

WHAT YOUTH WANT AMIDST COVID-19

Consultative Report

AUGUST
2020



WE DEMAND PARTNERS TO
INTENTIONALLY WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Osayidelerera
COVID-19



WHAT YOUTH WANT

COVID-19 INCLUSIVE RESPONSE for Malawi's Youth



CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges in the delivery of health services worldwide. The pandemic has led to a great shift in focus on programming and investments towards the COVID-19 response, negatively impacting other health services, including sexual and reproductive health, particularly for adolescents and youths.

Learning from the recent released consultative report on the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of and access to youth-friendly health services (YFHS) in Malawi—documented and championed by Youth Wave in collaboration with the Ministry of Health's Reproductive Health Directorate—found that since the onset of the pandemic in Malawi, there has been a drastic drop in the use of YFHS in the country. YFHS statistics from the DHIS2, a tool used as part of Malawi's health information system, corroborates the findings from our consultations.

DHIS2 data is showing a declining trend in YFHS provision starting from the period when COVID-19 preventive measures were instituted in Malawi in late March 2020. Between the same time period in 2019 and 2020, the use of YFHS declined by one-third, from a monthly average of 717,622 to just 481,210. One of the factors contributing to the decline is the reported interruption and/or cancellation of outreach services to young people seeking sexual and reproductive health services. In some instances there have been reports that even in YFHS Centres services are no longer provided due to COVID-19.

This situation can cause harm that will manifest in the future and leave deep scars to an approximately 78% of the Malawi population who are under the age of 35 (Population and housing Census 2018). This will cause great challenge in achieving the SDGs by 2030, Agenda 2063, ESA Commitments, Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 3 (MGDS3) and harnessing the demographic dividend.

Furthermore, the current situation in Malawi reveals that everyone is at risk, but the pandemic is hitting hard on older people more often than young people, this has led to relaxation of young people in abiding to measures put in place to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19. World Health Organisation (WHO) indicate that; the spread of COVID-19 is being driven by young people who, in most cases, are asymptomatic and pose a great threat to other vulnerable people such as older people and those with other underlined medications condition such as HIV and AIDS.

Changing this picture begins with young people. Advancing youth agenda is important in fast-tracking the national youth development response especially when youth are involved in identifying the barriers and solutions to healthcare and ensure that progress is accelerated. In August 2020, Ministry of Health, Health Education Services (HES) with Support from the USAID/Health Communication For Life (HC4L) Project, collaborated with a youth led NGO, Youth Wave to mobilize young people (Changemakers) across the country to hold consultations workshops on COVID-19 and SRHR sessions national wide divided into southern, central and northern region. This was done in collaboration with line ministries of youth, health – reproductive health directorate and health education services. These unique sessions also drew representatives of District Youth Officers (DYO's) who are responsible for demand and Youth Friendly Health Service Coordinators (YFHS) responsible for supply (services) and changemakers drawn from youth-led NGO's, networks, clubs and other development structures in 18 districts representing 28 youth structures.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS ON COVID-19 AND SRHR

The sessions aimed identifying community driven solutions by young people to ensure SRHR services are sustained in districts and communities amidst COVID-19. There were presentations made from the key line ministries listed above, group discussions, questions and answers, prioritization of key actions and recommendations that need to be addressed in creating safe spaces for young people.

Here are few highlights from young people's thinking on SRHR and COVID-19 pandemic:

1. I would rather get pregnant than getting Coronavirus from a health facility which is COVID-19 hotspot.
2. I am very scared to visit a health facility due to screening of possible COVID-19 test.
3. Who would dare welcome CBDA's in their households, these people are COVID-19 carriers.
4. Imagine buying a cloth mask over Chiwaya just to access services.
5. I cry for my beloved youth as our YFHS corner has been turned into COVID-19 isolation space.



The key actions and recommendations were gathered nationwide through a consultative process of young leaders (changemakers) representing 28 youth structures. The consultations shaped young people to set the agenda on COVID-19 and SRHR landscape.

KEY ACTIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Pledged to continue coordinating themselves, sharing lessons and learning from each other to promote targeted SRH choices and taking services to where young people are.
2. Responsible for taking charge of their health and others, adopting informed health choices and taking up SRH services in available facilities in their localities depicting case studies of PSI, BLM, Save the Children, FPAM who are providing outreach services in other districts.
3. Prioritize innovation in addressing SRHR barriers through harnessing the power of digital platforms in accessing information #HashtagGeneration
4. To hold government and partners accountable on youth interventions.

