



**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

# **SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE PROGRAMME**

# ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome
ASRHR	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
AYP	Adolescents and Young People
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
ESA	East and Southern Africa
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SYP	Safeguard Young People [programme]
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

# SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE PROGRAMME



10 Years

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# MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

As we commemorate the 30-year anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the imperative to advance the reproductive health and rights of young people in East and Southern Africa (ESA) has never been more critical.

Over the past decade, the UNFPA Safeguard Young People (SYP) programme has worked to empower youth in the ESA region. It continues to focus on critical issues such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, early pregnancies, gender-based violence, and creating a safer environment. Supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the programme operates across 12 countries.

In 2023, the SYP programme focused on expanding comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, integrating economic empowerment, addressing the impact of climate change on SRHR, and promoting self-care interventions. It also continued to tackle critical issues such as mental health, menstrual health, and universal health care to ensure the overall well-being of adolescents and young people.

Despite significant strides forward, there remain some challenges, as young people still require our prompt and decisive action to ensure their sexual and reproductive health and rights while safeguarding our environment.

As expressed during several youth engagements with UNFPA, their voices are clear: they seek improved sexual and reproductive health care, a transformative education system that promotes equal opportunities, radical inclusion of all youth voices while combating anti-rights movements, prioritized climate action, and increased youth participation in decision-making processes.

The SYP programme engages a diverse range of partners, including government ministries, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community, the African Union, civil society organizations and youth networks. This collaborative approach has made SYP a comprehensive and successful initiative in addressing the critical needs of young people in the region. As SYP advances, its multifaceted approach continues to pave the way for a healthier, more empowered youth population, which is vital for the prosperity of Africa.



Lydia Zigomo  
UNFPA Regional Director  
East and Southern Africa

# A DECADE OF EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Safeguard Young People (SYP) programme, a flagship initiative by the UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office, empowers adolescents and young people between the ages of 10 to 24 to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, early and unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, gender-based violence, early marriage, and other harmful cultural practices.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Rwanda

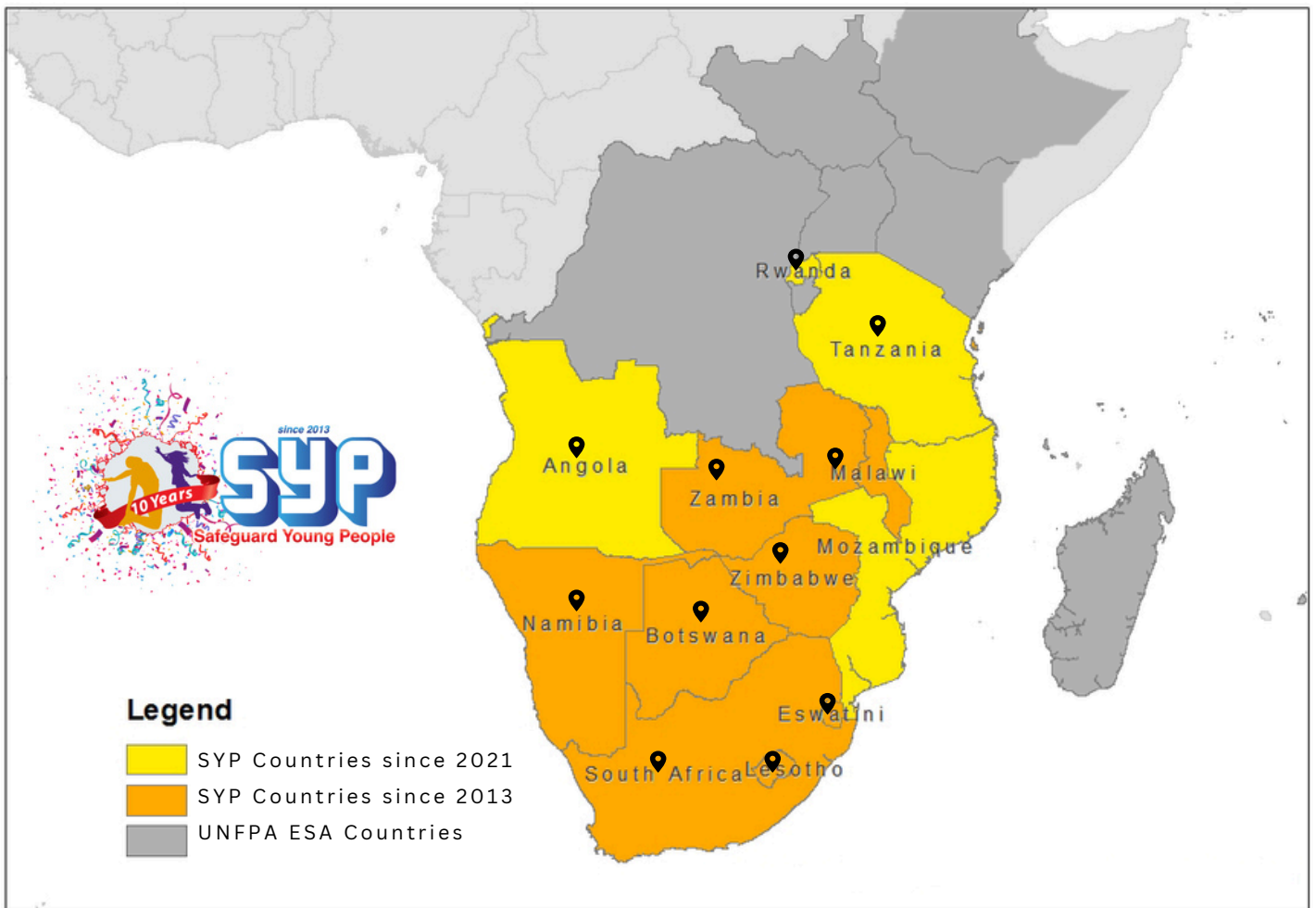
The SYP programme, established in 2013, celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2023. Initially implemented in eight countries (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the programme expanded to 12 countries in 2021, including Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands joined as a main donor in 2021, supporting Angola and Mozambique, and expanded its support to Eswatini, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 2023.

