



# Operations Research on Youth-Led Collaborations in Malawi

Final Report



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*Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) is a five-year programme (2016-2020) developed by a consortium consisting of Rutgers, Aidsfonds, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, Dance4life, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Simavi. The programme is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the SRHR Partnership Fund. The GUSO programme addresses the following problem: "Young people do not claim their sexual rights and their right to participation because of restrictions at community, societal, institutional and political levels. This hinders their access to comprehensive SRHR education and services that match their needs, and ability to make their own informed SRHR decisions." The GUSO consortium addresses this problem in seven countries: Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Indonesia, Ethiopia and Pakistan. The change that is envisioned is that all young people, especially girls and young women, are empowered to realise their SRHR in societies that take a positive stance towards young people's sexuality. Operational research has been identified as an integral part of activities in the GUSO programme. The aim is to enhance the performance of the program, improve outcomes, assess feasibility of new strategies and/or assess or improve the programme Theory of Change.*

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# Acronyms

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ADC	Area Development Committee	NL/UK	Netherlands/United Kingdom
ASK	Access, Services, and Knowledge	NPC	National Programme Coordinator
CAVWOC	Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children	NPTC	National Programme Technical Committee
CHRR	Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation	NSC	National Steering Committee
COWLHA	Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS	OR	Operations Research
CYECE	Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
DYO	District Youth Office / District Youth Officer	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
FGD	Focus Group Discussions	TA	Traditional Authority
FPAM	Family Planning Association of Malawi	UFBR	Unite for Body Rights
GUSO	Get Up Speak Out	VDC	Village Development Committee
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation	YAC	Youth Advisory Council
MoYDS	Ministry of Youth Development and Sports	YAP	Youth-Adult Partnership
MYP	Meaningful Youth Participation	YCBDA	Young Community Based Distribution Agent
NGO	Non-government Organisation	YCC	Youth Country Coordinator
		YLO	Youth-led Organisations
		YONECO	Youth Net and Counselling

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The research team was led by Arushi Singh, who worked with the GUSO Youth Country Coordinator (YCC), Happiness Makwinja and the three young co-researchers hired by the Malawi SRHR Alliance – John Kumwenda, Dingiswayo Moyo and Faith Nkhata. Valuable technical inputs were provided by Rosalijn Both, Researcher GUSO, from the Netherlands.

All the respondents were very helpful and generous of their time and knowledge, and helped the research team gain insights on how meaningful youth participation, youth leadership, and youth-led collaborations were being implemented.

# Introduction

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Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) is a five-year programme (2016-2020) developed by a consortium consisting of Rutgers, Aidsfonds, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, Dance4life, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Simavi. The programme is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the SRHR Partnership Fund.

The GUSO programme addresses the following problem: “Young people do not claim their sexual rights and their right to participation because of restrictions at community, societal, institutional and political levels. This hinders their access to comprehensive SRHR education and services that match their needs, and ability to make their own informed SRHR decisions.” The GUSO consortium addresses this problem in seven countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, and Uganda. The change that is envisioned is that all young people, especially girls and young women, are empowered to realise their SRHR in societies that take a positive stance towards young people’s sexuality.

By using a multi-component approach, there is a unique added value as a multitude of factors and actors are addressed in influencing young people’s SRHR. The theory of change describes five interrelated outcomes that contribute towards the long-term objective. These interrelated outcomes are:

- 1) Strengthened in-country SRHR alliances.
- 2) Empower young people to voice their rights.
- 3) Increase the access to and utilization of SRHR information/education.
- 4) Increase the access to and utilization of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.
- 5) Improve and create a supportive environment for SRHR.

The five outcomes in combination with five core principles are related to the strategies of the programme. These strategies focus, for example, on capacity building, evidence-based advocacy, provision of SRHR education and information, building youth-adult partnerships, and establishing social accountability mechanisms. GUSO’s Theory of Change builds on the earlier successes and experiences from Access, Services, and Knowledge (ASK) (2013-2015) and Unite for Body Rights (UFBR) (2011–2015) programmes.

**Operational research (OR)** has been identified as an integral part of the activities in the GUSO programme. The aim is to enhance the performance of the programme, improve outcomes, assess feasibility of new strategies and/or assess or improve the programme Theory of Change.

For **outcome area 2**, specific strategies include the structural engagement and empowerment of young people to voice their rights, through strengthening their capacities and ensuring that they are meaningfully involved in all aspects of the programme through youth-adult partnerships. The GUSO programme document lays out that young people will be encouraged, capacitated and empowered to act as youth advocates at local, national and international level, ensuring they can create a critical mass to advocate for and voice their SRHR. Major positive changes cannot be effected without building collective power which can mobilise a political force for change.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the idea within GUSO was to bring together young people working with the different partner organisations and existing youth

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<sup>1</sup> Batliwala, S (2012) *Changing their world: Concepts and practices of women’s movements (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, AWID: Toronto

networks under a joint political agenda, to strengthen these, and enable them to mobilize and engage in collective actions and activities, in particular towards building public opinion and advocating for SRHR. This kind of movement building was also tied to outcome area 1 where the country alliances were to be strengthened for sustainability by strengthening their collaboration within the alliance.

Previous ORs on MYP had revealed that there were several young people working on the ground as volunteers, peer educators, etc. for each of the partner organisations in a country alliance. While some partners had good systems and structures of youth representation within their organisation, others did not, and the alliance as a whole did not have such a structure either. To ensure that all young people working under the same alliance could have a more unified voice within the alliance and their own organisations, it was agreed that these young people need to be brought together, empowered to work together as a constituency, and demand their SRH rights, not only from governments and communities, but also the partner organisations and the country alliances.

This kind of movement building, especially between young people who were involved with partner organisations at ground level but were not aware of each other's roles in the programme, was intended to strengthen meaningful youth participation by ensuring that young people within the country alliance had a collective voice. It was also envisioned that this would enable better youth-adult partnerships at the country alliances' level, not just at the partner organisation level.

In practice, a youth movement was conceptualized as a group of young people working together towards a shared goal, namely, to create change towards better SRHR. It was intended to foster youth movements by supporting young people involved in GUSO to organize themselves and work together effectively.

This operational research report is focused on the youth movement building strategy implemented by GUSO country alliances under outcome area 2. In Quarter 4 of 2018, it was decided to change the term youth movement building to youth-led collaborations. This was because youth movement building was a challenge for the country alliances. It was not clear to everyone working in GUSO what a youth movement exactly was, how to build a movement and what a movement should do. The GUSO mid-term report (July 2018) showed that the work on youth movement building remained behind in most of the GUSO countries and not much progress under this strategy was being made.

Discussions at different levels within GUSO subsequently led to a redefining of the strategy of youth movement building. It was decided to change the strategy 'networking and movement building' to 'youth-led collaborations'. Also, on the intermediate outcome level it was decided to change 'young people work together' to 'networks of empowered young people'. It was felt that this change would lead to an improved understanding of the outcome for Youth Movement Building and would provide better directions for action in this area. This change was presented in the GUSO workplan for 2019-2020.

## Purpose

The purpose of this operations research was to examine how country alliances were implementing the newly defined strategy of youth-led collaborations, what were the good practices that could be shared across different alliances and programmes, and what lessons could be learnt for future iterations of the strategy. Therefore, two countries were chosen based on their reported progress and

good practices on outcome area 2, i.e. Uganda and Malawi, with the intention of examining and documenting their progress and sharing learnings.

Uganda was selected because many countries were already learning from the Youth Advisory Committee established by the Uganda Alliance. Malawi was selected because they are implementing different kinds of youth-led collaborations, including working with existing government structures, thus providing an opportunity to learn about sustainability. Because of their (partly) different approaches, together the choice of countries enables learning about a variety of YLC.

## Research question

### **Main research question:**

How is the strategy of youth-led collaborations applied within the GUSO programme and how does the YLC work to positively contribute to the development, implementation and delivery of SRHR interventions through the GUSO programme?