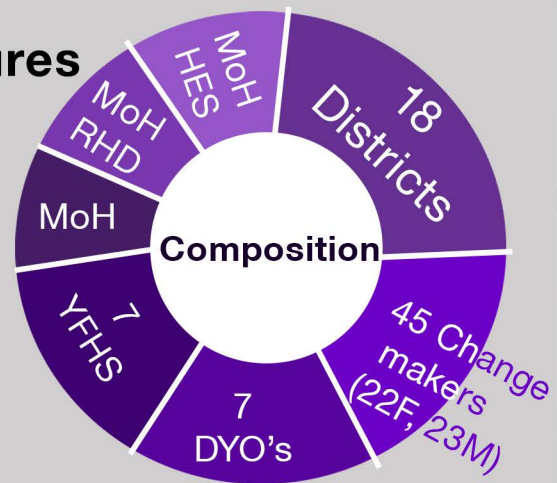


18 DISTRICTS

Lilongwe, Kasungu, Dowa, Rumpi, Blantyre, Nkhatabay, Mangochi, Thyolo, Neno, Machinga, Balaka, Mzuzu, Salima, Nkhotakota, Mchinji, Zomba, Phalombe, Mulanje

28 Youth Structures

- Youth Led Organisations
- Youth Networks
- Youth Associations
- Youth Clubs





TOP 10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Meaningful Youth Participation and Involvement in COVID-19 Taskforces at National, District and Community Levels.

- To add voice, innovation and different thinking to the response.

Strategic Partnership and Collaboration

- Partners working with young people must provide core technical and financial support and intentionally work with youth led organizations, networks and structures to leverage synergies in providing community based services.

Dedicate Youth Basket Fund

- Partners should support NYCOM to sub-grant youth led organizations and affiliates
- Pleading with government to allocate more funding (ORT) to DYO's and special fund to YFHS sector.

Capacity Building

- Provide technical support to youth led NGOs to deliver quality youth centered programs including youth fellowship programs, incubators, research and resource mobilization.
- Training of youth cadre; YCBDAs, peer educators and youth leaders.

Integrated Services Provision in Hard to Reach Communities

- Prioritize provision of service with the minimum package of COVID-19, SRHR, GBV and Mental Health to communities without static health facilities.

Youth Targeted Campaigns

- Diverse and inclusive campaigns targeting the most vulnerable and marginalized youth including those living with HIV, disability and refugees.

Advocacy Programming

- Holding government accountable on youth issues, needs, priorities and challenges including barriers in accessing SRHR services

Family and Community Engagement

- Sparking conversation around Parent Child Communication (PCC), Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Child Rape commonly known as child marriages.

Mass and Digital Media Engagement

- Harnessing the power of digital platforms for sharing correct and accurate information and linkages to grassroots community radio stations.

Build Back Better in Schools (BBBS)

- Safer schools that are free from COVID-19, Early Unintended Pregnancies (EUP), GBV, and sexual harassment.
- Availability of sanitary products.
- Skilled teachers to effectively deliver Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

ANNEX A

REPRESENTATION FROM GOVERNMENT LINE MINISTRIES

1. Mavuto Thomas - Acting Deputy Director of Prevention Health Education Services - Ministry of Health
2. Hans Katengeza - National Program Coordinator - Reproductive Health Directorate - Ministry of Health
3. Aubrey Banda - Youth Officer - Ministry of Youth

LIST OF YOUTH STRUCTURES, DYOs AND YFHS SOURTHEN REGION

1. National Youth Network - Sourthen
2. Youth Response for Social Change
3. Phalombe Youth Arms
4. Concerned Youth Organisation
5. National Association of Young People Living with HIV - Sourthen
6. Youth Initiative for Sustainable Development
7. Arts and Documentaries Malawi
8. Joseph Kamwendo Foundation
9. Mulanje Boma Youth Club
10. Bright Minds of Today
11. Mangochi District Youth Corner
12. Young Africans Leaders Initiative
13. Reach out for Life
14. Bwenzi Organization
15. Tonse Youth Club
16. SDG Copes Malawi

CENTRAL REGION

17. National Youth Network - Central
18. Dubai Youth Watch Organisation
19. Education for Change
20. Community Initiative for Social Empowerment
21. Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS
22. Arts and Fashion for Change
23. Youth Empowerment for National Transformation
24. SDGs Youth Champions
25. Maximum Inclusion and Development for All (MIDA)

NORTHERN REGION

26. Centre for Girls and interaction
27. Youth Empowerment Towards Development
28. International Community of Women living with HIV

LIST OF YOUTH OFFICERS

1. Martha Chilewani - Blantyre Urban
2. Chikondi Chasweka - Thyolo
3. Swoden Zuze - Machinga
4. Monica Neba - Dowa
5. Getrude Fransisco Chibaka - Blantyre Rural
6. Gweyn Makondetsa - Mchinji
7. Youngson Ngwira - Nkhatabay

LIST OF YHFS COORDINATORS

1. Maness Segula - Blantyre Urban
2. Lydia Mpalira - Blantyre Rural
3. Anthony Sandiyang'ane - Neno
4. Lyton Chithonje - Salima
5. Tiyanhulenji Ligoneka - Rumphi
6. Chris Mwambene - Kasungu
7. Dan Mika - Balaka