The past ten years have marked a transformation in how the SYP programme engages for and with young people, placing youth participation, leadership and accountability, bodily autonomy, and groundbreaking innovations at the centre of action in the region. This continues today as the programme builds on the successes and lessons learned from the previous phases of the SYP programme.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Tanzania

# KEY RESULTS 2013 - 2023



**40 million**  
**EXPOSURES OF YOUNG PEOPLE** to sexual and reproductive health information and education.



**275,000**  
**BOYS AND GIRLS** educated on how to respond to the effects of climate change, environment and disaster risks related to SRHR, HIV, GBV and well-being.



**280**  
**DISTRICT AND NATIONAL YOUTH NETWORKS** supported and functional.



**18,000**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE** built capacity in leadership, advocacy and youth development.



**17 million**  
**LEARNERS ACCESSED** comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in school.



**1,300**  
**HEALTH FACILITIES** supported to offer adolescent and youth-friendly services.



**14 million**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE** reached with sexual and reproductive health and HIV services.



**21,000**  
**SERVICE PROVIDERS** trained on the provision of adolescent and youth-friendly services.

# 2023 ANNUAL RESULTS

*TOWARDS YOUNG PEOPLE REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL*



*Photo credit: @UNFPA ESARO*



# CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

*Improved inclusive policies, legislation and accountability mechanisms for the promotion and protection of adolescents' and young people's rights at regional (SADC), national and subnational levels, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights*

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Countries continue to support the review and strengthening of national laws and accountability mechanisms utilising regional framework and strategy documents such as the SADC Model Law on Ending Child Marriage and AU Continental Strategy on Education for the Health and Wellbeing (EHW). Countries such as Rwanda and Zimbabwe have successfully conducted comprehensive national studies on Adolescent Pregnancy to inform policy and national strategies to prevent early and unintended pregnancies.

**1,824**

Youth network members trained in advocacy for SRHR and youth development

**299**

National and District youth networks are functional

**21**

Regional publications through SYP on research studies and best practices.

**92%**

SYP countries that have documented policy dialogues held on key emerging issues including CC and ASRHR; ASRHR in UHC; SRHR needs for boys and young men.

**100%**

SYP countries with platforms that facilitate the dissemination of strategic information.

**100%**

SYP countries with functional SYP coordination mechanisms.

# REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Ensuring that young people's voices are heard and included in policy processes: UNFPA continued to provide support to two large regional networks – AfriYAN (African Youth and Adolescents Network) and Y-ACT (Youth in Action) – which resulted in youth-led social accountability interventions such as participation in key thought leadership platforms such as the Africa Youth SDGs Summit, the Youth for Peace (Y4P) skillsbuilding dialogue, International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) 2023 and youth consultations to feed into policy engagements on localizing the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action on the African continent.
- UNFPA ESARO supported the inaugural partner meeting for the new phase of the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA Plus): To accelerate progress towards ending maternal mortality, UNFPA provided both technical and financial support to the Directorate of Health and Humanitarian Affairs of the African Union Commission to organize this significant gathering of partners. As a result, CARMMA Plus now includes adolescent SRHR services, in addition to reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health.

## COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:



Development of the SADC Protocol on Youth and the Accountability Framework of the SADC Youth Empowerment Policy Framework (2023-2030). Draft versions of the protocol and framework were shared with member states for further input.