### **Sub-questions**

1. How are the countries within the GUSO programme implementing the strategy of youth-led collaborations?
  - i. What kinds of youth-led collaborations are country alliances reporting under output indicator 2b?
  - ii. Who are involved in the implementation? What is the role of young people in general and the YCC?
  - iii. What are the methodologies used to implement this strategy and what was the process partners/alliances went through to arrive at the current implementation methodology in use – how was it conceptualized?
  - iv. What structural processes are in place for youth-led collaborations (to make sure that they do not disappear after GUSO programmes end)?
  - v. What are country alliances doing to make sure that youth-led collaborations are inclusive / involving young people from different walks of life?
  - vi. What mechanisms are put in place by country alliances to measure the effect of the youth-led collaborations?
2. How do Youth Led Collaborations work to positively influence the development, implementation and delivery of SRHR interventions through the GUSO programme?
  - i. What is the effect of this strategy on the young people / YLOs involved in it?
  - ii. What is the effect of this strategy on the collaborations within the programme / partner organisations / alliances?
  - iii. What is the effect of this strategy on building solidarity for SRHR of young people?
  - iv. What is the effect of this strategy on SRHR interventions for end-beneficiaries?
3. What are common obstacles in fostering youth led collaborations on SRHR within the GUSO program?
4. What distinct (missed) opportunities do country alliances have in nurturing youth led collaborations on SRHR?



# Methodology

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This was a qualitative operations research (OR) aimed at generating evidence-based knowledge on interventions, strategies or tools for youth-led collaborations, that could enhance the performance, quality, effectiveness or coverage. The research was led by an international consultant, in collaboration with a team of four young co-researchers (2 females and 2 males), trained by the Malawi SRHR Alliance. Three of these young co-researchers are part of the Alliance research team and were previously involved in the endline evaluation activities of GUSO outcome 2. They had been recruited externally, i.e. not from within GUSO. The fourth young co-researcher was the Youth Country Coordinator (YCC) for GUSO.

The data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), for which guides were developed based on the research question and sub-questions (see Appendix 1). Interview respondents included project officers; district government officials; Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members; and the National Programme Coordinator (NPC). There were a total of 14 interviews / group interviews held with 17 respondents. FGD respondents included the youth movement members and youth club members. A total of 7 FGDs were conducted of mixed females and males with 22 female and 40 male respondents.

The OR focused on Mangochi and Chikwawa Districts which are the GUSO implementation districts in Malawi, and all 6 partner organisations were covered, i.e. Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE) and Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA).

The data collection took place between 21-29 October 2019. Respondents were mobilised by the project officers. Respondents were reimbursed for travel expenses for the interview or FGD.

The research team defined some key concepts before the data collection to ensure that there was a common understanding of what they were looking for. This was done because the research team members were new to GUSO. The research team came up with the following definitions for key concepts:

***Solidarity:*** a strong relationship among young people which demonstrates unity and togetherness to claim their sexual and reproductive health and rights

***Youth-adult partnership:*** this is when young people work hand in hand with adults to achieve a common goal through sharing equal responsibilities and power

***Youth leadership:*** when young people are at the forefront of decision-making processes as well as the implementation

***Meaningful youth participation:*** purposeful involvement of young people in programmes at all stages, i.e. planning, decision making, budgeting, M&E, implementation, etc, while ensuring that young people fully understand their involvement and their roles

***Youth-led collaborations:*** network of young people and/or other stakeholders working together to achieve a common goal; being led by young people themselves

The **analysis** was done based on the research question and the sub-questions, and key concepts defined above, through an iterative process of discussion of the data collected each day among the research team. Each interview and/or FGD was discussed at the end of the day and research team members' observations, opinions, and interpretations of responses were noted to inform the final analysis. At the end of the data collection period, an overall discussion with the research team resulted in the development of a PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations that were shared with the NPC and at a planning meeting of the Alliance.

This report presents the final analysis informed by the interview and FGD notes and research team discussions, written up by the lead consultant.

One **limitation** of this research was that the young co-researchers – except for the YCC – were external to the programme. That is, they were hired from outside and had not been selected from among the young people who were engaged in the GUSO programme in some way. This meant that, while the young co-researchers had good research skills, they lacked some key insights on the programme, its functioning, and its effects on young people, which would normally have come for young co-researchers drawn from the programme itself. They also needed extra guidance on the key principles of the programme like a rights based and gender transformative approach and meaningful youth participation.

## Findings

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The youth-led collaborations taking place under the Malawi SRHR Alliance are unique in that they are focused on building capacities of existing, government established youth clubs and youth networks. These youth clubs are part of the government structure for youth development and come under the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports.

### Context for youth development in Malawi

The tiers of governance in Malawi start at village level, several villages form one Traditional Authority (TA), and several TAs form a District. Up to the TA level, there is a system of traditional chiefs who head the village and the TA. These are hereditary positions and function through Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Area Development Committees (ADCs) which are also meant to include elected members in them. At the District level there is an elected leadership and the TA Chiefs are also represented in the District Executive Committee, chaired by the District Commissioner.

At the village level, there are government established youth clubs, typically of 30-35 members each. At the level of the TA, there are youth networks that are comprised of two representatives from each youth club. Finally, at the district level, there is a District Youth Network Committee with two representatives from each TA network – usually the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from each TA network. This District Youth Network Committee works together with the District Youth Office. This Office administers the activities of the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports in the District as well as coordinates all youth-related programmes by NGOs in the District. Any work to be undertaken with young people needs to go through the District Youth Office and the District Youth Officer who puts the relevant youth networks and youth clubs in touch with the programme / NGO. For example, if an organisation wants to select some young people to train as peer educators, they would need to go through the youth club of the area they are targeting to identify these young people. It is important to note that the Malawi government's definition of young people is 10-35, as defined in the National Youth Policy of 2013, which means that Alliance partner organisations need to specify age criteria (i.e. below 25 years of age), when asking for young people for trainings, meetings, etc.

The Ministry of Youth Development and Sport's own programmes are focused on four themes, i.e. i) youth health, ii) economic empowerment, iii) functional literacy, and iv) youth participation and leadership (under which the youth clubs and youth networks fall). This is outlined in the Malawi National Youth Policy 2013. Part of the youth participation and leadership programme is also to include young people in the Village Development Committees and Area Development Committees.

The youth clubs work on their own – recruiting members from the village, raising their own funds and conducting their own awareness raising activities in their communities. Therefore, some sense of a youth movement or solidarity among young people, or youth collaboration, already existed due to the government structures in place. The GUSO programme has provided much needed capacity building and training on SRHR to these young people, who then continue to carry out awareness activities on their own, but with enhanced knowledge and skills from the partners.

This section elaborates on this and other ways that the Malawi SRHR Alliance has operationalised the youth-led collaborations strategy. Specific examples from different locations, that we were told about, are also described along with some good practice examples in the boxes.

## How the strategy of youth-led collaborations is being implemented

The 'strategy' of YLC has been implemented in Malawi, based on a brief guiding document and other technical support provided by the NL/UK Alliance. There is no written strategy for how to implement it in Malawi and actions have been taken through deliberation among members from the National Programme Technical Committee and the National Steering Committee, based on inputs from the NL/UK Alliance.

We asked the GUSO staff members among our respondents (who were a mix of adults and some young people) about their understanding of youth-led collaborations. The common response was that it is young people coming together to achieve a common goal. This indicates an understanding of young people's collaboration, but not necessarily of the leadership aspect of young people. While some of the staff members did appreciate the importance of youth leadership, the attitude towards young people's participation remained mostly top-down (this is elaborated on in the section on common obstacles and areas for improvement).

