 Risk analysis and context analysis

Another component of the MTE includes an analysis of the status (up-to-date or out-dated) of the risk analysis, how it is used, and what could the programme team do to increase its coherence, relevance, and usefulness.

According to the MTE respondents, when assessing the way risk analysis and context analysis are conducted within PtY and how these inform programme adaptations, it shows that the context analysis for the PtY programme was conducted collaboratively with the youth from the CSOs. All the partners came together to identify the potential risks and mitigation strategies and how they worked through the program. The respondents also noted that during the planning meeting context analysis was done with the consortium members and the other partners. At the country level, context analysis was supported by the grants manager who identifies risk or assess risk of

the partner organisations and points out those risks and then also develops a plan to mitigate the risk. The safety and security component supported by Rutgers was key during the context analysis especially on looking at how to ensure the staff are safe especially in countries with a shrinking civic space like Uganda. The initial context analysis not only looked at the operating environment but also there was an aspect of assessing the CSOs capacity and youth group capacities.

Similarly, the respondents stated that risk analysis is conducted frequently with countries having annual reflections whereby people identify the risks that they would encounter in the implementation, for example, the geopolitical situations in different countries. Some of the risks that have been identified include climate change, inflation as well as political instability. During implementation COVID-19 was a risk that country programmes faced. The programme teams include these risks in the reports and have had deliberations on how they can be overcome.

*“We are revising the risk analysis annually. It is part of a reflection meeting. So, we are having the same risk year to year like insecurity, instability, inflation and so on.”*  
-Amref Ethiopia

The respondents noted that the PtY programme coordinates actively with a lot of stakeholders to keep up with the context and trends and updates. The project monitors the risks and through monthly meetings and regular visits to stakeholders, offices the contexts are updated, and strategies put in place to ensure the implementation is not altered by the risks. For instance, in the programme opposition is one of the risks and the respondents noted that a lot of opposition is monitored. Also, in training young people on advocacy, they are supported to develop their advocacy strategies where they also develop a risk analysis and mitigation measures especially around opposition.

The respondents also noted that through the M&E focus leads in the country teams the context analysis baseline information was used to plan for the program. The information is currently being used for tracking the indicators and support teams to have a deep qualitative understanding on different dynamics of the project.

In regards to technical support needed to conduct regular context and risk assessments and to develop subsequent mitigation measures, for instance, in some countries like Ethiopia and Indonesia safety and security is always a risk that is identified and reported. This poses a risk to the implementation of the project and therefore there is need for technical support on should proceed with safety and security. Further, capacity strengthening is an area that requires support especially on cross-cutting themes such as advocacy, and opposition monitoring. The respondents noted that to address the risk of opposition, the country teams need support in coming up with a strong advocacy strategy that takes into consideration some of the guidelines developed such as the “Working on SRHR in Times of Opposition: Facilitator’s Guide” developed by Rutgers.

Another area of support reported by the respondents is addressing organisational risks. In such a consortium, some organisations may pose a risk to the implementation of a programme and therefore there is need for technical assistance to conduct organisation capacity assessments. The assessment will support the identification of risks the structure of the organisation poses to the programmes and align the capacity strengthening initiatives to address these risks.

The PtY programme has instituted several measures to ensure that SEAH, fraud and corruption are mitigated at country and partner levels through functional audit and compliance mechanisms.

PtY has made progress with regards to SEAH through conducting a participatory SEAH risk mapping exercise with the country teams. This was followed by capacity strengthening of consortium CMTs on safeguarding policies and their roles in rollout and implementation. A Safeguarding Policy is in place to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, bribery, and corruption by all PTY stakeholders. Country level partners have adopted and contextualised these broad guidelines to suit their needs. Further, partners monitor and report on any safeguarding issues on a regular basis both for internal and donor compliance. This ensures that SEAH remains an integral part of the risk analysis for the program.

In the 1st half of the programme implementation, there have been few isolated (non-related) cases of misconduct, inappropriate behaviour and or possible fraud. Using the internal integrity procedures of partner organisations, the program continues to monitor any integrity issues. Further, consortium partner CMTs are required to sign codes of conduct with regards to SEAH and fraud/corruption.

It may be concluded that PtY has put in place mitigating measures for SEAH, corruption and fraud. Further, the countries need more support from the consortium partners to conduct the risk analysis and management of these risks as well as technical assistance in reporting and planning for the risks.

#### 4.6.4 Advocacy capacity and training needs

For the provision of technical assistance for countries to implement the interventions to improve youth led and focused advocacy and accountability in relation to unintended pregnancy (UP), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, a number of technical working groups (TWG) were established. These are:

- Gender Transformative Approach (GTA)
- Lobby and Advocacy (L&A)
- Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research (PMELR)
- Communication
- Global Youth Group (GYG)
  - Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP also known as Engage4Change (sub-group)

The respondents reported that each TWG in the PtY has its mandate and goals based on their expertise. When it comes to advocacy and lobbying TWG, the goals are determined by the area of expertise. The advocacy TWG focuses on different issues depending on the need of the programmes such as FGM, community engagement or global advocacy in terms of language advocacy. The TWG is also mandated to strengthen the capacity based on the tasks at the global and regional level.

*“The first thing was to be aligned in terms of what our asks would be at global and regional level like what is there as far as the PtY mandate is concerned that needs to change in terms of commitments and implementation, so the strategy kind of helped us align ourselves on the kind of approaches we have and the platforms we engage in both global and regional, and then after that, to complement our strengths”*  
-Lobby and Advocacy TWG

For the GYG TWG the main goal is to strengthen the capacity of the youth and create spaces that bring adolescent girls and young women from the countries to share best practices or lived realities, etc. The respondents stated that the TWG focuses on influencing decision-making processes. The specific goals of the TWGs depend on the priorities of the countries, the region, and the global level hence there is cross partnership, cooperation or like joint efforts within the working group.

