YOUTH LEADERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY 2.0

PART 1.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These recommendations were developed by Restless Development, in partnership with UNFPA East & Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), following consultations with young people from across East and Southern Africa aimed at identifying how development agencies and young people can better work together to strengthen accountability for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and gender equality.

This participatory approach involved both online and offline consultation with over 80 young people and more than 30 development stakeholders.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU - The African Union
CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CESCR - UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
CPD - UN Commission on Population Development
CRC - UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSE - Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO - Civil Society Organisation(s)
CSW - The UN Commission on the Status of Women
EAC - East African Community
ESA - East and Southern Africa
FGM - Female Genital Mutilation
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPD - International Conference on Population and Development
IMF - The International Monetary Fund
INGO - An international non-governmental organisation
IPPF - International Planned Parenthood Federation
NGO - Non-governmental organisation
SADC - Southern African Development Community
SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals
SRH - Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNAIDS - The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA ESARO - United Nations Population Fund East & Southern Africa Regional Office
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
WHO - World Health Organization
YWCA - The Young Women's Christian Association

1. WHY YOUTH-LED ACCOUNTABILITY?

Recent global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Family Planning 2020 promise to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health, family planning, and education on gender equality, including elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Meaningful youth participation and increased support for youth-led accountability is essential for these commitments to be achieved. Half the world's population is currently under 30 and nine in ten of these young people live in developing countries. Never before has there been such a large generation of young people ready and able to deliver change in their communities. If we are to ensure the policies aimed at changing this are enacted, we must engage and mobilise the enormous potential of the global youth population to make these promises a reality.

What is Youth-Led Accountability?

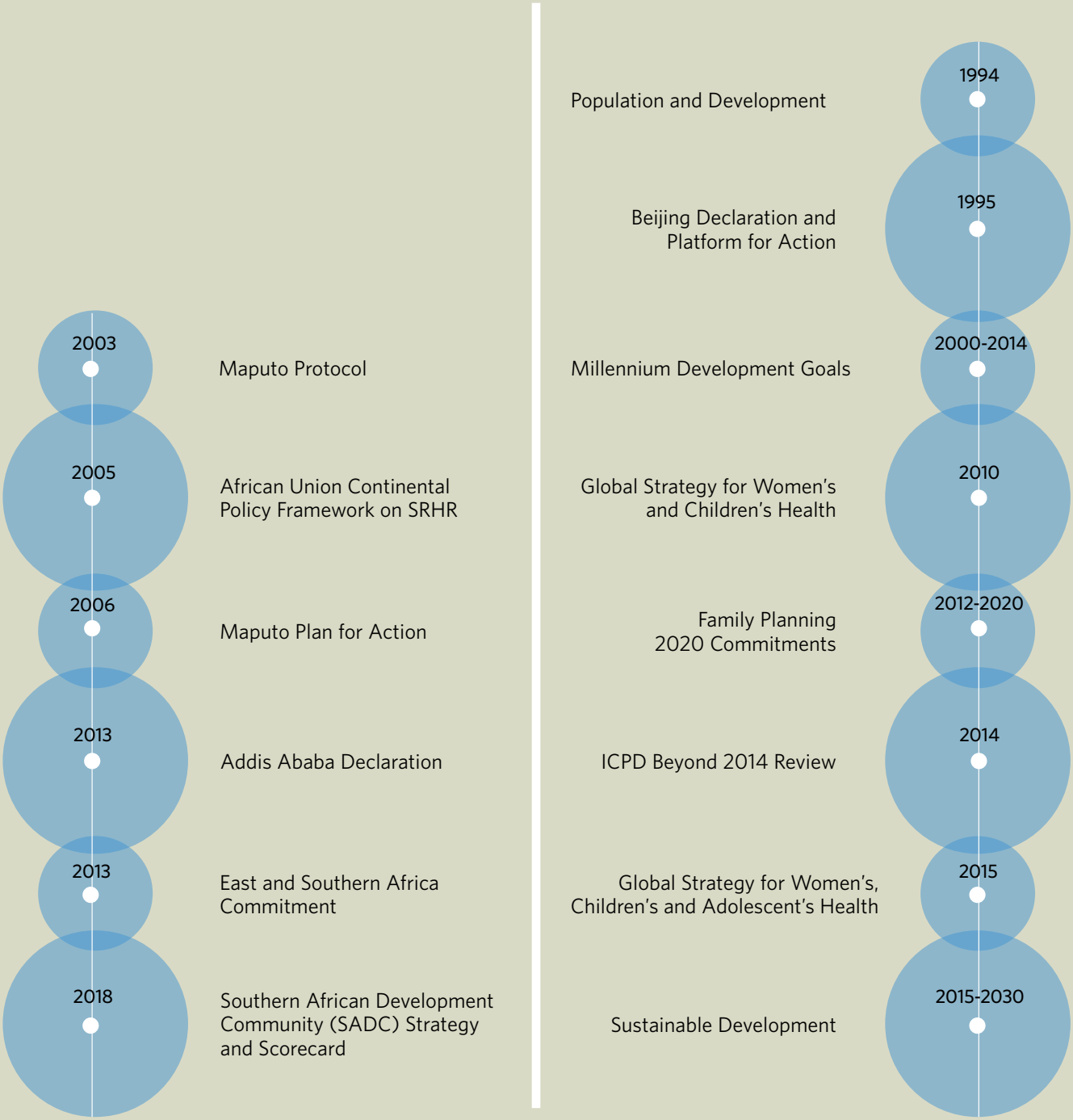
> *Enabling young people to hold decision makers accountable for the commitments they have made towards sustainable development, through increased capacity, access and agency.*

In 2018/2019 Restless Development and UNFPA ESARO worked with young people and development stakeholders from across East and Southern Africa to design a framework to better support them and the important work they do, specifically at local and national level where much of the youth-led accountability takes place. We do however, also acknowledge the value, support and opportunities given by regional and global advocacy spaces to push for change.