Continental dialogue with parliamentarians including those from key parliamentary forums such as SADC PF, Pan Africa Parliament, and East Africa Legislative Assembly, focusing on SRHR needs of young people. This dialogue was a follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD10) review,



An evidence-informed consultation with over 90 parliamentarians from the SADC region to discuss effective ways to domesticate the SADC Model Law on Ending Child Marriage and Model Law on GBV, and to improve the integration of proven interventions to address GBV, child marriage, and harmful practices in other development initiatives of the SADC region.

## REGIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONTINENT:

- UNFPA ESARO provided guidance and support to complement the ESA Commitment and the Africa Union Continental Strategy on Education for the Health and Well-being of Young People in Africa. Countries such as Malawi, Uganda and Kenya were supported in the ongoing processes of the endorsement of the political commitment by Member States. UNFPA also contributed to the development and validation of the ESA Commitment Results Accountability Framework and the Indicator Reference Sheet.



Photo credit: @UNFPA South Africa



Photo credit: @UNFPA Tanzania

- UNFPA ESARO informed the recent for young people. Education Plus Initiative assessment/scoping exercise and, based on this, supported the development of joint regional activities to support adolescent girls' education and empowerment.

- Regional contribution to continental initiatives: In partnership with UNESCO, WHO and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, UNFPA supported the African Union Commission in developing, validating, launching and disseminating the African Union Continental Strategy on Education for the Health and Well-being of Young People in Africa. The strategy aims to enhance the physical, mental and reproductive health of young people while contributing to the achievement of education goals and its implementation would ensure better health outcomes for young people.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Tanzania

# STORIES OF CHANGE

## *BREAKING TRADITION: MALAWIAN COMMUNITY LEADER REFORMS INITIATION CEREMONIES TO PROTECT GIRLS' RIGHTS CHIKWAWA, MALAWI*



*Photo credit: @UNFPA Malawi*

Fanny Galeta was not sure how to react when her mother told her that her initiation ceremony had been planned. Over the years, Fanny had heard many stories about these ceremonies and she was not sure whether she wanted to participate in one.

No one really tells you the truth about what happens there,” said Fanny, 16. “Many things are kept secret. I tried to reach out to my friends who had been there and they just laughed. They told me that I will have to discover [it] on my own.”

But the choice wasn't hers to make. Fanny's parents and her community held the practice in high regard and, like every girl her age in the village, she was expected to take part in the ceremony.

When the time came, Fanny was accompanied by her mother to a secluded camp deep in a forest near their village. Here, she was welcomed by four elderly women who were known initiators. Fanny would stay at camp for three weeks. Click [here](#) to find out more about Fanny's initiation experience

# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

## ANGOLA

- The SYP programme conducted resource mapping exercises in five SYP implementing provinces to identify available community resources and to enhance young people's participation in the programme. The results of this exercise will inform the design of tailored interventions in hotspots and strengthen referral mechanisms.
- UNFPA Supported the development and launch of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Prevention and Combating Early Pregnancy and Marriage where the need to revise the age of consent within the family code law 1/88 was highlighted.
- The country office supported youth capacity enhancement through South-South cooperation activities: SYP in Angola and youth-led organizations in Brazil facilitated exchanges between youth networks, led by SYP supervisors from Namibe, Huíla and Luanda Provinces.

## ESWATINI

- Technical assistance was provided for supporting the analysis of the Violence Against children Study which was concluded and disseminated to stakeholders. This study provided much-needed evidence to influence policy and programming in Eswatini.

## BOTSWANA

- The SYP programme supported the review and impact analysis of the 2010 National Youth Policy. It is expected that this will inform an action plan for the policy.
- UNFPA supported the following capacity enhancement initiatives:
  - An initiative for 31 traditional leaders from the Ntlo ya Dikgosi (House of Chiefs), enabling them to advocate for SRHR issues related to adolescents and young people in their communities.
  - The participation of 36 young people in Youth Quake 3.0, which resulted in their contribution towards the drafting of the national commitments on the well-being of adolescents, a landmark effort showcased at the Sustainable Development Goal Summit and endorsed by the President of Botswana.
- The UNFPA country office collaborated with national partners to host a high-level HIV prevention symposium to review the response of combination HIV prevention and to advocate for accelerating the reduction of new infections in Botswana. This resulted in an HIV prevention roadmap, placing young people at the centre of key response interventions.



## LESOTHO

- To support the implementation of the National Youth Policy (2017-2030), the programme facilitated the development of the Youth Development Act. This included holding district consultation meetings with youth. The Youth Development Act, which aims to establish a National Youth Council, is currently awaiting cabinet approval in parliament.
- Media houses were engaged to collect and publish stories on adolescent SRHR, resulting in more than 9 articles being published on issues affecting adolescents and young people such as implications of Early and Unintended Pregnancies (EUP), contributing factors to child marriage, and sexual exploitation.