Under GYG, Y-Act's role is offering capacity strengthening to youth-led organisations. The respondent noted that Y-Act has created a database of young people from Partner base within all the seven countries. Through the support of the countries the project has been able to map young people and conduct needs assessments to map out what are the areas of needs to be prioritised for 2022. Based on this GYG conducted three mentorship sessions on advocacy and MIYP which were co-created by these young people.

The TWGs also strengthened the capacity of youth advocates in different countries, of different aspects such as advocacy and lobbying, GTA and MIYP. This has seen effects in the programme being conducted at the global, regional, and national level. The lobby and advocacy TWG has

conducted training on feminist advocacy and digital advocacy. At a regional level, the partners are able to map the proprieties and spaces that the programme can engage in advocacy.

*"We've worked with Ghana and Indonesia on their Universal Periodic Review, it's like a human rights review in Geneva. And I found this to be a very practical best practice, where a longer-term capacity strengthening trajectory turned out to be quite like physical outputs and outcomes as well."*

*-Lobby and Advocacy TWG*

The respondents reported that through advocacy capacity strengthening some of the countries have been able to work closely with policymakers, and be able to get commitments from policymakers on the change that they want to see.

*"In most of the countries that we work with, they've really done so well in being connected to the policymakers, who are also willing to lead on the change of these harmful practices."*

*-GYG Sonke Gender Justice*

According to the respondents there is increased knowledge of harmful practices as well as the key thematic areas that the PtY programme is focusing on. The programme has a strong communications team, focused on awareness creation on issues being addressed by the program.

### **Barriers for the effective implementation of TWGs**

One of the key barriers to implementation by the TWGs is that country teams do not always voice their needs. Despite TWGs developing a training schedule with a menu on what to train on, the requests from the country teams are still very low. Often this is linked to country teams viewing a training need as a weakness hence refrain from requesting the TWG to train them on that specific area.

*"We came up with the menu and sent it to our country partners, but we still never really got any requests. So, I think that was a barrier in terms of partners not knowing what it is we can offer"*

*-Lobby and Advocacy TWG*

According to the respondents, another challenge is that the structures in the project, especially the TWGs, are complex. At the same time not everyone has a common understanding of the roles within these structures. Country teams do not always understand the role of each partner in the TWG and what expertise they can get from the specific structures. Lack of proper understanding of what role the TWGs play in the partnership has contributed to the low request for technical support from the TWGs.

The TWGs like GTA do not have autonomous budgets linked to their own activities. This hinders effective TWG operations as they have to depend on other activity line budgets to carry out their interventions.

### **Enabling factors for TWGs**

A key enabling factor in the programme's TWGs is that it is focused on certain themes and a specific population especially the adolescent girls and young women as stated by the respondents. The focused approach the programme has adopted ensured there is prioritisation of activities in the TWG work plans.

*"And this focus that Power to You(th) has helps, like prioritising spaces or activities in your work plan."-Lobby and Advocacy TWG*

Further, every organisation that is in the TWG is technically strong in their expertise area. The expertise that each organisation brings into the TWG has ensured that all aspects of the programme especially on advocacy, GTA and MIYP are integrated in the implementation of the programme through strengthening the capacity of the implementing organisations.

The TWGs have been setting the agenda with other partners in terms of who, what PtY is about and who PtY is at the country, at the regional level and with other partners. This has enabled the TWGs to engage with other partners on different matters whether it's universal health coverage and SRHR. People know PtY which gives the TWG a vehicle to bring the messaging through conducting webinar sessions. Currently the TWGs can conduct global level webinars that are hosted by PtY which has created their visibility of the programme at that level.

### Enhancing PtY advocacy capacity

To enhance advocacy, our analysis of the MTE results show the following areas need improvement:

- There is a need to support country teams to be able to bring out their issues at the regional and global levels as well. This can be done through building and strengthening the capacity of the partners through training and mentorship process as well as supporting their advocacy asks. This will continue the work of the project in policy influence.

*“Stronger collaboration between the TWG and the teams at country level for global and regional advocacy. So, if we're engaging at a regional level, we make sure that we're securing presence to effectively present what's happening at country level with our different partners”*

*-Lobby and Advocacy TWG*

- There is a need to develop knowledge products, through collaborative effort with the country teams. Further, the programme needs to come up with a procedure to follow or guidelines that support response to certain issues such as policies that violate human rights being passed by the government. The creation of knowledge products will also support the creation of visibility of the programme at different levels.
- Another suggestion is to fully embed MIYP in the annual work plans instead of only having it in one set of activities. There is a need for training as there is no common understanding of MIYP among country teams to elaborate how the concept can be incorporated in the annual work plan and ensure they implement it. Capacity strengthening on these aspects will ensure that there are linkages between young people and the programme as well as the GYGs.

*“The training on MIYP is really, really key for the countries, and then also creating a space for young people to interact. And that is happening through the quarterly MIYP technical meeting meetings.”*

*-GYG Sonke Gender Justice*

- Finally, the TWGs should also focus on matters of digital advocacy, and campaigning. Through this the TWGs can focus on advocating Universal Health Coverage (UHC). There is a need to leverage international days to get the voices of young people on board, so they can participate and share their ideas or best practices. The international calendar can be leveraged to advocate and raise awareness on thematic areas such as child marriages, Sexual Gender based Violence (SGBV). So, we have those days and then we have the women deliver in UHC.