Youth clubs – the main form of youth-led collaborations under the GUSO Alliance in Malawi – work on their own in **leading awareness raising activities** in their communities. Due to the GUSO intervention, youth clubs have been initiating and leading community dialogues, and open days with traditional and religious leaders, health service providers, on youth SRHR. Some of the youth clubs also collaborate with other youth clubs to conduct exchange and learning visits for SRHR awareness, sports tournaments and other such activities. These on-ground activities are led by the young people in the youth clubs and most of them are conducted through resources raised by the youth club. Some youth clubs are more enterprising than others and have their own farms, gardens or livestock, while others also raise funds from the members or approach the District Youth Office (DYO). Thus, the DYO enables and facilitates access of partners to the youth clubs and monitors their activities. On occasion, it also provides some financial assistance to the youth clubs. The partner organisations and GUSO 'legitimise' the work of the young people on the ground, since they have provided training and capacity building to selected young people in each club. This capacity building has given the young people some credibility among their peers and communities as reported by some young people as well as some district officials.

Trainings provided to the youth club members include advocacy and budget monitoring, meaningful youth participation, social accountability for SRHR. Through these trainings the youth club members are more aware about sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), diverse sexual orientation, the need for youth-friendly services, and how to hold authorities accountable for these issues. The youth club members as well as the project officers gave us instances of youth club members taking up SGBV cases by helping survivors and reporting to the police, or lobbying with health providers and traditional leaders to enhance access to youth-friendly services. Each partner organisation has taken on the mantle of providing trainings based on their own areas of focus and key competencies.

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*A week before the OR was conducted, five youth clubs from five villages in Mangochi District, that CYECE was working with, had come together for a 5-day awareness raising and advocacy activity. This was a comprehensive dialogue with the community members, health service providers, law enforcement authorities, and traditional leaders. While it is difficult for a youth club to approach their TA Chief by themselves, it becomes easier when other youth clubs from other villages have joined up with them. Thus, the five youth clubs spent one day per village, held dialogues with the TA Chiefs to apprise them of the SRHR issues of young people, met with service providers at the health facilities and asked them what their commitments would be for providing youth-friendly services (these were then pasted up on the wall of the service provider's office), and similar commitments for youth SRHR were obtained from other government authorities. The entire activity was led by the young people, and funded by GUSO through CYECE.*

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*The training on theatre for development by YONECO enables more youth-led collaborations as it provides the youth club members with a tool to work together more effectively for raising awareness.*

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*In Chikwawa, COWLHA and CAVWOC merge their budgets for open days (days in the community where awareness raising activities and dialogues on youth SRHR are held) and do them together, enabling the youth clubs associated with each partner to work together.*

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In an effort to be more deliberate in implementing the strategy on youth-led collaborations, the Alliance established '**District Youth Movements**' in 2017. While the YCC was meant to be the face of young people in the GUSO programme and bring their issues up for discussion and decision making, there was no platform for her to engage with young people on the ground. This is why the Alliance decided to come up with a structure that would enable better engagement of the YCC with young leaders on the ground. They developed a Terms of Reference for the District Youth Movements.

The District Youth Movements are comprised of five representatives from each of the organisations working in a district (see Terms of Reference in Annex 2). Therefore, each district has 20 youth movement members as there are four partners per district where GUSO is being implemented. Youth movement members are from youth clubs and were already working on SRHR with the 6 partners and had leadership skills. These youth movement members are meant to report on their activities to the YCC. However, the YCC who was part of this research team was too new in her role to have had any reports yet from the youth movement members. As such, the YCC role is envisioned to provide technical assistance, ideas, monitor the work of the youth movement members through visits, and be their voice to the National Steering Committee (NSC) and the National Programme Technical Committee (NPTC). The Alliance facilitates some ad hoc meetings of the youth movement members, but there is no dedicated budget allocation for them to meet regularly or implement their action plan.

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*The youth clubs associated with CYECE, COWLHA and CAVWOC were asked to themselves choose the five members for the youth movement, rather than being selected by the staff.*

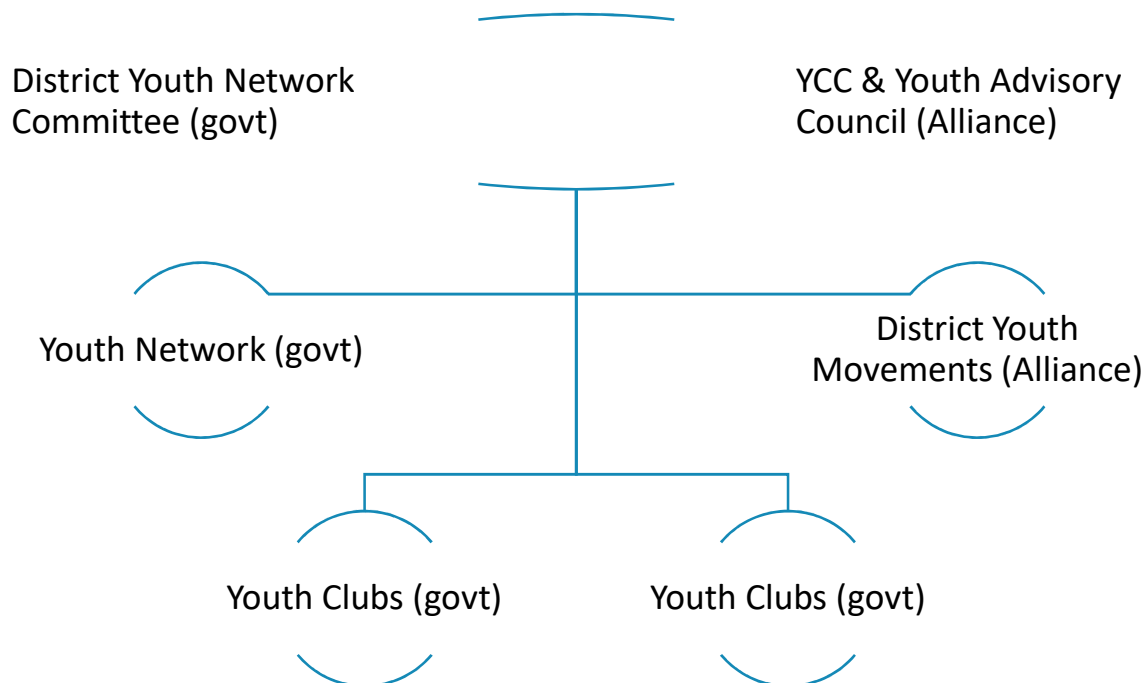
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A gap was felt between the YCC and the youth movement since there were no budget allocations for the YCC to visit the districts, interact with the youth movement members, and understand their work on the ground. Therefore, after a learning visit to Uganda to understand the Youth Advisory Committee, the Malawi Alliance decided to adapt a **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** structure. This YAC was created to be the link between the youth movement members and the YCC. It is comprised of staff, interns, or peer educators from the partner organisations (one person from each partner) who are below 25 years of age. Some of these YAC members have been involved in GUSO while others have been engaged in other work at the organisation. Some of the YAC members are based in Lilongwe and a few are based in the GUSO implementation districts. They are meant to meet quarterly, monitor the activities of the youth movement, and mentor the youth movement members. At the time of this OR, the YAC were awaiting approval of the budget that would enable them to action this. It is not yet known how the YAC members who are staff and have other responsibilities will be able to deliver on their YAC obligations.

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*The YAC members from both FPAM and CAVWOC are young people who actually work on the ground as peer educators and peer leaders. They are therefore more likely to be conversant with young people's issues on the ground, the challenges they face, and the context that they work in.*

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*Working with existing government structures like the youth clubs, the youth networks, the District Youth Network Committees and the District Youth Office has ensured that unnecessary parallel and resources consuming structures have not been established. The Alliance has made efforts to streamline the representation from these ground level young people up to the Alliance level decision making by*

*establishing the District Youth Movements and the Youth Advisory Council to work in conjunction with the YCC. However, it is difficult to comment on the effectiveness of these separate structures that have been created for the purposes of the Alliance since budget allocations have not been made for them to function as per their ToRs and action plans.*

*One limitation of working only with the young people in the youth clubs is that the programme cannot reach those who are marginalised within the community and not a member of the youth club. On the other hand, the partners have made an effort to include some young people from marginalised communities into the youth clubs, like those who identify as LGBT, young people living with HIV, and, to a limited extent, girls and young women.*

## Structural processes in place for youth-led collaborations

In terms of sustainability, the youth clubs and their work would continue since these are existing structures within the communities that fund their own activities, and the young people have received the capacity required from GUSO. The young people have invested a lot on their own towards collaborations through income generation activities and some youth movement members expressed their interest in continuing their work and collaborating together beyond GUSO. Similarly, the YAC has been established for the Alliance as a whole, not just for GUSO, and will continue beyond the programme. The YAC members fulfil their roles voluntarily, over and above their other roles within the partner organisations. The Alliance also plans to use the structure of the District Youth Movement for other projects that it implements.