2. THE CONTEXT

A. The Global and Regional Policy Environment for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

This section highlights some of the key moments in which policies and tools for accountability on SRHR were agreed at the global and regional level.



The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

At the global level, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), convened under the auspices of the United Nations, is considered a landmark moment in the history of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Held in Cairo, the conference was the largest intergovernmental conference on population and development ever held in which all regions recognised reproductive health as a basic human right.[1] Furthermore, the definition of 'reproductive health' outlined in the ICPD Programme of Action[2], as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease," and its affirmation that people should have the ability to have "a satisfying and safe sex life [and] the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so," was truly ground breaking.

The ICPD Programme of Action, adopted by 179 countries, sets out three goals to be reached by 2015, one of which was to achieve universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning. ICPD affirmed the importance of sexual and reproductive health and family planning as a precondition for women's empowerment and is widely considered "the foundational document for the modern sexual and reproductive health movement."[3] The UN Commission on Population Development (CPD) leads the monitoring and review of the ICPD Programme of Action at the global level.

ICPD Beyond 2014 and the Addis Ababa Declaration

In 2013, each of the world's five regions organised a Regional Conference on Population and Development to review the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The ICPD Beyond 2014 Review achieved the global consensus that investing in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity across multiple sectors, and throughout the life course, is the foundation of sustainable development. In the African region, the Addis Ababa Declaration[4] reaffirmed the commitments of the ICPD and reviewed the implementation of its Programme of Action, acknowledging the gaps to be taken into account in its implementation beyond 2014. The Declaration also reaffirmed the Maputo Protocol and Plan of Action (see on the following page) and emphasised the growth of the African youth population and the importance of adopting inclusive development policies and strategies.

(1) UNFPA (1994) "ICPD Programme of Action." Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/event-pdf/PoA_en.pdf. Accessed 26/02/19.
(2) Ibid
(3) UNPOPIN (1995) "From Cairo to Beijing: Women's Conference Amplifes ICDP" Available at http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/icpdnews/icpdnews9510/cairo.html.Accessed: 26/02/19
(4) UNECA, AU, UNFPA (2013) "Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014" Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resourcepdf/ Addis_declaration_english_final_e1351225_1.pdf Accessed 26/02/19.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, seen as the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights. The Platform for Action imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realise all her rights, such as to live free from violence or child marriage, to go to school, to participate in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work.

The Beijing process unleashed remarkable political will and worldwide visibility on these issues. It connected and reinforced the activism of women's movements on a global scale. It reaffirmed the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action and also raised the possibility of the decriminalisation of abortion, inviting governments to "consider reviewing laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions."[5] The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) leads the monitoring and review of the Beijing Platform For Action at the global level.

The Maputo Protocol

In 2003, the African Union adopted The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa[6], better known as the Maputo Protocol. This protocol guaranteed comprehensive rights to women including the right to take part in the political process, to social and political equality with men, improved autonomy in their reproductive health decisions, and an end to female genital mutilation.

The Protocol is binding on all who ratify it. It came into effect in November 2005, after the minimum 15 of the 53 African Union member countries ratified it. As of January 2018, it had been ratified by 40 of the 55 AU Member States.[7]

> *The ICPD Programme of Action, adopted by 179 countries, sets out three goals to be reached by 2015.*

(5) UNPOPIN (1995) "From Cairo to Beijing: Women's Conference Amplifes ICDP" Available at http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/icpdnews/icpdnews9510/cairo.html. Accessed: 26/02/19
(6) AU (2003) "Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa" Available at: http://www.achpr.org/fles/instruments/women-protocol/achpr_instr_proto_women_eng.pdf Accessed: 26/02/19
(7) AU (2018) "High Level Consultation on the Ratifcation of the Maputo Protocol." Available at: https://au.int/en/newsevents/20180129/high-level-consultationratifcation-maputo-protocol. Accessed 26/02/19

African Union Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The African Union's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Continental Policy Framework[8] was agreed in 2005 in response to the call for the reduction of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality across the African continent. It was developed by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, the African Regional Office of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and other development partners. The corresponding Maputo Plan of Action (2016 - 2030)[9] set out how this framework would be operationalised and committed to ensuring universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in Africa. The Plan of Action has been adopted by all countries in the ESA region.

Family Planning 2020

In 2012, at the London Summit on Family Planning, 41 governments adopted the commitments to address the policy, financing, delivery and socio-cultural barriers to women accessing contraceptive information, services and supplies; collectively known as the FP2020 Commitments. FP2020 was renewed and expanded during the 2017 Family Planning Summit for Safer, Healthier, and Empowered Futures, growing to include more than 120 commitment-making partners including governments, multilateral organisations, private sector organisations and youth-led civil society organisations.