#### 4.6.5 Communication

The PtY consortium has comprehensive and robust communications strategies, both internally and externally. The programme developed an overarching guideline launched in 2022 with the aim of ensuring the involvement of all partnership members and closed feedback loops. The guideline focus is to foster transparency, alignment, and engagement among stakeholders.

Externally, the PtY programme has implemented a layered external communications strategy, with each country having their localised approach, but also contributing to the global joint campaign strategy meetings and implementation.

*“These strategies effectively reach and engage stakeholders, considering cultural nuances, language preferences, and regional priorities.”  
-Coordination lab.*

At the global level, the PtY programme has maintained a flexible external communications strategy, allowing adjustments for different international conferences, events, joint campaigns, and activities in the annual work plan. Through the TWGs collaboration, the programme workshops are aligned to the external communications approach that is specific to the advocacy needs and objectives to ensure maximised impact and consistency in messages tailored to diverse audiences. A co-created external communications strategy is still being developed by the communications TWG.

The objectives of the PtY internal communications are to promote transparency, alignment, and engagement among stakeholders. The programme has successfully implemented and refined the global internal communication guidelines, particularly in terms of reporting, timelines, and branding. Through the strategy's launch, emerging loopholes were identified and addressed to improve its effectiveness. The PtY programme has been keen on adhering to the co-created internal comms flow which has resulted in strong ownership demonstrated by the partners successfully implementing various aspects of the guidelines.

In the PtY program, the contribution of communication activities to specific advocacy outcomes is dependent on the context and desired results. At the global level, the Communications TWG, Lobby and Advocacy TWG, and the Global Youth Group (GYG) work together on various international events, conferences, and workshops. Members from the Lobby and Advocacy TWG and the Communications TWG have collaborated in profiling the PtY consortium to external stakeholders in 2022 and 2023. Additionally, the programme has partnered with other youth programmes and organisations, such as Y-ACT, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), +, Youth Power Hub, and SAT, to enhance the collective impact, amplify our reach and run the international #youthzone together during the Africa Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC).

*“Through co-creation, we collectively set objectives, organise events, curate materials, run side events and develop content for key international conferences such as the Africa Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)”  
-Coordination lab.*

Further, the respondents noted that communication and advocacy efforts in general go hand in hand. For instance, during the in-person workshop in 2022 the TWG worked on a 16 Days-campaign that successfully combined both elements. By mobilising 25 youth advocates, and using their recommendations for a global call to action and a handover to an UN-representative (advocacy), while using this input for a joint social campaign (Comms) and media coverage as well the programme was able to amplify the voice of the youth.

However, there is a recurrent need for closer alignment and synergy between communication activities and advocacy activities throughout the program, at all levels. The building synergy among TWG is an issue that is being addressed at the Global Management Team (GMT), prompting collaborative efforts and discussions among programme partners to foster synergy and break down silos within the Technical Working Groups (TWGs).

#### 4.6.6 PMERL

According to the respondents, the project has a robust M&E system, whereby there is a technical staff for M&E in each implementing organisation who monitors the impact in the countries. The programme has focused on establishing a well-functioning data collection and management system where different M&E tools like outcome harvesting are used. This enables the country teams to ensure that they keep monitoring the project to ensure that implementation is on track. The programme M&E is not only used for tracking the information or data it is part of the management tool as the information is used for decision making. The project also supports other mechanisms such as operations research that informs on the implementation of the project.

The respondents reported that availability of reporting templates has also supported the collection of data that is sufficient to support programme implementation. However, a challenge with the template is that they are being developed as the project is being implemented hence some discrepancies in some data collected.

#### 4.6.7 Scale and reach

The PtY programme is implemented in a consortium that has partners who have vast experiences on the approaches being used in the program. The tools and models used in the programme have been proven to work in the implementation of other programmes and as part of adopting learning and using evidence -based approaches, these tools have been adopted in the programme. For example, the online advocacy curriculum that Y-ACT uses had been piloted at the country level before it was scaled to the regional level. The consortium brought on board partners with expertise in different pathways of the programme who have conducted case studies to prove that the approaches they recommend for the programme work.

The PtY programme focused on adopting best practices or models that have worked before and ensuring that they are scaled up in the project as noted by the respondents. Further, findings from previous projects that are similar to PtY implemented by the consortium partners have been used to support learning and the innovation trajectory at PtY. During the annual planning, countries learn from each other on what works and what does not work, and this supports the scale up of certain models and approaches within the project. This is further supported by capacity strengthening from the partners who have the expertise in the model or approach to be scaled up.

#### 4.6.8 Innovation and learning

The Technical Working Groups support the linking and learning aspect where the different countries get an opportunity to share with each other on the different implementation strategies, the different results, and challenges. The respondents stated that the countries also get an opportunity to brainstorm on various solutions, either that have been employed by a different country and could work on a different one. This has created a safe space and platform for cross learning as countries openly share and interact and train each other. Further, the linking and learning is supported through the country exchange forum where country exchange visits are supported, with teams from one country visiting another to learn on a certain aspect of the PtY programme they would want to implement or scale up.