## MOZAMBIQUE

- UNFPA supported two ministerial sessions of the CIADAJ (Comité Intersectorial de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento de Adolescentes e Jovens), a multi-sector committee to support the development of adolescents and young people, and one national technical seminar involving representatives from all 11 provinces of Mozambique.
- Seventeen thematic studies based on the 2017 Population and Housing Census were published, outlining the progress that has been made in Mozambique since the last census in 2007. This helped stakeholders revisit their strategies and approaches to accelerate their efforts towards meeting key national SRHR indicators.

## MALAWI

- The SYP programme provided technical support to the Ministry of Health, Reproductive Health Unit to revise the youth friendly health services strategy. UNFPA supported the review of the International Technical and Programmatic book for out of school CSE which has been aligned to the Malawi CSE Guidance book.

## NAMIBIA

- The annual review and planning meeting of the National School Health Taskforce, supported by the SYP program, facilitated the evaluation of school health initiatives and the development of work plans to address emerging health issues among school-aged children. This was in collaboration with government ministries (Social Services, Education, Arts and Culture), UN agencies, and civil society organizations.
- These multifaceted initiatives, focusing on policy review, youth empowerment, capacity building, and multi-sector collaboration, demonstrate Namibia's commitment to improving SRHR and creating a brighter future for its young population.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Tanzania

## RWANDA

- UNFPA supported the Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health to disseminate a sermon guide to facilitate dialogues on adolescent SRHR in various religious settings. Capacity building on the use of the sermon guide was conducted for 40 mentors and 245 church leaders, with the consequent dialogue sessions reaching 10,005 adolescents and young people.
- To inform policy and national strategies to prevent early and unintended pregnancies, UNFPA led a comprehensive national study on adolescent pregnancy in all 30 districts in Rwanda. The quantitative and qualitative reports are now available, but are currently being reviewed by the extended reference group led by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Zambia

## SOUTH AFRICA

- Advocacy for CSE: The country office supported the Ministry of Basic Education to train 164 Representative Councils of Learners from 15 education districts to be in-school DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) Ambassadors to advocate for CSE and promote access to health and social services.
- Leading in the development of technical documents:
  - The country office completed the first phase (the literature review) in the development of the CSE implementation guide.
  - UNFPA played a lead role in supporting the development of a strategy to combat teenage pregnancy in South Africa. This included starting the development of an investment case to demonstrate the financial implications of teenage pregnancy on the health system and the economic impact of inaction.
- An abridged version of the Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools was developed, and 1,500 copies were printed for distribution to provinces.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Botswana

## TANZANIA

- The country office provided technical and financial support for the official launch of the Zanzibar Youth Development Policy, which incorporates SRHR and other emerging issues such as innovation and climate change. This is a critical document that will guide the youth agenda in Tanzania.
- A first for the country: UNFPA contributed strategically to creating an enabling environment for adolescents by developing the National Menstrual Health and Hygiene Guidelines together with its toolkits. It will be the first such guide to be developed in the country.
- UNFPA supported the capacity building of 70 AfriYAN members on resource mobilization. Furthermore, 60 members of the network were trained on digital advocacy and communication skills to influence youth empowerment.
- To foster meaningful youth engagement, 78 youth were supported to attend various national and international meetings, workshops and conferences where youth issues are discussed. AfriYAN members and network members were from the SYP programme-supported regions in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

## ZAMBIA

- The country office supported the development, validation and dissemination of the 2023 State of the Youth Report produced by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts. The report provides valuable data on the current status and needs of the youth across various sectors in Zambia.
- UNFPA supported the African Youth SDGs Summit, which was held in August in Lusaka with more than 3,000 participants. The summit, which is the largest youth platform for SDGs in Africa, is an annual gathering of young people, private sector actors, development practitioners, government bodies, and African Union and United Nations entities who come together to connect, collaborate and build synergies to address Africa's most pressing issues.

## ZIMBABWE

- All government ministries now have appointed Youth Desks, and 18 Youth Desks under various ministries submitted reports to the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training, as well as to the cabinet. A total of 1,325,911 youth have reported receiving services from the Youth Desks.
- The SYP programme provided support for the finalization and publishing of a national assessment on adolescent pregnancy in Zimbabwe. The report recommends a multi-pronged approach, including improved sex education and economic empowerment for girls. The findings have already spurred action, influencing discussions and collaborations around policies and programmes to tackle this issue.