FP2020 is based on the principle that all women, no matter where they live, should have access to life-saving contraceptives. The commitments also address the integration of family planning within the continuum of care for women and children, including HIV-related services, as well as empowering women to decide whether and when they wish to become pregnant and how many children they wish to have.[10] FP2020 works closely with key partners and existing mechanisms and contributes to the UN Secretary General's Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, 'Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent'[11].

(8) AU (2005) "Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Continental Policy Framework" Availavle at: https://au.int/sites/default/fles/documents/30921-doc-srhr_english_0.pdf Accessed: 26/02/19
(9) AU (2016) "Maputo Plan of Action 2016-2030" Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/fles/documents/24099-poa_5-_revised_clean.pdf Accessed: 26/02/19.
(10) FP2020 <https://www.familyplanning2020.org/about-us#who-we-are>Accessed: 26/02/19.
(11) EWEC <http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/global-strategy/>Accessed: 26/02/19.

UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health

The Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health was launched by the UN Secretary General in 2010 and put into action by the multi-stakeholder 'Every Woman Every Child' movement. The strategy was updated in 2015 to include adolescents and to align fully to SDG targets, recognising that the survival, health and well-being of women, children and adolescents are essential to ending extreme poverty, promoting development and resilience, and achieving all the SDGs.[12]

Agenda 2030

More recently, the goals of ICPD and Beijing have been further reinforced within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN Member States in 2015. The 2030 Agenda specifically affirms the right to sexual and reproductive health under Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 5 [See Box 1]. However, there remains no globally agreed language on sexual rights.

BOX 1.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN THE 2030 AGENDA

SDG 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Target 3.3 "By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases."

Target 3.7 "By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes."

SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.3 "Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation."

Target 5.6 "Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences".

(12) EWEC <https://globalstrategy.everywomaneverychild.org/chapter4/> Accessed: 26/02/19.

SADC SRHR Strategy and Scorecard

In November 2018, the Health Ministers of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreed on a new sexual and reproductive health and rights strategy and an accompanying scorecard to assist countries to reach targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals aimed at improving health, reducing mortality, and realising the rights of all citizens, especially girls and women. The scorecard was developed collaboratively with young people by UN agencies, civil society organisations, and SheDecides (a global movement to realise the decision-making power of women and girls), and will be used to monitor progress and advocate for changes to achieve action on the most pressing issues in the region, including reducing the high rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality which are often linked to unsafe abortion; improving access to contraception; supporting efforts to reduce rates of new HIV infections and cervical cancer; and scaling up comprehensive sexuality education and integration of youth-friendly health service delivery within existing health services.[13]

ESA Commitment on CSE and SRH Services for Adolescent and Young People

The East and Southern Africa Commitment was adopted in December 2013 by Ministers of Health and Education from 20 countries in East and Southern Africa in Cape Town, South Africa. The Commitment is a strategic tool that, for the first time, brought together Ministries of Education and Health to strengthen HIV prevention efforts and foster positive health outcomes by advocating for access to quality, comprehensive sexuality education as well as sexual and reproductive health services for young people in the region. An accountability framework was developed to monitor country and regional progress towards the agreed commitments developed and implemented by the Technical Coordinating Group, under the leadership of UNAIDS and with support from the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community Secretariats.[14]

Other Frameworks

The frameworks and tools presented here are not an exhaustive list. Several other global development, human rights and legal frameworks also uphold the right to sexual and reproductive health and gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is also acknowledged by numerous treaty bodies, including the CEDAW Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR).[15]

"In November 2018, the Health Ministers of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreed on a new sexual and reproductive health and rights strategy and an accompanying scorecard."