*"We also do have the country exchange forum, where different countries get an opportunity to submit a proposal to a specific or another country where a similar thematic area is being implemented or addressed. And they get an opportunity to go with the whole team to that specific country. Learn about the methodologies, visit their sites, get a clear overview of how some of the interesting initiatives that they're looking to employ or adapt are carried out."*

*-Coordination Lab*

The programme produces a huge amount of data and information that requires to be stored and support documentation in the project. The PtY program, by virtue of being implemented in different countries and regions, becomes complex to share information across the partnership at

different points in time, in different seasons. The programme has systems in place that make everything centralised in one specific docket. Having the documents in a centralised system that can be accessed by all parties in the programmes that support learning and scale up innovation which is subsequently documented by other countries.

#### *4.6.9 Link between Southern leadership principle, GTA and MIYP*

The principles of southern leadership, Gender Transformative Approach, and Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation are interlinked in multiple ways. Here's an analysis of how these three dimensions are connected:

1. **Southern Leadership Principles:** Southern leadership principles focus on promoting local agency, self-determination, and ownership in development processes. They emphasise the role of local actors in leading, implementing, and evaluating interventions to address their own development needs. These principles prioritise the voices and experiences of those most affected by the issues at hand.

2. **Gender Transformative Approach:** A gender transformative approach goes beyond addressing gender disparities to transforming harmful gender norms, roles, and power structures. It seeks to challenge and change the root causes of gender inequality, rather than just addressing the symptoms. This approach is seen as critical to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

3. **Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation:** Meaningful and Inclusive youth participation refers to the involvement of young people in decision-making processes in a way that is active, free, and meaningful. It recognizes the agency of young people and their right to influence the decisions that affect their lives.

#### **Linkages:**

- **Empowerment:** All three dimensions share a common emphasis on empowerment. Southern leadership principles emphasise the empowerment of local actors; the gender transformative approach seeks to empower women and girls and engage men and boys in promoting gender equality; and meaningful youth participation involves empowering young people to take part in decision-making.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** These principles all recognize and value diversity. They advocate for the inclusion of underrepresented voices in decision-making processes, whether it's Southern actors in international development, women and girls in traditionally male-dominated spaces, or young people in decisions that affect their lives.
- **Transformative Change:** All three promote transformative change. Southern leadership principles call for a shift from traditional, top-down development approaches to locally-led development; the gender transformative approach seeks to change harmful gender norms and structures; and meaningful youth participation pushes for a shift from tokenistic to meaningful involvement of youth.

In practical terms, integrating these principles can result in development programs that are locally-led, gender-responsive, and youth-inclusive. Such programs are likely to be more responsive to local needs, more effective in promoting gender and generational equity, and more sustainable in the long run. The TWGs within PTY separately meet, deliberate on issues, plan and execute their mandate in an effective way. Together, however, they do not have a mechanism for integrating their deliberations, plans and actions to tackle the interlinkages that exist within the program. This speaks to a silo approach among the TWGs.



## 5. Lessons learned

During the MTE the following key lessons were learned:

- The involvement and engagement of young people who are the targeted participants at all levels of implementation of PtY activities is a very effective approach. It strengthens the capacity of the young people to be involved in decision making processes on issues that affect them, while empowering them to also empower their fellow peers. At the same time, it increases ownership of programme results and sustainability of the results.
- The involvement of youth at the national and regional levels has been less effective, mainly because often the involvement of the young people at these levels is limited to attendance/ physical presence, without them getting an opportunity to voice their views, opinions on issues that affect them. PtY partners need to consider increasing young people's active, and meaningful involvement in platforms that are closer to home such as schools, and community through which the young people's confidence shall be boosted for them to be able to advocate in larger platforms at national, and regional level.
- Strengthening the capacity of the young people to identify their own needs and how to deal with them ensures relevance and impact of the interventions thus promoting meaningful and inclusive young people participation and ownership of the interventions.
- The youth stories and reflections point to stronger connection between the programme and the youth at the grassroots level, an indicator of strong ownership and sustainability mechanisms being put in place for longer-term realisation of the programme goals
- The implementation of PtY interventions through the support of grassroots CSOs is very effective and efficient. They have a good understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that influence community knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding SRHR, and harmful practices. PtY's collaboration with the CSOs is very effective because they can utilise their experience, as well as existing structures in the community, to support PtY interventions. However, the PtY partners should ensure the full participation of these CSOs in the next half of implementing the program through more co-creation and implementation opportunities.
- Capacity strengthening and sensitization for the CSOs and the young people are relevant and effective approaches which sustainably Strengthen the capacity of well-placed and grounded CSOs, as well as the young people to advocate for SRHR.
- For greater impact and adoption, the engagement and inclusion of key gatekeepers at both district and community levels such as the Offices of the District Commissioner (DC) District Director of Planning and Development (DPD) and traditional and civic leaders was critical in facilitating and expediting collective decision-making processes. During the implementation the country management team (CMT) realised that engaging those in authority and power was critical as they were able to have buy-in into the advocacy efforts. For example, the country partners engaged gatekeepers to lobby for inclusion of young people in various governance structures at both district and community levels.
- Collaboration and coordination with multiple partners including at regional, national, district and community level, based on their core mandates and comparative advantages, facilitates efficiency, linkages and synergies, in pursuit of the desired objectives. Such institutions possess the required organisational structures, basic knowledge and skills of existing programmes to mainstream gender interventions within their core business, as well as wider geographic influence. The Country Management Team also built on and used existing community structures for mobilizations of both participants and

beneficiaries of different capacity strengthening initiatives, for instance young people Networks and Mother groups. Similarly, engaging district stakeholders (councils and CSO Networks) as resource persons and facilitators for capacity strengthening initiatives (training and orientations) meant recognition of their capacity hence strengthened partnerships and collaboration. This is a premise for ownership and sustainability of interventions. The PtY consortium for example partnered with line ministries and departments such as District Education Office, District Social Office, District young people Office and District Gender Office and District CSO Committees which is critical to advocacy and therefore more engagements should be conducted by the programme.