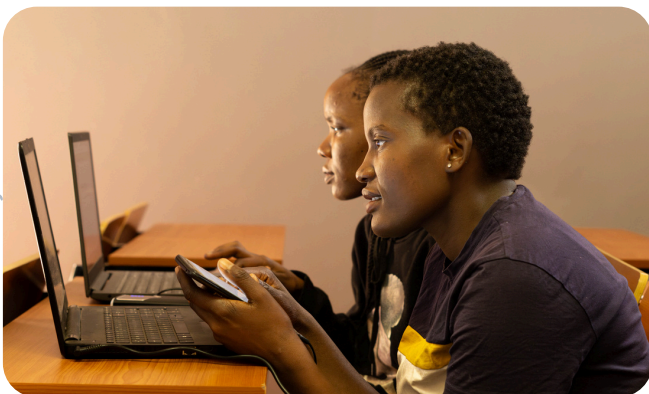


Photo credit: @UNFPA Namibia



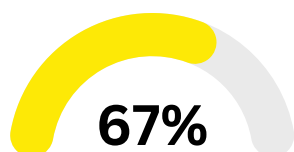
# STRENGTHENED DEMAND THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

Gender-transformative and climate-smart integrated SRHR/GBV/HIV/CSE services

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The SYP programme focuses on improving the quality and reach of age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) both in and out of schools. A key achievement is the successful institutionalization of CSE in pre-service teacher training across all 12 SYP countries. This ensures that future educators are equipped to deliver effective CSE in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions.

SYP countries with Inclusive and quality CSE for out-of-school programmes and/strategies



2021

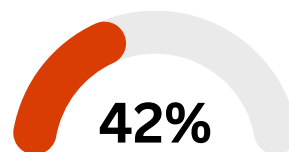


2022



2023

SYP countries with Inclusive and quality CSE institutionalised in pre-service teacher training



2021



2022

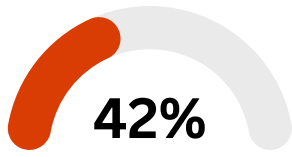


2023

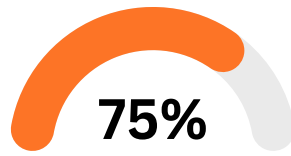


Photo credit: @UNFPA Botswana

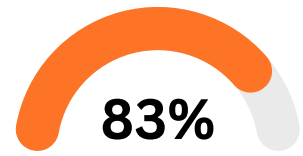
**SYP countries with Inclusive and quality CSE institutionalised in tertiary institutions - out of 12 countries**