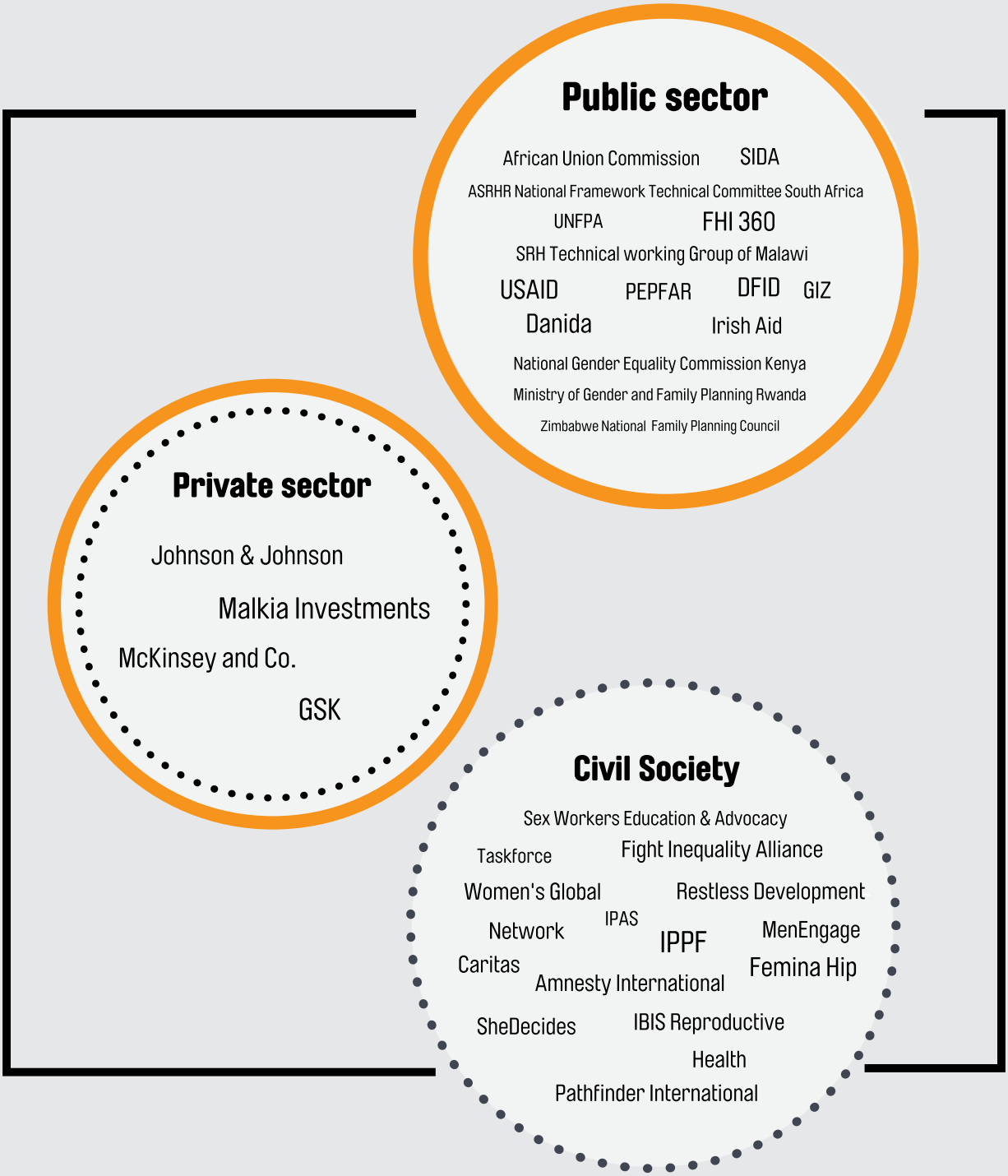
(13) Zambian Eye (2018) "Health Ministers agree strategy to help SADC become a region where SheDecides" <https://zambianeye.com/health-ministers-agreestrategy-to-help-sadc-become-a-region-where-shedecides/> Accessed: 26/02/19.
(14) UNESCO (2014) "ESA Commitment Update" Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Harare/pdf/ESACommitmentNewsletter22May2014.pdf. Accessed: 26/02/19
(15) UNFPA (2009) "Frameworks and Policies on Sexual and Reproductive Health" Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/jahiaevents/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/events/2009/policies_frameworks.pdf Accessed: 26/02/19.

B. Who We Are: Mapping Youth-Led Organisations across East and Southern Africa

In an effort to get a better sense of the youth-led organisations and movements currently working on SRHR and gender equality in the East and Southern Africa region, we used a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder mapping (undertaken during the South Africa Youth Consultation), and key informant interviews with members of youth-led organisations and development partners in the ESA region. The aim was to capture a representative sample of youth-led organisations and movements and to highlight some of the innovative approaches deployed - and challenges faced - in their quest for accountability.

During the youth consultation in South Africa, the participants mapped the accountability ecosystem in the region, including public sector, civil society, private sector stakeholders and youth-led organisations. The other stakeholders identified are highlighted in the photos below and the diagram on the following page.

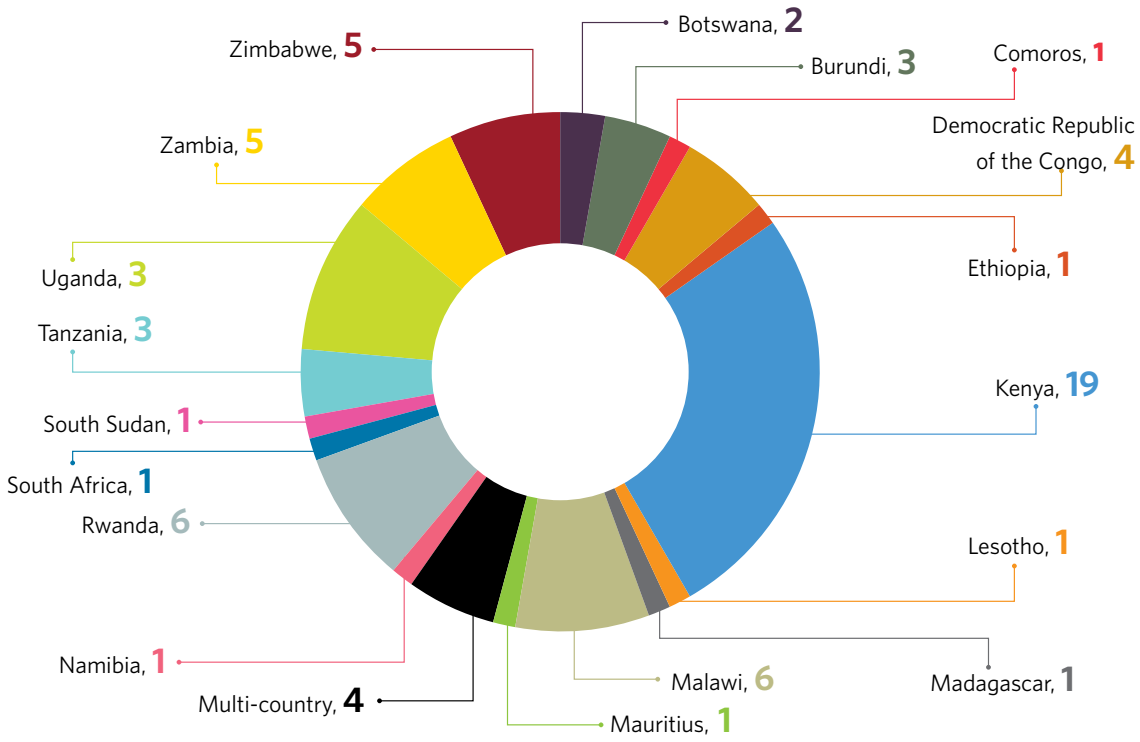
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING SNAPSHOT