- Engagement of partners in a consortium that have footprints in the districts where the programme is operating, is very crucial for sustainability. It ensures better presence and reach to beneficiaries, leveraged on existing rapport for networking and also had established structures at the grassroots level that facilitated implementation.
- The concept of Southern Leadership is both understood and not understood in equal measure by the country teams. Country partners who joined the programme after it had started seem to be less knowledgeable about how the southern leadership principles were conceptualised and implemented.
- Overall, the GTA, whilst an integral strategy within the programme, does not have foundational information as a baseline wasn't conducted at the start thus resulting in information and targeting gaps.
- Whilst communication at global, consortium and country levels is deemed robust and effective, there is a gap with regards to communication between TWGs and jointly from the TWGs to the country teams.
- The programme has many working strategies and has documented lessons learnt and even in other instances shared these lessons through cross-learning among partners. However, these lessons have not been systematically documented to form a knowledge management repository.
- There exist interlinkages between the principles of southern leadership, GTA, and MIYP within the program. However, there hasn't been a deliberate approach to integrate the outputs of the TWGs in order to provide the countries with a unified support approach from the TWGs.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

### 6.1 General

#### *Sensitization on Southern Leadership*

The MTE shows that the concept of Southern leadership in the programme supported involvement of country teams in decision making and created autonomy for the team to contextualise the programme to the country. However, the concept is still not clear to some of the consortium members. There is a need for discussions and **sensitization sessions conducted at the country level** to ensure that all the country **understand what Southern Leadership is and how it functions** and what their role is within this approach. Further, the PtY programme should focus on documenting the Southern Leadership process as they implement noting key challenges, gaps and best practices to build on the body of knowledge of southern leadership which is minimal and for future scale up of the model in other programmes.

#### *Information sharing among TWGs.*

The support provided by Technical Working Groups was rated effective by respondents, however there were challenges regarding sharing information produced within these groups. Since the programme has many working groups which lack integration information, produced teams are lost and are not shared with other group and country teams. To address the challenge of loss of information, the consortium should **establish a dissemination strategy** especially through the quarterly update and reflection meeting where different TWGs share information that they deem important and crucial for implementation of the program.

#### *Documentation of success stories for advocacy*

Advocacy is very critical in the PtY programme and therefore there is need for **proper documentation of success stories**. Through the country consortium and the CSOs the programme needs to start **identifying the most significant stories** from inspiring beneficiaries / role models /champions/ youth advocates etc. and amplify their voice through their stories. This can be achieved by ensuring their stories are shared through communication material, social media, media pitches and upcoming annual reports. The stories can be used to showcase the programmes work to partners like MFA and for media and other potential donors as well as the government which will influence their support to the programmes mission and objectives.

#### *Coordinated and structured Communication*

Communication is one of the key challenges noted by the respondents especially among the country teams whereby there are isolated cases where partners deviate from the agreed internal communication processes, due to crises or internal conflicts, resulting in communication gaps. To address this, there is a **need to involve an impartial central body for mediation in situations where internal communication becomes deadlocked**. Within the PtY partnership this can be achieved through the conflict resolution whereby in case a conflict occurs between a consortium partner and a national coordinator, it is essential to determine the most appropriate entity to mediate and facilitate a resolution. Further, there is a **need to establish clear procedures for internal communication during times of crisis to ensure swift and effective information dissemination, decision-making, and response coordination**. These procedures should be clearly communicated to the country team to enhance information flow within the partnership at different levels.

#### *Proposed revision of the Theory of Change*

The overall structure and set-up of the PtY Theory of Change was assessed. The four pathways holistically involving four key stakeholder groups, provides a relevant framework for the PtY programme. In addition, the four ultimate outcome goals (one per pathway) are deemed highly relevant. However, the consortium could **reconsider some of the lower-level outcomes** for example on pathway 1 replacing youth having increased agency with youth engaging with decision makers and youth participating in decision making processes. Further, the PtY programme can look at how youth are involved in sensitising of the community on SRH or

advocate for YFS to improve SRH services for youth as well as involving survivors of GBV/TP for more impactful engagement at community level. Similarly for pathway 2 the outcome related to CSOs using innovative lobby and advocacy methods could be replaced by CSOs enabling youth to influence decision making processes. For pathway 3, societal actors demonstrating positive attitudes are witnessed in various forms of verbal or written commitments and could be considered to be reformulated as such. Finally, for pathway 4 it could be considered to distinguish between the level of youth engagement with state actors and the result in terms of policy changes of the said engagement.

As a general recommendation, it is suggested to regularly include a reflection on the theory of change in PtY reflection events and ensure the theory of change is contextualised for each country.

### *Risk management and prevention of SEAH*

It may be concluded that PtY has put in place mitigating measures for SEAH, corruption and fraud. Further, the countries need more support from the consortium partners to conduct the risk analysis and management of these risks as well as technical assistance in reporting and planning for the risks. In order to ensure the prevention of any sexual harassment cases to occur in the remaining PtY period, it is recommended to ensure that there is a common understanding of SEAH within the PtY consortium based upon a shared language and widely understood definitions as espoused in the PTY Safeguarding Policy. Each PTY partner's approach to safeguarding should ensure an effective and comprehensive response to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment. Taking note that in order to prevent SEAH, interventions and responses must be aimed at counteracting the power imbalances and gender inequalities that are the root causes of such violations.