## Mechanisms to measure the effects of youth-led collaborations

The mechanism for measuring the effects of youth-led collaborations include several operations research that have been carried out, as well as anecdotal evidence on change in attitudes and communities on SRHR. The staff we spoke to also cited increased visibility of young people and the GUSO programme in the community, while the young people reported reduction in teenage pregnancies and child marriages, and increase in girls going back to school within their communities. It was unclear whether there were any formal measures in place other than the GUSO M&E framework.

## Inclusiveness of youth-led collaborations

In some ways, diversity and inclusion have been well taken care of by the Malawi SRHR Alliance, while it has been difficult to do so in others. Due to the emphasis by CHRR, the youth movement members include young people of diverse sexual orientation, and due to the work of COWLHA in bringing together networks of young people living with HIV, they are also represented in the youth clubs and among the youth movement members. One of the staff members told us, *“LGBT were discriminated and no one would accept them but now they have about 6 people from the LGBTI community who are freely able to walk around and state they are homosexual. The youth clubs fight for the rights of LGBTI – they may not have one person in the club who is gay but are able to fight for the rights of those who are.”*

These organisations have been working with their targeted communities from the beginning. In fact, they were established with the purpose of working with these groups and several staff members also identify themselves with these groups. Thus, having CHRR on the Alliance meant that their cohorts of young people with diverse sexual orientation could be included in the programme, and having COWLHA in the Alliance meant that their cohorts of people living with HIV could be included. Different religions are also represented among the youth clubs and youth movement members.



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*Youth clubs associated with CHRR visit young people in prisons to discuss SRHR and empower and motivate these young people. This ensures that even under-served young people like those in prisons receive some SRHR information and knowledge.*

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On the other hand, it has been difficult to get girls fully involved in the SRHR awareness raising work and the youth movement due to cultural barriers and parental control. Parents tend to dismiss SRHR as 'bad' and are reluctant to send their daughters to the youth clubs. This was especially the case in Mangochi, while some inroads on girls' leadership had been made in Chikwawa especially through the effort of CAVWOC. Additionally, in Chikwawa the District Youth Officer (DYO) took the initiative to restructure the youth clubs, as many of the members and leaders were over age. The DYO decided to make a deliberate move to have the youth club leadership be from among 18-25 year olds (since several civil society partners wanted to work with young people 25 years and below even though the Malawi government definition of youth is up to 35). They also aimed to have a gender balance in the youth club leadership as well as some level of education.

Several youth clubs also involve young people living with disabilities, especially working to support these young people to live comfortably within the community.

## The positive influence of youth-led collaborations

There has been a **positive effect of youth-led collaborations on young people** due to their increased knowledge on SRHR. They have also gained from mutual sharing and learning with young people within and across youth clubs willing to share their knowledge and skills with each other. Some have also gained public speaking skills and leadership skills have been built to some extent. For example, those young people who are in the Village Development Committees or Area Development Committees or the District Youth Technical Committee, have benefited from the capacity building received through GUSO and are better able to contribute meaningfully to these committees.

The staff reinforced to us the confidence gained by the young people and the results of that, *“youth are now able to organise stakeholders in the community to sensitise them in SRHR; youth are empowered in such a way that they are able to mobilise elders and talk to them on SRHR issues like rape, child marriages, etc.”* Another said, *“young people have gained confidence. It was hard in the past for them to speak up. We can call 1000 people and they can speak publicly about the programme like one of the officers. They have also gained knowledge on SRHR since they are able to articulate issues on SRHR and can even share this knowledge with their fellow peers.”* Similarly, *“it has increased the confidence among the youth as they are now taking roles and have voice on different aspects. They can speak even to the chiefs, for example, one time they organised a campaign and spoke to the chief about not being happy how things are being done in the community. Youth-led collaborations has led young people to learn how to approach people in big positions, even in health facilities.”*

Another of the key positive effects is that the young people have gained the ability to recognise SRHR gaps and act or advocate on them. For example, they have lobbied for a youth-friendly health services corner, and reported GBV cases to the police. Some of them have also successfully lobbied to get chiefs to put by-laws in place on cultural practices around SRHR. In one instance, the youth club members lobbied for a clinic for under five year olds to be established in their community as young mothers had to travel far to access health services for their children.



The young people themselves mentioned that working together on GUSO activities had given them a sense of purpose; a reason to wake up in the morning and do something. They feel excited and proud of their work and want to be seen as role models, *“people in the village notice me; they come to me for sexual advice / condoms.”* They also said, *“we are passionate about our work and we love to see every youth empowered through knowing their rights,”* and another said, *“when people have problems in the village concerning sex they come to us. The village relies on us and this motivates us to continue doing the work.”* Another said, *“GUSO has changed my life as now I know that youth have a right to work in development activities in the community and also by taking roles.”*

## Building solidarity for SRHR among young people

Some level of **solidarity** already existed among the youth club members and networks. They had the ability to work together, raise a voice, and raise funds for activities. For example, there is one Traditional Authority youth network where all youth club members who go for trainings or meetings, give 10% of the meeting allowances they receive to the youth network fund. GUSO provided the youth club members with the technical knowhow on SRHR, which enables other young people to trust peer educators and YCBDAs for SRHR information and services. In addition, they understand the impact of working together as a couple of staff from partner organisations said, *“Youth have learnt that unity is power. They have learnt that working together you achieve more. They are also able to go and access SRH services now”* and, *“MYP enables the youth to speak out but the collaboration allows them to share ideas and impart knowledge to others in the collaboration. MYP allowed them to be part of the Area Development Committee (the TAs and chiefs discuss the development of the committee) but in the collaboration they share talents and ideas.”* Even a government official agreed with this, *“young people’s interaction with community leaders has improved. Once I was on a monitoring visit and I saw how they have engaged the local leaders and demand for SRH. Parents said that we didn’t want to talk about SRH as it was taboo, but because of the young people we realise it is important. The young people in the Area Development Committee also help include SRH in development.”* One of the youth respondents said, *“when we link up with our friends from other areas, we benefit from sharing information and being exposed to new ideas and we are also able to teach them some of the things we know.”*

On the other hand, some young people feel that they are representatives of one or other organisation and do not want to collaborate with each other to share resources. For example, in Chikwawa, respondents mentioned that if a Young Community Based Distribution Agent (YCBDA) of one organisation ran out of condoms, and asked for a supply from a YCBDA of another organisation, they might be refused as they are from different organisations. This may be stemming from monitoring and reporting needs; however, it limits young people’s collaboration with each other for the greater good of the community. In fact, a recommendation from a staff member was, *“As NGOs we should not call the youth by NGO names e.g. youth from COWLHA, youth from CHRR, etc., as this creates margins. If we stop doing this the youth will be more united.”* Sometimes, the training provided to YCBDAs, for example, will differ from one organisation to another in number of days or topics covered. This will result in YCBDAs of one organisation feeling they are better trained than the other, again creating a divide between the young people on the ground.