Mapping of Youth-Lead Organisations

The mapping exercise identified 72 youth-led organisations from 18 of the 23 countries in the East and Southern Africa region. The chart below displays the spread of youth-led organisations by country and highlights where further research is required to identify youth-led organisations, particularly in Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia and the Seychelles.

Youth-Led Organisations by Country



These organisations work on a range of issues relating to gender equality and sexual health and rights, with several organisations working on multiple issues as illustrated in the word cloud below.

3. CHALLENGES

Based on feedback from members of the youth-led organisations who took part in key informant interviews and the Regional Consultation workshop, barriers to SRHR and gender equality can be broadly classified as being either social, economic and/or institutional.

Social Barriers

Stigma is encountered in various ways by young people working on SRHR accountability. For example, young people who identify as LGBTQ+ reported that social stigma associated with their sexuality means they often cannot engage with government and decision makers, which hinders their ability to do accountability work. Others reported that they were stigmatised merely for working on sexual health and rights.

> *"Stigma related to abortion hinders our ability to sensitise communities and seek accountability for the implementation of post-abortion care services."*
>
> **- Youth-led organisation**

Culture and religion pose another social barrier for young people working on accountability for SRHR, in particular where traditional structures deny female participants equal status to male participants in meetings with decision makers. One participant noted that the pastoral religion observed in her community doesn't permit young women to take up leadership roles, which has impacted her ability to work effectively.

In some countries in the ESA region, anti-LGBTQ+ laws mean confidentiality is critical to protect LGBTQ+ people working on accountability. For LGBTQ+ groups, attending a government or NGO meeting carries the risk of declaring themselves members of the LGBTQ+ community, potentially putting themselves and others at risk.

Ease of accessibility – to spaces, information and decision makers – was also flagged as a barrier. Many public meeting spaces are not designed to facilitate access for young advocates living with disabilities, thus hampering their ability to carry out accountability work. Equally, language that is overly technical and jargon-dense prevents young people from fully participating in meetings, while a lack of understanding of the government system and key relationships, can also be a significant barrier for young people working at the grassroots level.

Economic Barriers

In the funding environment, young people working on accountability for SRHR and gender equality often feel obliged to push the donor's agenda rather than advocating for their own specific issues, for fear of losing funding.

Young people reported that resources for youth-led accountability work are limited and that where funding is available, donors often lack an understanding of the work required – both before and after – to fund it sufficiently.

Because donors tend not to trust young people to manage funds, young people are obliged to deal with gatekeepers and middlemen who often cut off direct access to funds for youth-led organisations. It was suggested that donors cut out middlemen organisations and directly fund grassroots youth-led organisations while providing them with support and training to manage the funds.

Young people also reported that they are not always aware of a donor's budget rules and procedures. Further, those leading organisations expressed frustration at being denied the authority to make changes to budgets based on their direct experience, whereas donors can change costs mid-programme.

> *Organisations compete for the same funding which creates silos, and acts as a barrier to good partnerships.*
>
> **- Youth-led organisation**

In cases where they receive government support, young people often hesitate to criticise official policies. Even those who don't directly receive government funding may feel reluctant to criticise government departments if they rely on them for access to certain spaces.

> *We don't do as much social accountability work as we would like to because the government provides facilities and places for training.*
>
> **- Youth-led organisation**

Finally, young people perceived a general decrease in prioritisation of health and SRHR funding in the ESA region, with governments prioritising other issues such as economic development and anti- terrorism.

Institutional Barriers

Young people reported that laws around public demonstrations - such as public order policies - place restrictions on how they may mobilise around an issue. In addition, complex political structures make it difficult to know who the decision makers on a particular issue are. And assuming young people manage to find out who to approach, the decision maker may be reluctant to engage with them. It was also reported that in many contexts, influencing at the local government level is often heavily dependent on bribes and corruption to persuade leaders to support certain issues. Where such practices prevail, grassroots youth-led organisations cannot compete with big business or other larger organisations when it comes to pushing an agenda.

Additionally, a strongly centralised system of government, with limited support for regional infrastructure added to the problem of accessibility; particularly where power was concentrated in a capital city.