Furthermore, partners are encouraged to promptly report all credible allegations in accordance with the reporting process outlined in the PTY Safeguarding policy and that such reporting will be made without compromising the safety and due process rights of any concerned person. Also, partners are encouraged to prioritise awareness-raising activities around what constitutes SEAH and where to report it within other planned or ongoing community awareness activities (e.g communication campaigns, trainings) and use these spaces as an opportunity to obtain feedback on the safety and appropriateness of interventions, which will in turn facilitate the review and update of mitigation measures. This is done with a view to strengthening the capacity within the implementing organisations to prevent, detect and respond to all SEAH incidences. This capacity includes, among other things, having policies and procedures in place; safer recruitment practices; adequate awareness and training; robust reporting and response capacity; victim/survivor support and/or referrals; and the use of tools and policies to engage with the community.

## **6.2 Pathway 1: Young people demand accountability and responsiveness**

### *In School Youth Interventions*

The programme noted that in some countries the programme was highly focused on youth who are out of school with minimal focus on youth in school which limits the reach of the interventions. Therefore, there is a need to broaden the scope of the programme from focusing to include the young people who are in school. This can be achieved through **increasing the number of school outreach activities**, such as school clubs among others. Further, there is a need for the programme country teams to continue lobbying with school administration especially where there is resistance to comprehensive SRHR education to increase the buy-in and mainstream of this aspect in education. Further, nurturing youth advocates right from the school level will ensure that there are competent champions to continue advocacy of youth rights beyond the school.

### *Meaningful youth participation and engagement Streamlining*

Whilst MIYP is an effective strategy there are some areas that need attention and strengthening in the implementation of the strategy. Lack of understanding of what meaningful inclusive youth participation and engagement entails, has been identified by the MTE. Internally, at the consortium level it was noted that there is lack of a joint vision and strategy on MIYP while

externally by policy makers there is lack of understanding regarding its importance. Therefore, the consortium partners and state policymakers need **capacity strengthening to understand meaningful youth participation and engagement** and its importance. This can be achieved first by ensuring that there is a clear definition of MIYP at the country levels whereby the technical working group and the technical partners need to ensure uniformity of the abbreviation being used for uniformity and ease of understanding. Also, all the consortium partners should be on board and ensure that the MIYP component of the programme is not only left to the YLOs but is a joint responsibility among the partners. To increase understanding among adult policy makers, continued capacity strengthening with a uniform curriculum or training guideline on MIYP is required.

### *Language Considerations*

The MTE also established that language was a barrier to meaningful engagement of the youth in decision making. Despite some of the youth advocates articulating and being vocal on issues being addressed by the programmes, their participation at national, regional, and global level may be hindered by their limited capability in articulating languages like English. Thus, there is a need for interpreters especially for participants who do not articulate English or English is not their national language. The programme needs **to ensure that the youths have interpreters and the documents being used in platforms that require communication in English are translated for youth advocates** who lack proficiency in the language. Also, critical documents such as research, survey reports on issues affecting the youth should be produced in different versions catering to the needs of each country and translated to the official language of the country.

### *Learning and Innovation Guidance*

Despite the programme having a component on learning and innovation, the insights gained from learning questions have not been applied yet in new programme initiatives. Dealing with opposition and contextualising country ToCs may be integrated in learning activities. There is a need to **jointly review the learning questions** at the end of the year during harvesting outcomes to assess attainment of outcomes and identify lessons for partners in the consortium. Further, documentation of these learnings and innovation will support the scale up and adoption of lessons across the country teams supporting cross learning.

### *Power Imbalances*

Meaningful engagement of the youth is highly impacted by the power imbalance as noted by the respondents. This creates a need for the PtY programme to demystify beliefs around youth engagement in the society as well as enlighten the policy makers on the need of the youth in decision making. Gender Transformative Approaches can be applied to address the root causes of PtY issues and address power imbalances hampering youth engagement in addressing root causes. This can be achieved through **supporting the youth at the community level to understand the specific power dynamics** in their communities and how to use this understanding to influence decision making. Further, the project should continue in identification of youth champions and empower them to take independent actions to respond to the key PtY issues in their community.

## **6.3 Pathway 2: CSOs amplify young people's voices**

### *Capacity strengthening of CSOs on GTA and MIYP*

To enhance sustainability, the MTE revealed that the CSO actors are critical however there is a challenge in the capacity to advocate and amplify the voices of young people. Majority of the CSOs lack a clear understanding of the cross-cutting theme of the project that is GTA and MIYP. The programme needs **to maintain and strengthen its focus on capacity strengthening of existing CSOs, youth networks and local structures in GTA and MIYP**. The programme should further prioritise organisations that have a footprint in the programme areas especially considering the high turnover of trained youth advocates, state, and non-state actors in the program. To advance the achievement of the programme goals there is need for the TWGs and the technical partners to ensure that the partners in country teams have a clear understanding of these themes. This can be achieved through training of the CSOs on these themes but also

supporting them with guidelines and protocols that are designed to support compliance with the project themes.

### *Institutional Strengthening*

The structure of the PtY programme was deemed complex with the consortium requiring the representation of YLOs. However, there has been an attrition of YLOs in different countries due to their institutional capacity inadequacies which has affected the implementation. Thus, there is a need for **consideration of YLOs that are established and have a base in the target communities** despite the institutional capacities. Their institutional capacities can be addressed through updating the initial needs assessment to identify the current gaps in the institutions and contextualization of the capacity strengthening of the YLOs based on the assessment.