The **partners and the Alliance have gained a better understanding of MYP** and the attitudes within the organisations towards young people are slowly changing to be more positive. As mentioned by an adult respondent, the strategy of youth-led collaborations has helped people work better on MYP, *“Youth-led collaborations provide a wider area or space for young people to share information and learn from each other, and be supported and mentored by experts in the field. Compared to MYP which wasn’t really embraced before. It was considered the responsibility only of CYECE and not by everyone.”* Similarly, another adult respondent conflated youth-led collaboration with meaningful youth participation, *“Previously in*

*such events young people were just asked to open with a prayer, but now they have an open day and young people do everything and the organisation just chips in to help them. Now we understand what youth-led collaborations are, unlike in the past when we were claiming that we were involving young people but we weren't really."*

The value of young people, and their leadership, is being seen among the staff who deal with young people directly, though less so among the top management (as is evident from the lack of budget allocations for youth-led collaborations). The partners have also learnt from each other on how to best involve young people, for example, FPAM learnt this from CYECE, which has been leading the Alliance on MYP. Partners are beginning to include young people or younger staff at different decision-making levels.

One staff member also spoke about learning more from the young people about the communities they are from, *"As organisations we have learnt from the youth about cultural issues happening in their respective communities, for example, girls are being locked indoors during menstruation – 2 weeks – without going to school. This was affecting their education. We gained some ideas on how to plan and implement youth activities."*

For the **GUSO programme**, youth-led collaborations have inspired innovative methods of implementation, for example, holding soccer matches for awareness raising or organising variety shows themed on SRHR. In terms of the end-beneficiaries of the GUSO programme, as mentioned earlier, respondents have told us that young girls would get pregnant before finishing school but this has now reduced. In fact, in some cases, those who drop out of school are able to go back to school. Young people's lobbying for youth-friendly health services and their knowledge of where to report in case of denial of services, due to a better understanding of human rights, has led to better access to youth-friendly services. Those facing SGBV within the communities know that they can get help from the youth club members for reporting to the police, etc. And the YCBDAs have facilitated better access to condoms and contraceptives.

In addition, the young people who were engaged at the community level, through government policies on youth representation, in Village and Area Development Committees have been able to contribute more meaningfully. As expressed by a district stakeholder, *"[The GUSO partner organisation] focuses on economic empowerment and youth participation and allows the youth to speak out so that now the youth are represented in the ADC and VDC. Youth in [one area] organised advocacy campaigns that involved the traditional leaders. There was a chief who was saying if girls wanted to access family planning services, they should get his permission. So, the youth liaised with him to change his perception and managed to change it."*

The visibility of the programme has also increased as mentioned by several staff members.

## Common obstacles and areas for improvement

The main obstacle to youth-led collaborations is the limited budget allocations for the YCC to engage with the youth clubs and youth networks, for the youth movement members to be able to meet and strategise regularly, and for the YAC to kick off their activities. This has happened due to a limited budget available for joint activities of the Malawi SRHR Alliance and a lack of prioritisation by the National Steering Committee. For example, faced with having to choose on budget allocation for outcome area 1 versus outcome area 2, the NSC has prioritised allocation for outcome area 1. In addition, several staff members spoke about the fact that the idea of the youth movement or youth-led collaborations came after GUSO had already started and the budgets were already allocated for other activities.

The study found instances of a top-down approach to youth-led collaborations. Some partners are doing better than others, but the overall approach is paternalistic towards the youth clubs, rather than one that appreciates their potential for leadership and ownership over their own SRHR issues and solutions. For example, the Chairperson of the Mangochi youth movement was selected by the staff of partner organisations rather than enabling the youth movement members themselves choose their Chair. The reason given for this was the need for speed and efficiency so that the new YCC was not overwhelmed by her new duties of managing and interfacing with the youth movement. However, it is an indicator of the control that the staff have over the youth movement and the fact that the youth movement members themselves do not have enough ownership yet over the structure. In fact, one of the youth movement members said, *“most of the time we are just informed on future activities but not really involved in the planning of these activities or why they are happening.”*

Another example of the top-down approach is the establishment of the YAC and selection of its members. The decision of who the YAC members should be was made at the level of the National Programme Technical Committee (NPTC) and the National Steering Committee (NSC), without consultation with the young people on the ground despite the fact that the purpose of the YAC is to be a link between the young people on the ground and the YCC. The YAC members were chosen by the management of the partner organisations based primarily on their age (i.e. under 25). However, the fact that many of them are staff members of the partners means that their commitment to representing the voice of the young people on the ground is debatable. They may also have limited time to dedicate to this task. While most of the youth movement members had not yet heard of the YAC, when it was explained to them, they said, *“there should be a 50-50 split in the YAC between members of the youth movement and the organisation’s staff so we both have representation and we can help each other better”* and another said, *“we need more youth movement members in YAC so they can better represent our community and better address the problems we face at community level.”*

Along with this top-down approach is one that instrumentalises the youth clubs rather than having a symbiotic relationship with them. This means that the partners get their work done through these pre-existing youth clubs, but are not necessarily always available to support the youth clubs when required. There was an example from Mangochi of a youth club that needed help in registering a police case for a GBV survivor. They called the project officer of the partner organisation they were working under, who didn’t come down to the community as promised. There is inadequate communication from some partners to the youth clubs in Mangochi. For example, there are hardly any supportive visits despite the young people taking leadership and conducting several events. There is also limited and delayed information sharing about the project and its activities with the youth movement members, resulting in their disillusionment with the programme. One young respondent told us, *“we need a two-way relationship where, if we need the organisation, they should come, and if the organisation needs us we are also available. But usually the organisations remember us when they need us..”*

There is the issue of geographical distance, especially in Mangochi, for the youth movement members to be able to meet each other without spending a lot of time and money. In Chikwawa, it is slightly easier for the youth movement members to meet as the partner organisations overlap in the TAs, thus the youth movement members from these partners also overlap. In Mangochi however the TAs are divided per partner, thus one TA will only have the youth movement members of one partner.

The young people also face barriers in their work due to cultural norms, harmful traditions, and gender roles and expectations. Cultural norms dictate that chiefs make important decisions and that young people must be respectful of elders, which inhibits free interaction between young people and the chiefs and makes it difficult for the young people to demand for their rights to be upheld. In fact, some young people

spoke about chiefs asking them for an 'allowance' to let them mobilise people for awareness raising activities, or asking them to share some of the allowances they received for going to a meeting or training. Harmful traditions around SRHR, like sexual initiation ceremonies, are difficult to change and result in negative consequences for young people, especially girls. Gender roles and expectations prevent engagement of girls and their taking on leadership positions. For example, one staff member told us how, "last week I went for a meeting and a girl wanted to pray and everyone was boo-ing her saying she can't pray. This culture makes the girls fail to voice out – it hinders girls."

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*In Malawi, women are expected to be submissive while men are dominant so CAVWOC trained more girls so they can take up leadership positions. They trained girls in karate so they could learn perseverance and stand up for themselves. This would help to empower them so they could speak out on their challenges. They have also had a sports bonanza for girls so that girls can learn to work as a team and achieve goals together. When a girl scores a goal it's a motivation for her. They introduced girl's football to challenge gender stereotypes. Now boys have realised that girls also need to take leadership positions and girls are also Chairpersons or Vice Chairpersons.*

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## Conclusion

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The purpose of youth-led collaborations (and of the original strategy of youth movement building) was to create a sense of solidarity among the different young people involved in the project, enabling them to have a bigger voice within and outside the project, the partner organisations, and the Alliance. In fact, in Malawi the young people who are part of GUSO are also part of a larger government-led movement with the youth clubs and youth networks. Thus, since the concept of movement building already exists within these young people, GUSO's strategic input has been and should continue to be to enable these young people's leadership within their communities by helping them to engage with police (for cases of GBV), community leaders (chiefs, religious leaders, etc.), and government officials.

The strategy of youth-led collaborations is also intended to build young people's leadership, thereby enhancing meaningful youth participation (MYP). MYP is an integral part of the programme and of the alliances' values. Learning from the previous iterations of the alliances' programmes, i.e. the ASK and UBR, it was necessary to find a space for all the different young people working towards the shared goal of the alliances, to come together, learn from each other, be motivated by each other's achievements, and feel a sense of belonging – not only to their own organisation – but also to a larger movement of young people working on SRHR. This was the logic behind the youth movement building / youth-led collaborations.