Young people also face difficulties navigating complex political systems where multiple levels of decision making can result in issues being pushed from one department to another, such as the Ministry of Gender, the Ministry of Youth or the Ministry of Health, without one clear lead.

> *We don't have a properly functioning coordination mechanism or council of NGOs locally. Sometimes we are unaware of what other organisations are doing and there's a danger in duplicating efforts or sending the wrong messages that aren't in line with government's priorities.*
>
> **- Youth-led organisation**

In some contexts, attitudes of health care providers can negatively influence the quality of service provision, resulting in lack of accessible SRHR services for young people. For example, in South Africa all doctors are legally bound to provide abortion services, however young people we spoke with reported that only one in four will provide these services. Young people also struggle to make sense of the complexity of power holders and players in the SRHR ecosystem, specifically when it comes to understanding how they link together and where the opportunities lie. They also cited politics between different partners such as UN agencies or bilateral donors as a barrier to accountability, prompting the need to navigate between the various agenda.

4. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Our consultations identified many innovative ways in which young people are seeking accountability on SRHR at different levels, some of which are highlighted below.

Accountability through Media

ASHWA, a youth-led organisation operating in Busia, Uganda, has partnered with a local radio station to raise awareness and hold district health officers to account. The radio station records their advocacy meetings with local leaders and later airs the sessions for the community to hear and join in the discussion.

Community members use this platform to draw attention to problems they experience, such as accessing HIV drugs on time, and are able to call on the local leader to ensure that stock is replenished by the national drug authority in a timely manner. Radio exposure has also had a positive effect on the organisation's profile and reputation in the community, allowing them to become even more effective in advocating for youth-friendly health services.

Eric Omondi

> *We engage the community through radio talk shows. Listeners call in and ask questions to the leaders about what they have done.*
>
> **- Eric Omondi**

Hola Africa, founded in 2012 in Johannesburg, is an interactive online space which uses audio, visual, and written material to challenge perceptions and norms, raise awareness, and engage in activism on African queer women's experiences and issues. Its contributors are queer women from across the African continent and diaspora. The collective focuses on adding to the African female sex and sexuality narrative by publishing stories by African women on sex and sexuality while also engaging in online activities and campaigns, on everything from masturbation and safe sex, to cyber violence.[16]

(16) Bashi, G. et al. (2018) "Young feminists' creative strategies to challenge the status quo: a view from FRIDA" Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2018.1526464. Accessed: 26/02/19.

Accountability through Performing Arts

A number of youth-led organisations are using entertainment to raise awareness among community members and decision makers.

Circus Zambia, a youth-led organisation, is seeking to improve the relationship between government officials and community members in the townships in which they work. The project was founded in response to a recent incident in which an unarmed community member was shot by police in a public space. Circus Zambia realised that without bridging the divide between government officials, the police, and members of the township communities, situations in which they interact with each other have the potential to escalate into conflict. Using a circus format, they are working with young people to create a show about this incident which also educates citizens, particularly young people, about their rights.

In Rwanda, a group of university students organises Zumba dances in cabarets and nightclubs and uses the opportunity to talk about safe sex and HIV prevention. In the daytime, they reach out with mobile services offering free HIV testing and free condoms. Known as Love Prize, the initiative was in response to an increase in teenage pregnancies and HIV among female students despite the government-sponsored messaging around abstinence as the only way to prevent pregnancy and HIV.

> *We thought that abstinence is not working. Why don't we promote safe sexual behaviours rather than abstinence?*
>
> **- Florentine Kamirwa**

Similarly, Kenyan-based Swadakta, a youth-led dance group working on HIV and AIDS prevention and sexual health, performs in public places such as buses and schools to create awareness of HIV and AIDS, and to distribute condoms.

> *While dancing, we raise awareness of how people can avoid getting HIV or how to live with AIDS. There are also a lot of circumcised ladies in our area. We are anti Female Genital Mutilation and also raise awareness of why FGM is harmful for women.*
>
> **-Andrew Koroso**

> *In Kenya, a youth-led organisation called Uthabiti uses blockchain technology to campaign for sexual health rights and increase access to safe and legitimate sexual health products.*

Accountability through Harnessing Technology

From online activism to blockchain, youth organisations are finding innovative ways to promote SRHR and gender equality.

Online activism has been employed by youth-led organisations and movements either as a standalone strategy or as a component of a wider campaign or activity. Examples include: The Warembo Ni Yes! ('Ladies Say Yes') movement aimed at mobilising thousands of young Kenyan women to vote for the 2010 Constitution by raising awareness of how their rights would be improved under the new Kenyan Constitution and galvanising their support for the vote. Later, in 2014, following widespread protests in reaction to a video of a young woman being forcibly stripped of her clothes in public, an online campaign with the hashtag #MyDressMyChoice resulted in the arrest of the culprits and the introduction of an amendment to Kenyan law recommending a jail term of up to 20 years for those found guilty of invasion of privacy.[17]

In Kenya, a youth-led organisation called Uthabiti uses blockchain technology to campaign for sexual health rights and increase access to safe and legitimate sexual health products. According to Uthabiti, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Kenya (PPB) has stated that up to 30% of health products in Kenya are counterfeit. Using blockchain technology, Uthabiti has developed an app that checks the legitimacy of health products, thereby protecting women and holding pharmacies to account.