### *Supportive Policy Environment*

One of the key challenges identified during the MTE is the lack of a supportive policy environment in countries where the civic space has been shrinking. Thus, PtY programmes need to empower the CSOs in these countries to ensure that their organisational structures are strengthened especially on advocating for the CSOs inclusion in the policy making process. This can be achieved through capacity strengthening in areas such as advocacy and lobbying to support the efforts of these CSOs to advocate for the rights of the youth as well as get buy-in from the politicians and policy makers to create a better policy environment. In this regard, the risk of opposition could be addressed by strengthening the capacity of the country teams in mapping of opposition and coming up with a strong advocacy strategy that takes into consideration some of the guidelines developed such as the “Working on SRHR in Times of Opposition: Facilitator’s Guide” developed by Rutgers.

### *Financial Support to CSO to implement Action Plans*

PtY has focused on empowering CSOs to amplify the voices of the youth through supporting their activities and engaging them in the implementation of the programme activities. However, the PtY programme makes provision of financial support to a few CSOs through the YISG grant leaving the majority of the CSOs without funding support. This creates a need for the **programme to support the action plans developed by CSOs to increase the youth’s voices**. Through cross country lesson learning other countries can adopt the YSIG model from Ghana to create financial support structures for youth led initiatives. The programme can support the CSOs in fundraising through training them on fundraising strategy using the action plans they have developed and lobby with potential donors and other developmental partners implementing similar interventions to fund the implementation of the work plans.

## **6.4 Pathway 3: Societal actors support and protect youth rights**

### *Community Advocacy*

The illiteracy levels within the community as well as social and religious norms around harmful practices are a key hindrance to adoption of progressive social norms. Changing social norms in a community especially around harmful practices that have been normalised by the society takes time and thus the need for PtY to continue with advocacy at the community level. PTY should therefore increase the number of **sensitization forums and dialogues which can be used to impart knowledge to community members on harmful practices**. Also, the programme can leverage the international days that are relevant to the themes of the and engage community members in celebrations whereby they are educated and sensitised on these key issues. Further, development of IEC materials on the harmful practices and SRHR and translating them in local languages will support the adoption of progressive social norms as people will have a better understanding.

### *Youth Friendly Services*

Despite the youth having knowledge on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancy, the evaluation noted that the vices have not reduced in all the implementation areas in different

countries especially around contraceptive use due to low uptake of contraceptives and lack of youth friendly services. This creates the need for the **programme to advocate on the establishment of youth friendly services and clinics** within the healthcare system. The programme team in different countries have a good working relationship with the local and national government especially with the ministry of health. PtY through the youth and CSOs therefore can leverage on this relationship to advocate with the government to support the mainstreaming of youth friendly services in the healthcare system to increase access to SRHR services and support the fight against harmful practices. Further, this can be achieved through engaging healthcare workers to improve youth friendly services by dialogue days, social audits, youth committees between youth and health facility staff.

#### *Intergenerational Conversations*

Moreover, the change in social, cultural, and religious norms is impacted by lack of common platforms that different generations can come together and discuss issues impacting the youth. Therefore, there is a need for the programme to continue **creating the intergeneration platforms** where conversations on harmful practices are conducted. This can be achieved through planning comprehensive parent and young people conversations, to change the perceptions, attitudes, and practices of the parents on SRHR issues of the young people.

#### *Community Champions sensitization*

Another key challenge that was noted by the evaluation was the issue of community gatekeepers who support harmful practices. PtY should understand the traditional decision-making structure in each of the intervention communities as well as the cultural norms that guide these structures. Through a **regular updating of context analysis and sharing of success stories and lessons learned**, the programme will be able to identify entry points and opportunities that they can use to fight against the harmful practices. Further, **identification of the gatekeepers to be community champions will reduce the resistance** as they value engagement. Further, the community champions need more sensitization as well as training on key issues affecting the youth and the implications of harmful practices to increase their understanding of why their support is crucial in achieving the programme objectives.

#### *Strengthening Reporting Mechanisms*

Another key barrier that the MTE revealed in the fight against the harmful practices is the lack of proper reporting mechanism as well as follow up which impacts on actions taken against offenders. There is a need for the PtY programme to **popularise reporting mechanisms for harmful practices, gender inequalities and safeguarding issues**. This can be achieved through supporting the CSOs to build linkages with institutions within the implementing areas that support SRHR, harmful practices and gender related issues such as the probation offices, health facilities, police, court and GBV shelters. Further, there is a need for sensitization of community members on the referral pathway or system to seek justice to ensure cases are reported and resolved with the survivor getting justice. Also, there is a need to sensitise the police and the justice system officer on handling of survivors to make the process smooth for them which promotes reporting of cases in the community.

### **6.5 Pathway 4: State actors improve policy making, budgeting and implementation**

#### *Advocacy on Comprehensive SRHR Education*

The MTE established that a key impediment to implementation and sustainability of the programme is the illegalization and sensitivity of certain issues such as LGBTQ+ in some countries. GTA being a cross cutting theme in the PtY programme has been incorporated in all aspects of the program. However, discussions around GTA and SRHR are viewed as the programme promotion of LGBTQ+. Therefore, there is a need to **sensitise policy makers and advocate with politicians on the importance of comprehensive education on SRHR**. This can be achieved through PtY programme using its influence at different levels (regional, global, and country) to influence the policy agenda especially on policies that support harmful practices through engagement with agencies and institutions that hold policy makers in countries

accountable. Furthermore, the programme can also sensitise the policy maker on what GTA entails to demystify the myths around it, especially the linkage of the approach to LGBTQ+.