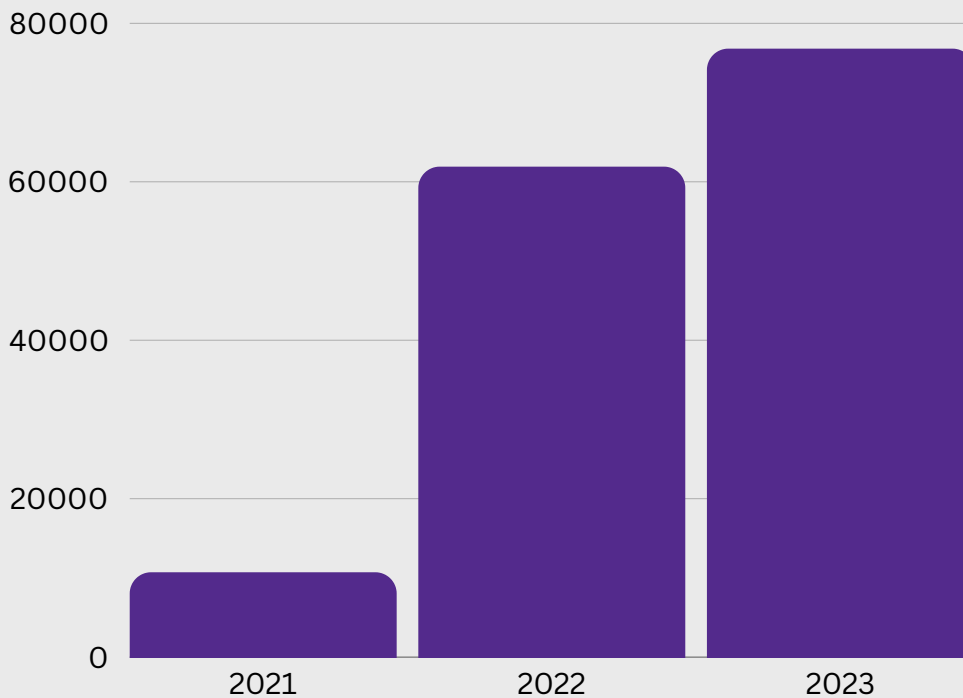
2021



2022

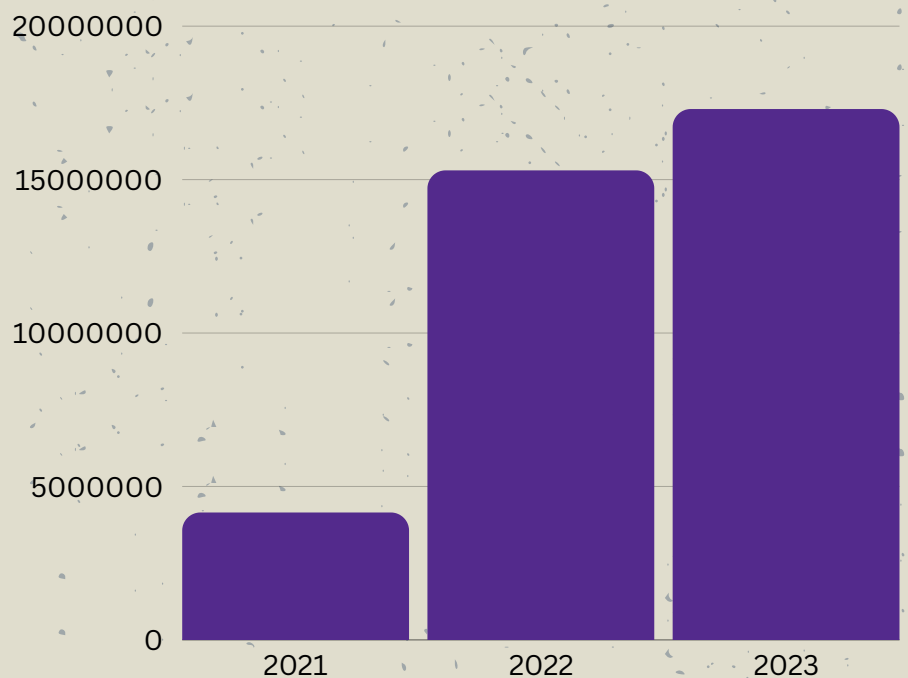


2023



**Number of Primary and Secondary Schools that provided life skills based HIV and sexual education in the previous academic year**

**Number of learners who received inclusive and quality CSE lessons in school or nation wide if curricula is fully institutionalised in the country**



# REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- UNFPA updated the CSE facilitator manuals and provided regional CSE training to UNFPA focal points and implementing partners to help facilitate delivery to out-of-school young people with disabilities and young people living with HIV.
- UNFPA co-published an article with the Medical Research Council in the Sexuality and Disability journal titled 'Validating the Teacher Sexuality Education Questionnaire scales to assess educators' preparedness to deliver CSE to young people with disabilities'. This is part of the CSE Breaking the Silence approach aimed at customizing CSE lessons across different disability types.
- UNFPA supported the development of nine thematic briefs on menstrual health, which were disseminated at the third Africa Menstrual Health Symposium in May 2023. The briefs informed key recommendations aimed at improving menstrual health policies and programming within specific country contexts. Additionally, they provided insights into how relevant stakeholders can work together to close gaps in existing menstrual health programming.
- UNFPA explored ways to amplify data: iSay is an artificial intelligence semipublic platform that enables UNFPA country offices to have direct access to real-time information on dialogues, social media behaviour and reactions to seven core topics (CSE; child marriage; family planning; female genital mutilation; gender-based violence; HIV, AIDS sexually transmitted infections; and maternal health), and it was launched in December 2023.
- UNFPA ESARO introduced and disseminated the Variations in the Menstrual Cycle: Get to Know Your Cycle AMAZE video to regional partners and across various platforms, including the Africa Coalition for Menstrual Health Management; AMAZE videos were also launched on the South African Department of Basic Education's television station.



- UNFPA ESARO hosted a Mental Health and Adolescent SRHR Hacklab, which received 201 applications from all 12 SYP countries. Ten finalists received innovation and entrepreneurship training in an online boot camp and pitched their concepts at the YouthConnekt Africa Summit in Nairobi. The two winners, Selma Ndasilohenda Iyambo, 22, from Namibia and Tapiwa Penama, 29, from Malawi, were awarded US\$15,000 in seed funding and \$5,000 in business support. Ms. Iyambo's initiative, 'Sex Talks', is a podcast aimed at delivering essential SRHR and mental health information to Namibian youth, facilitating open dialogue and expert connections. Ms. Penama's project, Tilitonse, is a central hub providing sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and psychosocial support to vulnerable youth at Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi.
- UNFPA supported the Joint Youth Working Group on SRHR and Climate Change (established in 2021) to engage in climate change policymaking processes through support to various conferences, including Local Conferences of Youth (national), Regional Conferences of Youth (Middle East and North Africa; Latin American and the Caribbean), and the eighteenth global Conference of Youth (COY18). Further support was provided for engagement in critical research. UNFPA funded 11 young people from diverse regions in the global south to attend the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) – eight from the Joint Youth Working Group and three from YOUNGO, the youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



# STORIES OF CHANGE

PUTTING ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AT FRONT AND CENTRE IN RWANDA



Photo credit: @UNFPA Rwanda

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through the Safeguard Young People (SYP) Programme, with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and other partners, led a two-day field visit to Karongi and Nyamasheke districts of the Western Province in Rwanda. Read the full story [here](#).

# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

## ANGOLA

- The SYP programme supported training on menstrual health for 107 primary and secondary schools, along with 198 teachers.
- A total of 16,048 students received CSE, with an emphasis on preventing teenage pregnancy, including measures aimed at achieving 'zero pregnancy' in schools.
- A total of 15,000 period panties and 10,000 SmartCycle Menstrual Trackers were distributed to empower 17,500 adolescents and young people (15,000 girls and 2,500 boys) aged 10 to 24. This initiative aimed to provide them with skills and knowledge on menstrual hygiene and related issues, utilizing the SmartCycle® education methodology and menstrual products.

## BOTSWANA

- The programme reviewed the life skills curriculum for all school levels using the global Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool.
- SYP supported the domestication of the ESA Commitment by galvanizing support at the political level and providing relevant platforms. This resulted in a comprehensive national operational plan that shall serve as an accountability tool.

## ESWATINI

- The Teen Moms Initiative received support from the SYP programme and enabled the reintegration of 34 teenage mothers back into the schooling system. These mothers were part of 200 teenage mothers benefiting from the initiative, which is run by a faith-based non-governmental organization and implemented across three regions in Eswatini.
- Seventy-five thousand adolescent girls and young women attended the 2023 Reed Dance (Umhlanga) at various locations (Embo, Emahhulumbeni, Lobamba National High School, Bhamu Sakhe). Of these, 30,000 received sexual and reproductive health messaging, achieving a 40 per cent reach. Sixty out-of-school young people underwent comprehensive training and mentorship under the entrepreneurship and life skills programme.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Mozambique

## LESOTHO

- The Lesotho College of Education, which trains most teachers in the country, received support to develop a CSE course. The college now includes CSE as a mandatory part of its degree programmes. Fifteen lecturers and 915 student teachers have been trained to teach CSE in schools.
- Community women's groups, faith-based organizations and community leaders engaged in discussions on preventing early and unintended pregnancy, reaching 550 community members. Thirty stories were documented, four radio slots were utilized, and four community dialogues were conducted, reaching 57 men and 455 adolescents with messages on preventing early and unintended pregnancy.
- A total of 105 parents of adolescent girls and boys were engaged and trained to effectively communicate SRHR issues to their adolescents and young people.
- UNFPA and UNESCO supported the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Health to adopt the MIET Africa school health referral mechanism tool. This adoption process helped to identify areas within the tool that could be implemented without external help and to establish a coordination framework between the two ministries to boost the uptake of SRH services by young people.

## MALAWI

- The Ministry of Youth and Sports, with help from UNFPA, created guidelines and tools to improve the Parent-Child Communication Programme. This has led to increased parent-child discussions about sexual and reproductive health, resulting in better support for girls to stay in school. The programme also promotes healthy sexual behaviour and reduces risky practices among adolescents. The developed tools include monitoring tools, a code of conduct and a parent-child communication guidance manual.
- In Nkhata Bay and Mangochi Districts, the SYP programme trained 100 young people living with HIV, young people with disabilities and sign language interpreters on CSE. This training empowered youth leaders to advocate for their communities' rights and well-being, enhancing their capacity to make informed sexual and reproductive health decisions.
- TuneMe dedicated a week to discussing population issues in Malawi, aligning it to the government campaign; at the time of reporting, the Malawi TuneMe page had
- reached 3,480 registered members.

## MOZAMBIQUE

- Six hundred and twenty-five mentors across three regions reached young people with strategically designed behaviour change communication interventions aimed at fostering demand among adolescents and young adults for comprehensive information and services related to sexual health, gender-based violence and HIV.
- UNFPA supported group discussions for boys and young men at the community level. The focus was on preventive dialogues. A mentorship approach was used, where trained young men led weekly sessions for groups of 20 participants aged 10-24 over three-month cycles.
- An implementing partner provided mental health and psychosocial support training to SYP service providers and mentors. Thirty-six training sessions were held, reaching 1,042 people. Fifteen cases needing further support were identified, and all received satisfactory assistance.