Through its partnership with the PPB, Uthabiti has also compiled a database of certified pharmacies selling legitimate products. Community members can send a text with a verification code provided by the pharmacy to a centralised number which responds to confirm that the pharmacy is verified. Uthabiti has used evidence from its work to engage the Council of Governors of Kenya on the need to ensure that government hospitals in Kericho and Uasin Gishu Counties take steps to safeguard their supply chain against counterfeit products.

(17) Marler, I. et al. "Reclaiming culture, resisting co-optation: young feminists confronting the rising right" Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2018.1523274. Accessed: 26/02/19

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

How to Strengthen Youth-Led Accountability for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Gender Equality

Restless Development and UNFPA ESARO consulted with young people from across East and Southern Africa to identify how development agencies and young people can work together to strengthen accountability for SRHR and gender equality.

From this process, four themes were highlighted as priority areas for young people, under which eight key recommendations have emerged. Recognising the need to visualise and find practical solutions, each recommendation is accompanied by a suggestion as to how this could be implemented.

Create an Enabling Environment for Youth Leadership

During the consultations, it was recognised that many development agencies and civil society stakeholders have made positive steps towards meaningful youth engagement in accountability programmes. For example, participants highlighted programmes supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Marie Stopes South Africa and ActionAid, which are empowering young people, and creating the space for them to hold decision makers to account for their SRHR and gender equality commitments.

> *We need to shift negative attitudes held by some agency and NGO staff towards young people.*
>
> **- Youth Advocate**

Despite the rhetoric around youth engagement, many young people still face discrimination in practical terms. For example, being actively excluded from high level meetings and tokenistic participation in forums without any real opportunities to influence decision making.

While the young people consulted recognised their own power to lead and drive accountability, they also recognised the importance of building a strong accountability network and working in partnership with civil society and government bodies to strengthen their work. For this reason, the recommendations below seek to create an enabling environment for youth within national CSOs and Forums, NGOs, UN agencies and government bodies to support the integration of young people into existing accountability work.

WHAT	HOW
Facilitate regular interaction between development practitioners (especially within INGOs and UN agencies) and young people.	Invite youth organisations and activists into your office to share their work in informal spaces (e.g. brown bags, staff retreats).
Build knowledge and skills of staff in youth engagement - theory & practice.	Include youth engagement as part of compulsory and regular training for staff.
Include young people in existing decision-making structures.	Open up a position on your governance board for a young person – fully supported as an equal member.
Ensure young people are represented on panels and platforms.	Establish a policy that your Director will not speak on a panel if there is no young person represented.
Ensure that a diverse range of young people's perspectives are gathered during youth consultations - so no perspectives are left behind.	Minimum requirement to consult three youth organisations/networks - incl. young women and marginalised groups.
Create stronger links between National CSOs and youth-led organisations to increase connections and build capacity in key areas for accountability.	Establish a two-way skills exchange programme between INGOs, CSOs and youth-led organisations - on topics including advocacy, and youth engagement.
Strengthen communications between young people and NGOs and UN agencies.	Trial the use of platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp as a mode of communication and reporting.
Evaluate CSOs, INGOs and UN agencies on levels of youth participation.	Support young people to lead "youth audits" of structures and programmes.

Leverage and Diversify Resources for Youth-Led Accountability

> *Give young people enough support and resources in a timely manner, do not expect them to volunteer their time.*

- Development Practitioner

Throughout the consultations, a lack of financial resources was repeatedly highlighted as a key barrier for young people to be able to lead accountability work. While the young people we spoke to recognised those opportunities that have been made available - such as sponsorship from NGOs and some UN agencies to participate in youth conferences and regional or global forums - the lack of consistent funding to support youth-led accountability work at a grassroots and national level remained a problem. For example, whilst a select number of young people may receive sponsorship to attend an event and speak with decision makers, they do not have the resources to collect and analyse data to hold decision makers accountable or to hold meetings to provide feedback to community members.

The recommendations on the following page contain suggestions on how to broaden funding opportunities.

WHAT	HOW
Expand funding opportunities beyond participation at events and conferences.	Fund youth-led organisations to gather evidence prior to presenting at conferences and hold people accountable for outcomes.
Open up funding opportunities to diverse range of youth organisations and movements supporting marginalised young people.	Establish a regular "partners audit" to assess and evaluate existing youth partners, creating opportunity for others to apply.
Increase information and transparency about funding opportunities.	Invite youth-led organisations to "hotdesk" in your office, and support them to use the internet to access information.
Increase skills and capacity of youth-led organisations in budgeting and financial management, to build trust with donors.	Include financial management training and mentoring as key components of any funded programme, alongside guidance documentation.
Encourage NGOs to allocate funding for youth engagement in accountability work.	Require down-stream NGO partners to budget and publish reports on youth participation, including highlighting marginalised groups.
Foster collaboration rather than competition between NGOs, CSOs and youth organisations in the SRHR and gender equality sector.	Grants with co-creation, to encourage CSOs to collaborate with youth-led organisations, ensuring young people feed-in at early stages.
Encourage government delegations to include and support youth representatives.	Lobby for a Government Minister to bring a Youth Delegate as part of an official delegation to high-level forums and international conferences.
Explore non-traditional funding mechanisms, to support grassroots organisations.	Trial funding informal youth organisations to undertake accountability work, for example, by using Mobile Money.