### *Lobbying on Policy Financing*

The study established that the state actors have gathered a lot of knowledge and skills to design and implement policies; however, limited budgetary allocation was cited as a key hindrance in the effective implementation of policies. Therefore, there is a need for more **financial support to aid the implementation of policies effectively**. This can be achieved through lobbying and advocating with the government to allocate funding and include the policy priorities into the annual work plans which ensure they are funded. Moreover, there is a need for accountability systems to hold duty bearers on the implementation of the policies especially on budgetary utilisation. Social accountability processes such as community scorecards can be used to track expenditure allocated to implement the policies to limit misuse of the already limited funds. PtY can train and support the youth in conducting these activities to ensure that any funds allocated to fighting harmful practices as well as implementing policies responding to harmful practices and SRHR are utilised efficiently.

### *Dissemination of Policies*

In most countries it was noted that there exists policy instruments that support GTA and MIYP however different stakeholders such as CSOs, youth and community members are not aware of them. There is a need to **develop and implement a more robust strategy to disseminate and popularise legal and policy instruments that directly promote gender equality and human rights**, to address resistance from some quarters of society, particularly males and traditional leadership. This can be achieved through thorough analysis of different roles of members of society in influencing attitudes and practices on harmful cultural practices and creating channels and platforms to share the policy and legal instruments with them. Some of the platforms that can be used include community meetings, traditional media as well as social media to create constant engagement and awareness creation.

## Annexes

### Annex 1:

|                                                        |        |                      |                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PATHWAY 1:<br>Strengthening youth to claim civic space | PW1.A1 | None (not mandatory) | # of youth advocates with an improved understanding of decision-making processes and power dynamics regarding key topics                         |
|                                                        |        |                      | # of youth advocates (female) with an improved understanding of decision-making processes and power dynamics regarding key topics                |
|                                                        |        |                      | # of youth advocates (male) with an improved understanding of decision-making processes and power dynamics regarding key topics                  |
|                                                        |        |                      | # of youth advocates (other) with an improved understanding of decision-making processes and power dynamics regarding key topics                 |
|                                                        |        |                      | # of youth advocates (gender not specified) with an improved understanding of decision-making processes and power dynamics regarding key topics  |
|                                                        | PW1.A2 |                      | # of young people who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful (SRHR A)                   |
|                                                        |        | SRH002f              | # of young people (female) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful                   |
|                                                        |        | SRH002m              | # of young people (male) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful  |
|                                                        |        | SRH002x              | # of young people (other) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful |
|                                                        |        | SRH002               | # of young people (gender not-specified) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful     |
| PATHWAY 2:<br>Strengthening civil society              | PW2.A1 |                      | # of CSOs participating in Power to You(th) (SCS 6)                                                                                              |
|                                                        |        | SCS061               | # of women led CSOs participating in Power to You(th)                                                                                            |
|                                                        |        | SCS062               | # of youth led CSOs participating in Power to You(th)                                                                                            |
|                                                        |        | SCS063               | # of CSOs (not youth or women led) participating in Power to You(th)                                                                             |
|                                                        |        | SCS064               | # of CSOs which are both women and youth led participating in Power to You(th)                                                                   |
|                                                        | PW2.A2 |                      | # of communities, CSOs, and advocacy networks with increased lobbying, advocating, thematic and/or research capabilities (SCS 5, SRHR J)         |
|                                                        |        | SRH021               | # of women led CSOs with increased L&A capacities and or research capacities                                                                     |
|                                                        |        | SRH022               | # of youth led CSOs with increased L&A capacities and or research capacities                                                                     |
|                                                        |        | SRH023               | # of CSOs (not youth or women led) with increased L&A capacities and or research capacities                                                      |
|                                                        |        | SRH024               | # of CSOs which are both women and youth led with increased L&A capacities and or research capacities                                            |

|                                                          |        |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                          |        | SRH025               | # of communities with increased L&A and or research capacities                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                          |        | SRH026               | # of advocacy networks with increased L&A and or research capacities                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                          | PW2.A3 | None (not mandatory) | <b># and type of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs for, by or with their membership/constituency</b>                                                                                                                                |
|                                                          | PW2.A4 |                      | <b># of CSOs who have advanced on using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth (SCS 8)</b>                                                                         |
|                                                          |        | SCS081               | # of women led CSOs using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth                                                                                                   |
|                                                          |        | SCS082               | # of youth led CSOs using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth                                                                                                   |
|                                                          |        | SCS083               | # of CSOs (not youth led or women led) using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth                                                                                |
|                                                          |        | SCS084               | # of CSOs, which are both women & youth led using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth                                                                           |
|                                                          | PW2.A5 | None (not mandatory) | <b># of times government or private sector at all levels include CSOs in decision making processes related to our advocacy issues, react to CSO positions by adopting their argumentation or putting our advocacy issues on the agenda</b> |
|                                                          | PW2.A6 | SRH020               | <b>Description of effective use of accountability mechanisms by citizens/communities and CSOs towards SRHR of all people (SRHR I)</b>                                                                                                      |
| <b>PATHWAY 3:<br/>Changing social norms</b>              | PW3.A1 | None (not mandatory) | <b># of media reports on PtY key issues that influence public and political debate</b>                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                          | PW3.A2 | None (not mandatory) | <b>Level of public support for family planning and prevention of harmful practices and SGBV</b>                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>PATHWAY 4:<br/>Policies and policy implementation</b> | PW4.A1 | None (not mandatory) | <b>Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce, implement, and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex</b>                                                                                        |