Continuing to build this sense of solidarity and togetherness is necessary in future iterations of the alliances' work to ensure that young people feel stronger together, achieve synergies, and reach out beyond the alliance as well to achieve common SRHR goals or advocate for young people's SRHR in their countries. However, this needs to be accompanied with a strong sense of youth-adult partnership and those holding power still need to give some of it up and share it with the young people for whom the space and the structure has been created to engage meaningfully.

## Recommendations

This section provides some recommendations for improving the implementation of the youth-led collaborations strategy, including some areas on MYP and YAP, which when strengthened would enhance youth leadership and movement building. Some of these recommendations came from our respondents while others are from the research team, based on the findings and analysis.

### For the partners

- The partners should demonstrate more interest in the youth clubs by doing more supportive visits and having better communication between with them. This was especially an issue in Mangochi, where youth respondents shared that they were not getting enough support from some of the partner organisations.
- Another area of focus should be on strengthening young people's links with community / traditional / religious leaders and police so that once the project phases out, the links remain strong and the young people retain the legitimacy that has been provided to them through GUSO.
- This includes making more efforts to also address parents' concerns through more youth-parent dialogues that are led by young people and supported by the staff from partner organisations.

- In addition, due to the fact that most of the young people being reached are out of school, efforts should be made to link youth clubs with existing initiatives for economic empowerment (e.g. under the DYO), vocational skills training, income-generating activities by other organisations, etc. Economic skills may be a catalyst for the young people to fully participate in the SRHR programme.
- Another area where partners can demonstrate support is by discussing the barriers posed by the chiefs (i.e. of asking for allowances) with the DYO / other relevant government officials so that some action can be taken to discourage this behaviour.
- To ensure that young people on the ground feel more solidarity with each other and collaborate to achieve common goals is to pool training budgets between partners on the ground and train young people together, e.g. YCBDA training. They also need more training on: leadership, advocacy and social accountability skills for youth movement members; CSE for peer educators and YCBDAs; public speaking, conflict resolution, and economic empowerment for young people in general.
- It is important to maintain transparency in the selection of young people for meetings or trainings. Ideally, this selection should be done by the youth club members themselves after the partner organisations has provided them with full information on what is expected of the attendees, what is the criteria for selection and why, and what kind of support will be provided to the selected attendees so that the youth clubs are able to select the right person for the right task.
- Partners still need more / better understanding and implementation of MYP and youth-adult partnership and to ensure that the age criteria for GUSO are met when working with the young people in youth clubs and networks.

### For the Malawi SRHR Alliance

- During the remaining time of GUSO, if adequate budget allocation is made for the District Youth Movement and YAC action plan, then young people may feel motivated and interested in continuing the work and the YAC as well as the YCC will be better able to provide technical support to them.
- In addition, it would be good to pair the YAC members with one youth movement member from that partner for better mentorship and connection with the young people on the ground.
- The Alliance could harmonise the branded products provided to young people across the Alliance, i.e. instead of some partners providing bags and others providing t-shirts, pool resources and create Alliance branded products that can be used by the young peer educators, YCBDAs, youth movement members, etc. who are working on the ground. This will help their sense of solidarity, provide greater visibility to the Alliance, and give more motivation to the young people as they will be easily identified and their work legitimised.
- Think about using asset-based approach for future programmes, i.e. assess the assets existing among the young people and use human-centred design tools to arrive at the best strategy for implementation.

### For the NL/UK Alliance

- Donors should re-think the way that they expect reporting and results-based financing to better reflect collaborative work on the ground that benefits the community, rather than only thinking about where *their* money is going and what it is specifically achieving.

- In terms of diversity and inclusion, country alliances should include civil society organisations or community-based organisations that are led by or specifically reaching people from marginalised and under-served groups. This ensures that the alliance as a whole receives sensitisation to the needs and requirements of these groups and that the groups are included in the programme.

## Appendix 1: Youth Involvement at Malawi SRHR Partners

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### Youth involvement / leadership structures of Malawi SRHR Alliance partners

The 6 partner organisations are youth-serving organisations with diverse structures for young people's involvement and leadership. Following is a summary of these structures per organisation:

- **Centre for Alternatives for Victimised Women and Children (CAVWOC)** is an SGBV focused organisation, head office based in Blantyre, and implements GUSO only in Chikwawa. They have a number of trained peer educators on the ground and two young volunteer peer educators who are based at the district office and participate in meetings for planning, etc.
- **Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)** is focused on sexual minorities, head office based in Lilongwe, and implements GUSO in both districts. They are the main lead on advocacy for safe abortion in Malawi and also work in schools and prisons. They have several trained peer educators on the ground who tend to identify themselves as LGBTQI.
- **Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA)** is focused on people living with HIV, head office based in Lilongwe, and implements GUSO only in Chikwawa. They have established support groups for young people living with HIV in areas where these did not exist. They have several trained peer educators on the ground who tend to be living with HIV.
- **Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE)** is focused on MYP, head office based in Lilongwe and is the host for the Alliance. They implement GUSO in both districts. They have several staff who are young.
- **Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM)** is an SRHR service provider, secretariat based in Lilongwe, and with clinics in Mangochi where it implements GUSO. They have the Youth Action Movement which consists of their youth volunteers including peer educators, with a leadership structure that is also part of the organisation's governance. They also have Young Community Based Distribution Agents (YCBDAs) who provide contraceptives within their communities, and young people are involved in outreach activities.
- **Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)** is focused on youth empowerment, head office based in Zomba, and implement GUSO only in Mangochi. They have a national radio and lead on national advocacy on SGBV for which they have hotlines and phone-in programmes.



## Appendix 2: Interview and FGD guides

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### 1. Interview / FGD guide for Youth Movement Members / young people:

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:	
Location:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee name:	
Position / Job title & when	
Organisation:	
Start time:	
End time:	

OR

Date:	
Location:	
Facilitator:	
Notetaker:	
Focus Group Title:	
Number of participants:	F =                      M =                      Other =
How long they have been involved with GISSO:	
Start time:	

End time:

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to participate. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a researcher working with the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance in Malawi. We are carrying out an operations research on youth participation within the SRHR Alliance, our focus is specifically on young people from different organization working together to realize better SRHR for young people.

If you agree to participate in this assessment, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with the GUSO programme, working together with other young people, and your perception of such collaborative work. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Your participation may benefit you and other GUSO programme stakeholders by helping to improve its effectiveness. This will be no different from an ordinary conversation.

Anonymous data from this assessment will be analysed by the consultants and reported to the GUSO Alliance. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results, unless they specifically request to be identified. If the results of this assessment will be published or presented at meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this assessment will be kept strictly confidential. All materials will be stored in a secure location by the consultants and the GUSO Alliance, and access to files will be restricted to paid professional staff.

Can all participants please indicate verbally whether you consent to participate: *[put number of respondents in boxes below]*

Yes		No	
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## FGD GUIDELINES

- Guidance on how to raise hand, speak, etc.
- No right or wrong answers, only differing points of view.
- You don't need to agree with others, but you must listen respectfully as others share their views.
- Participation is completely voluntary. There is no obligation to answer any question. Feel free to pass on any question that you are not comfortable discussing.
- All points discussed during the FGD will remain confidential. Please do not share details of the discussion outside of this group.
- Role of the facilitator is to guide the discussion; however, please speak with each other. Feel free to use first names.
- Please speak slowly and clearly so we can all understand one another.
- One person speaking at a time. FGD will last approximately 1 hour.
- Place phones on silent and turn off notifications for emails or other apps for the full duration of the FGD.