Increase Diversity of Young People Leading Accountability Work

> *After all, young people know their needs, they know what they want, they know what kind of services are missing - they are the population that is affected.*
>
> **- Development Practitioner**

A recurrent theme from the consultations was the lack of diversity amongst young people leading accountability work, especially in engaging with decision makers at high-level events. Young people we spoke with identified that marginalised young people who are most affected by the poor national implementation of SRHR and gender equality commitments, are not represented or supported to hold decision makers to account.

In unpacking the barriers faced, the young people shared their experiences of unclear and unequal selection processes, with unnecessary academic and language barriers within selection criteria, and how this has resulted in "cherry picking", fostering the "professionalisation" of youth advocacy. The recommendations below put forward solutions for how to open up opportunities for a more diverse range of voices, and support experienced advocates to "pass on the torch".

Drawing from direct experience, young people also identified additional barriers encountered by young people from marginalised groups, notably LGBTQ+ young people and young people with disabilities, in advocacy spaces. The recommendations below also put forward a set of suggestions for how organising partners can take responsibility for ensuring safe and accessible opportunities for young people to engage with decision makers and development stakeholders.

WHAT	HOW
Ensure recruitment and selection of youth representatives are simple and transparent, ending the practice of "cherry picking" youth delegates.	Share opportunities widely, inform young people of the selection criteria that is being used and involve youth representatives or create a youth panel to oversee the selection.
Remove academic and education requirements to participation in accountability initiatives.	Remove degree requirement from all applications, placing greater value on community volunteering and work experience.
Remove language barriers for young people to engage in advocacy and accountability work.	Ensure translation support – whether formal or informal - is available at events and conferences.
Support for marginalised groups - notably young women, LGBTQ+ young people, and young PwD to participate.	Allocate a member of staff to outreach to local LGBTQ+ and PWD youth organisations, and share opportunities as they arise.
Ensure safe physical and social spaces for marginalised groups - notably young women, LGBTQ+ young people and Young PwD.	Provide a briefing to all attendees on appropriate language and terminology - especially regarding gender, sexuality and disability inclusion.
Build the skills and experience of a diverse range of young people in accountability.	Host training in key skills for accountability (e.g. data collection & analysis) for youth activists and youth-led organisations.
Encourage experienced advocates to mentor upcoming activities to capacitate and support the growth, learning and exposure of new youth representatives.	Establish a "buddying" programme at the next national, regional or global conference.
Use creative media to engage young people "outside the room" at events and conferences in two-way conversation.	Support young creatives and social media influencers to attend conferences and develop engaging content.

Foster Greater Accountability to Communities

> *Young people must be responsible and go with accurate data when approaching decision makers.*

- Youth Advocate

The consultations highlighted the unintended consequence of youth mobilisation at the global level, (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals). Young people we spoke with believed that resources to support engagement with national or regional SRHR and gender equality frameworks, have been stretched, or even taken away from them.

In addition, a lack of awareness of these platforms and how they link to local decision making and the lack of transparent structured engagement opportunities, result in young people focusing on global movements. Young people shared that this can result in accountability and advocacy work appearing "far away" from the grassroots, and makes it difficult for community members to understand the impact it could have on their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

Young people also shared the challenges of being a "youth representative" where it is often unclear which constituency they are representing, who they are accountable to, and what feedback mechanisms are available. Young people shared experiences of feeling they did not have adequate or quality evidence to fully represent community perspectives, forcing them to rely on personal testimonies.

Young people shared examples of how they have developed informal feedback mechanisms, such as live-tweeting their activities at events and presenting back to colleagues during team meetings. The recommendations below include suggestions on how to establish feedback mechanisms that enables community members to better hold their youth representatives to account.

WHAT	HOW
Strengthen young people's knowledge and understanding of global and regional accountability frameworks and interlinkages with local commitments.	Make mapping documents and advocacy briefings (e.g. on links between SDG and SADC indicators) open source, and share with youth organisations.
Increase awareness amongst communities on role of accountability in improving access to SRHR and gender equality (e.g. service provision, reducing stigma).	Support young people to present their accountability work at community meetings.
Increase public awareness of local, regional and national accountability work - alongside global conferences.	Use UN media channels to feature stories of youth-led accountability - linking local activism to global issues, and sharing with other media.
Encourage young people to undertake community consultations to identify issues prior to deciding accountability priorities.	Ask young people to present community perspectives during pre-conference sessions; host side-events and plenary sessions.
Encourage young people to engage in national and regional accountability platforms and mechanisms, which are "closer" to the grassroots.	Call on national and regional forums (incl. AU, SADC, EAC) to increase space for youth-led accountability, sharing these recommendations.
Increase the quality of evidence gathered, analysed, and used by young people for accountability work.	Include data analysis as a key activity in any youth-led accountability programme.
Strengthen links between youth spaces and main conferences - to ensure young people can accurately report on outcomes.	Set-up a screening room adjacent to conference and in Country Offices for young people to watch and interact with the conversation.
Encourage young people to provide feedback to community members on outcomes following meetings with decision makers.	Include a "Community Perspectives "section in feedback reporting for young people to complete and share back with sponsoring partners and local youth constituencies.

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