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

#	Name, title	Organisation
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

### Questions

1. Tell us how you have been involved in the GUSO programme/SRHR Alliance.
  - *How did you get engaged with GUSO? Since when?*
  - *How did the Youth Movement/ Youth Club that you are a member of come about?*
  - *Please tell us about your main tasks and responsibilities? Are they formalized? Do you have a task description or ToR?*
2. What other youth are involved when you do activities for GUSO?
  - *Probe for youth from other organizations, other districts, other networks, etc.*
3. How did you begin working with these other young people?
  - *What enabled this collaboration?*
  - *Is this a structured process, i.e. even if you move on, other young people will still be able to work together in a similar manner?*
  - *If yes, what is the structure? If no, how does it work?*
  - *Who takes decisions?*
4. How have you been working with these other young people towards a shared goal within the GUSO programme / SRHR Alliance?
  - *As a Youth Movement/Youth Club, which objectives are you prioritizing and how did this come about?*
  - *Do these objectives resonate with the priorities/realities of young people's lives in this community? Why yes or why no?*
    - *If no, what topics do you feel you should work on more?*
  - *How did you arrive at a shared goal?*
  - *What have you been doing to achieve it?*
  - *Has your capacity been built to work together? How yes or how no?*
  - *Has your capacity been built to work on the topics we just discussed? How yes or how no?*
  - *How easy or difficult has it been? Why?*
5. Why have you been interested in this work / these activities?

- *What do you get out of them?*
  - *What has changed (positive / negative) for you since you started doing these activities?*
6. What are your thoughts about working alongside other young people coming from different organizations on SRHR?
    - *Feel stronger / safer / louder / more acceptability / more effective/ more credible – or not? Why? Is this good or bad?*
  7. Tell us how your work has helped achieve the GUSO programme objectives?
    - *Give an example*
  8. How can this be done better, i.e. enabling young people to work together, take leadership / ownership, achieve things in collaboration?

## 2. Interview/group interview guide for YAC members:

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:	
Location:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee name:	
Position / Job title & when	
Organisation:	
Start time:	
End time:	

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to participate. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a researcher working with the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance in Malawi. We are carrying out an operations research on youth participation within the SRHR Alliance, our focus is specifically on young people from different organization working together to realize better SRHR for young people.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with the GUSO programme, working together with other young people, and your perception of such collaborative work. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Your participation may benefit you and other GUSO programme stakeholders by helping to improve its effectiveness. This will be no different from an ordinary conversation.

Anonymous data from this assessment will be analysed by the consultants and reported to the GUSO Alliance. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results, unless they specifically request to be identified. If the results of this assessment will be published or presented at meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this assessment will be kept strictly confidential. All materials will be stored in a secure location by the consultants and the GUSO Alliance, and access to files will be restricted to paid professional staff.

Please indicate verbally whether you consent to participate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

## Questions

1. Please tell us how you became a YAC member in the GUSO programme/SRHR Alliance? Were you asked or did someone (who?) approach you? How did it go?
2. Please tell us about your main tasks and responsibilities as YAC member? Are they formalized in a task description or ToR?
3. Please describe if and why you believe that young people coming together from different organizations as YAC members adds value to the programme / the SRHR Alliance / the NSC?
  - *What is the added value of being from different (partner) organizations?*
  - *Can you describe some of the challenges of working together with young people from different organisations? Some of the successes?*
4. What motivates you to work in the SRHR Alliance as a YAC member?
5. What factors are responsible for the success of the YAC? (*probe for: support from NPC/YCC, support from own organization, young people's commitment etc*)
6. What changed for you, if anything, after being a YAC member? (*e.g. changes in self-esteem, decision-making ability, relationship with adults at home / school / community, participation in other social or citizenship domains, development of knowledge and skills / leadership development / advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment etc.*)
7. What changes, if any, have YAC members made at the level of the community/beneficiaries? (*ask for concrete changes, they can be small ones but ask for concrete stories*)
8. What types of changes, if any, have you noticed regarding SRHR Alliance staff and other adults' attitudes towards youth participation since the YAC has been established?
9. Please describe how the role of the YAC members has / will contribute to the achievement of the GUSO programme objectives? Give examples
10. What can be done better / improved in the way that the structure of the YAC is currently being implemented?
11. If similar programmes in other countries would like to implement a YAC, what is the top advice / tips you would give them on how to go about it?

**3. Interview/group interview guide for Programme Officers / staff of partner organisations:**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:	
Location:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee name:	
Position / Job title and date started:	
Organisation:	
Start time:	
End time:	

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to participate. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a researcher working with the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance in Malawi. We are carrying out an operations research on youth participation within the SRHR Alliance, our focus is specifically on young people from different organization working together to realize better SRHR for young people.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with the GUSO programme, working together with other young people, and your perception of such collaborative work. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Your participation may benefit you and other GUSO programme stakeholders by helping to improve its effectiveness. This will be no different from an ordinary conversation.

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Please indicate verbally whether you consent to participate:

Yes		No	
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## Questions

1. What is your understanding of youth-led collaborations? Please tell us in your own words.
2. Tell us what has been happening with regard to output indicator 2b (collaborations between young people from different organisations / networks) in the GUSO programme in Malawi.
  - *How did you approach this strategy from the start of GUSO until now (from when it was called Youth Movement Building up until it was changed into Youth Led Collaborations)?*
  - *What kinds of activities have you been implementing under this indicator at Alliance level/ Partner Organization level?*
  - *What have you been doing to encourage collaborations between young people from the different partner organisations?*
3. How did you arrive at this way of doing things for output indicator 2b?
  - *How did you identify opportunities for collaboration between young people?*
  - *How did you set goals for this collaboration?*
  - *What kind of technical support did you receive from the SRHR Alliance/ The NL/UK Consortium?*
4. Which of the youth-led collaborations within the SRHR Alliance in Malawi are you most proud of and why?
5. What, in your view, is the added value of youth-led collaborations (young people from different organizations working together) when compared to meaningful youth participation within your own organization?
6. How are you measuring the effects / achievements of the youth-led collaborations?
7. What do you think the young people have gained from working together? (*development of knowledge and skills / leadership development / advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment, etc*)
8. What do you think the programme / your organisation/ the SRHR Alliance has gained through implementing this strategy?
  - *What has changed since you started implementing this strategy with regard to the organisation's way of working / organisation's attitude towards youth involvement*
  - *In your view, how do the youth-led collaborations contribute to the overall objectives of the GUSO programme?*
  - *What positive effects, if any, did the youth-led collaborations have for the SRHR of the end beneficiaries? (ask for concrete / tangible results / changes)*
9. What has been the most challenging part of enabling youth-led collaborations that are meaningful / effective?
  - *Have you been able to ensure that diverse young people are involved? If yes, who and how; if no, why not?*
10. Is this particular part of the programme sustainable – do you think the young people will continue to work together after GUSO? Why / how?
  - *Have the YAC or other youth-led collaborations been integrated into your organisational / alliance strategies?*
  - *Is there a link between outcome 2 and outcome 1 (building strong and sustainable alliances)?*
11. What can be done to improve the way that youth-led collaborations are currently being implemented?
12. What kind of support – if any – is needed / would be useful to strengthen the strategy of youth-led collaborations within the GUSO programme? From whom should this support come?



#### 4. Interview guide for NPC:

##### GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:	
Location:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee name:	
Position / Job title and date started:	
Organisation:	
Start time:	
End time:	

##### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to participate. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a researcher working with the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance in Malawi. We are carrying out an operation research on youth participation within the SRHR Alliance, our focus is specifically on young people from different organization working together to realize better SRHR for young people.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with the GUSO programme, working together with other young people, and your perception of such collaborative work. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Your participation may benefit you and other GUSO programme stakeholders by helping to improve its effectiveness. This will be no different from an ordinary conversation.

Anonymous data from this assessment will be analysed by the consultants and reported to the GUSO Alliance. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results, unless they specifically request to be identified. If the results of this assessment will be published or presented at meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this assessment will be kept strictly confidential. All materials will be stored in a secure location by the consultants and the GUSO Alliance, and access to files will be restricted to paid professional staff.

Please indicate verbally whether you consent to participate:

Yes		No	
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## Questions

1. What is your understanding of youth-led collaborations? Please tell us in your own words.
2. Tell us what has been happening with regard to output indicator 2b (collaborations between young people from different organisations / networks) in the GUSO programme in Malawi.
  - *How did you approach this strategy from the start of GUSO until now (from when it was called Youth Movement Building up until it was changed into Youth Led Collaborations)?*
  - *What kinds of activities have you been implementing under this indicator at Alliance level/ Partner Organization level? How did the decision/ idea come about to focus on Youth Movements and Youth Clubs?*
  - *What have you been doing to encourage collaborations between young people from the different partner organisations?*
3. How are partner organisations within the SRHR Alliance working together to come up with efficient youth-led collaborations?
4. Please describe what has been your role in developing / coordination of the strategy of youth-led collaborations?
5. Which of the youth-led collaborations within the SRHR Alliance in Malawi are you most proud of and why?
6. What, in your view, is the added value of youth-led collaborations (young people from different organizations working together)? What has the Alliance / the programme gained through implementing this strategy?
7. How are you measuring the effects / achievements of the youth-led collaborations (*Youth Movement / youth clubs*)?
8. What do you think the young people have gained from working together? (*development of knowledge and skills / leadership development / advocacy skills / perceptions of empowerment, etc*)
9. What has been the most challenging part of enabling youth-led collaborations that are meaningful / effective?
  - *Have you been able to ensure that diverse young people are involved? If yes, who and how; if no, why not?*
10. Is this particular part of the programme sustainable – do you think the young people will continue to work together after GUSO? Why / how?
  - *Have the YAC or other youth-led collaborations been integrated into your organisational / alliance strategies?*
  - *Is there a link between outcome 2 and outcome 1 (building strong and sustainable alliances)?*
11. What can be done to improve the way that youth-led collaborations are currently being implemented?
12. What distinct (missed) opportunities does the country alliance have in nurturing youth led collaborations on SRHR?
13. What kind of support – if any – is needed / would be useful to strengthen the strategy of youth-led collaborations within the GUSO programme? From whom should this support come?
14. Would you recommend for youth-led collaborations to be a strategy that should be taken up in other, similar SRHR programmes as well? Why yes or why no? Or in adjusted form, why?
15. Looking back, what do you feel about the level of support you have received from the NL/UK consortium on implementing this strategy? What should be done differently next time and why?

**5. Interview guide for government officials / district partners:**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:	
Location:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee name:	
Position / Job title and date started:	
Organisation:	
Start time:	
End time:	

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to participate. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a researcher working with the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance in Malawi. We are carrying out an operations research on youth participation within the SRHR Alliance, our focus is specifically on young people from different organization working together to realize better SRHR for young people.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with the GUSO programme, working together with other young people, and your perception of such collaborative work. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Your participation may benefit you and other GUSO programme stakeholders by helping to improve its effectiveness. This will be no different from an ordinary conversation.

Anonymous data from this assessment will be analysed by the consultants and reported to the GUSO Alliance. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results, unless they specifically request to be identified. If the results of this assessment will be published or presented at meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this assessment will be kept strictly confidential. All materials will be stored in a secure location by the consultants and the GUSO Alliance, and access to files will be restricted to paid professional staff.

Please indicate verbally whether you consent to participate:

Yes		No	
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## Questions

1. Since when have you been associated with the GUSO programme / the SRHR Alliance? How?
2. What has been your experience working with the young people from this programme?
  - *What kinds of things have you worked on with them?*
  - *Has it been challenging / rewarding? How?*
3. Is there anything that changed significantly because these young people were engaged? Give examples. (*i.e. policy / programmatic direction / way of working / level of awareness / etc*)
4. What is your feeling / opinion about their:
  - leadership skills?
  - advocacy skills?
  - about how they work together as young people?
5. What do you think should be the role of young people in such programmes? Why?
6. From your perspective, does/did it add value if young people from different organisations work together/ join forces to achieve a certain goal? Please explain.
7. Are there areas for improvement in the programme or the way that young people are engaged?

## Appendix 3: Terms of Reference for District Youth Movements & YAC

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### **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DISTRICT YOUTH MEVEMENTS**

- Represent GUSO at districts level
- Conduct awareness on SRHR
- Research and report emerging SRHR issues in districts
- Advocacy on SRHR issues at districts level
- Prepare Youth Movement reports and submit to YCC and alliance members
- Mobilise resources for SRHR programmes at district level
- Represent GUSO in different district Youth Development Committees in districts
- Train / Sensitize fellow youth on SRHR
- Promote Meaningful Youth Participation in development fora at district level

### **TOR FOR THE MALAWI SRHR ALLIANCE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Malawi SRHR Alliance is a coalition of six local organizations that are jointly working together to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, women and marginalized groups in the country. The six organizations include the Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), Centre for Youth and Civic Education (CYECE), Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Youth Net and Counseling (YONECO), and the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA). The alliance exists to promote full attainment of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for all vulnerable women, men, boys and girls in Malawi through service delivery, lobbying and advocacy, empowerment, creation of enabling environment, research, capacity building and collaboration and networking.

#### **Background of the alliance**

Young people between 10-24 years constitute over 65% of the Malawi population. Youth, especially young women, are at risk of early forced marriages, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections and HIV as they often face obstacles in accessing sexual health services and information. The Malawi SRHR Alliance aims at empowering young people towards full attainment of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights in Malawi.

Meaningful youth participation is a central strategy for the Malawi SRHR Alliance. Many of the alliance partners understand the importance of meaningful youth participation and have made commendable efforts and commitment in inclusion of MYP in their organizations. The formation of the youth advisory council is a result of consultations with various stakeholders and steering committee members on the need for a youth body to enhance MYP in the alliance.

The alliance is committed to work with the Youth Advisory council whose main purpose is to guide, lead, advice and facilitate youth related activities and youth engagement from the planning to the implementation level. The TOR's are to be guiding tool in giving an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the youth advisory council.

### **Composition**

The youth advisory council will be comprised of six young people (ages 15-25) with an inclusion of the Youth Country Coordinator. The members of the council will be young people from each of the partner organizations. They will be youth leaders championing meaningful youth engagement in the alliance.

Each partner organization will be required to give a name of the young person that will represent them within the Youth Advisory council. The young person must be one that is actively involved in implementation of the organizations programmes.

The membership within the youth advisory council is voluntary hence there will be no salaries attached to the positions. Members will serve a term of two years each.

### **Purpose of the youth advisory council**

The Youth advisory council is set up with the purpose of enhancing Meaningful youth participation in the Alliance. The members will offer guidance, support and work closely with the YCC, alliance secretariat and partner organizations in relation to efficient and effective youth involvement. The council will not interfere with alliance programme content or implementation.

### **Positions within the youth advisory council**

- 1) President
- 2) Secretary

The positions will be filled using a democratic approach where members will have to vote among themselves to choose who is to lead the council.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- To offer guidance and advice to the YCC, Alliance secretariat and partner organizations in promoting MYP.
- To be a link between young people in the programme and the YCC.
- Provide necessary support in increasing visibility of the alliance at both the local and national level.
- Offer mentorship services for the development of young people in the alliance.
- Identify and pursue partnership opportunities with likeminded organizations.
- Support Alliance advocacy plans and initiatives.
- Together with the YCC, the council will facilitate development of work plans from the alliance youth movement and monitor progress of the plans outlined.
- Compliment alliance efforts in mobilizing resources.
- Monitor that the voice and inputs of young people are incorporated in alliance activities.

- Facilitate efficient and effective youth-adult partnerships.
- To convene on a quarterly basis and provide progress reports to the YCC.

### **Requirements**

- Ability to cooperate and work in a team.
- Conversant with SRHR issues specifically those affecting young people.
- Ability to communicate in English and Chichewa.
- Dedicated to advancing the mission of the alliance.
- Innovative and energetic.
- Can easily use social media.
- Willingness to work on volunteer basis.

### **Skills**

- Oral and written communication skills.
- Organizational skills.

### **Accountability**

The youth advisory council will work on a youth-adult partnership basis with the alliance secretariat and it is hierarchically accountable to the YCC.