## NAMIBIA

- The SYP programme advanced institutional capacity for integrated CSE in schools. It trained 553 pre-service teachers and nurses through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, UNFPA, UNESCO, the University of Namibia, and the International University of Management, and provided CSE training to 89 in-service teachers and nurses.
- In the Kunene and Khomas Regions, 4,609 adolescent and young boys participated in male engagement sessions. These sessions centred around crucial topics such as sexual and gender-based violence, gender equality, and positive masculinity.
- Through multi-sectoral community engagements led by several ministries, 1,500 parents, traditional leaders and guardians in Kavango West and Oshana Regions were educated on SRHR, GVB and HIV.

## SOUTH AFRICA

- In the Eastern Cape, a four-day learner pregnancy indaba organized by the Ministries of Health, Social Development and Education addressed early unintended pregnancies. The event, which was held in OR Tambo and Alfred Nzo Districts, involved 251 learners and 292 officials and stakeholders.
- CSE has been fully integrated into schools via the Life Orientation curriculum, reaching a total of almost 6.5 million learners nationwide.
- UNFPA and Triggerise partnered to implement TIKO (an innovative SRH platform using technology and behavioural economics) to provide CSE and SRH services to young people. A baseline assessment and training of peer educators have been conducted to support the initiative.

## RWANDA

- UNFPA trained 7,323 primary and secondary school teachers on CSE. This has resulted in the improvement of the quality of CSE delivered for more than 2 million learners, facilitated by a supportive working environment created through ongoing collaboration with the Rwanda Basic Education Board. The customized CSE monitoring tool will be used to ensure ongoing quality improvement.
- The SYP programme engaged 600 religious and community leaders in discussions to challenge harmful cultural norms around gender equality and CSE. These engagements led to increased openness and demand for youth services and information within the faith-based community.

## TANZANIA

- UNFPA finalized and endorsed the National Life Skills Standards Guide and Training Manual for Out-of-School Youth. Validation of the review of the National Life Skills Education Framework for out-of-school youth was underway.
- The programme completed the review of the SRHR content in the Technical and Vocational Education Life Skills Curriculum, and approval was obtained for its inclusion.
- UNFPA and Femina Hip collaborated to produce and distribute more than 95,000 copies of Fema Magazine. The magazine's theme centred on boys' sexual and reproductive health and mental health during puberty.
- Tanzania reported having institutionalized CSE modules in tertiary institutions.



## ZAMBIA

- The country office continues to promote and support platforms to ensure that the voices of young people are heard. Zambia faced opposition to CSE implementation from some communities, but strong government support and civil society engagement led to its adoption as life skills and health education. Key strategies included emphasizing youth voices, protecting their rights, collaborating with stakeholders, showcasing CSE's positive impact, and linking in-school CSE with health-care services.
- Forty-eight community dialogues were conducted to address harmful gender, social and cultural norms and to promote CSE and adolescent SRHR. Additionally, 96 safe space mentors were trained to provide life skills training to adolescents.

## ZIMBABWE

- UNFPA conducted radio sessions focusing on life skills, sexuality, HIV and AIDS, with 594 interactive guidance and counselling sessions broadcast across 11 community radio stations.
- UNFPA visited 40 schools for joint CSE support and mentoring, exceeding the annual target of 20 schools.
- The SYP programme supported five provinces to conduct 40 interactive sessions on SRHR with learners.
- The programme supported 53 young people through mentorship and capacity building. The young people engaged with stakeholders and 30 submitted business plans to receive start-up kits.
- A new initiative using sports to spread SRHR information reached 523 young people in Hopley, a settlement in Harare.



# INCREASED EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY SRHR, GBV AND HIV INTEGRATED SERVICES

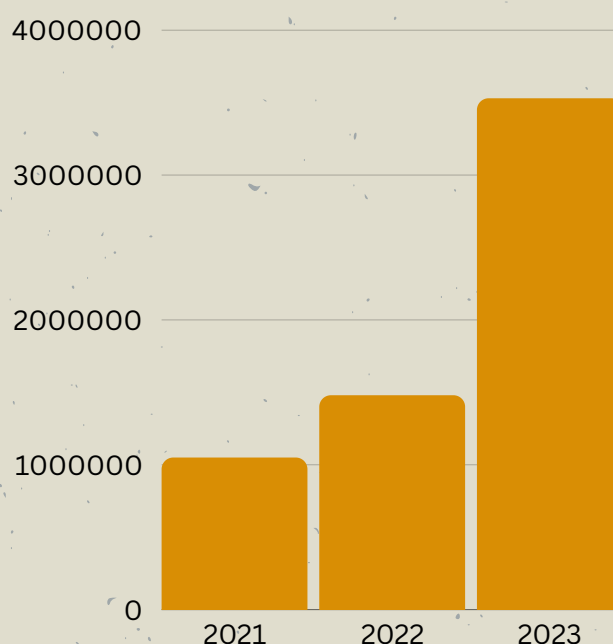
*Adolescent and youth friendly services*

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

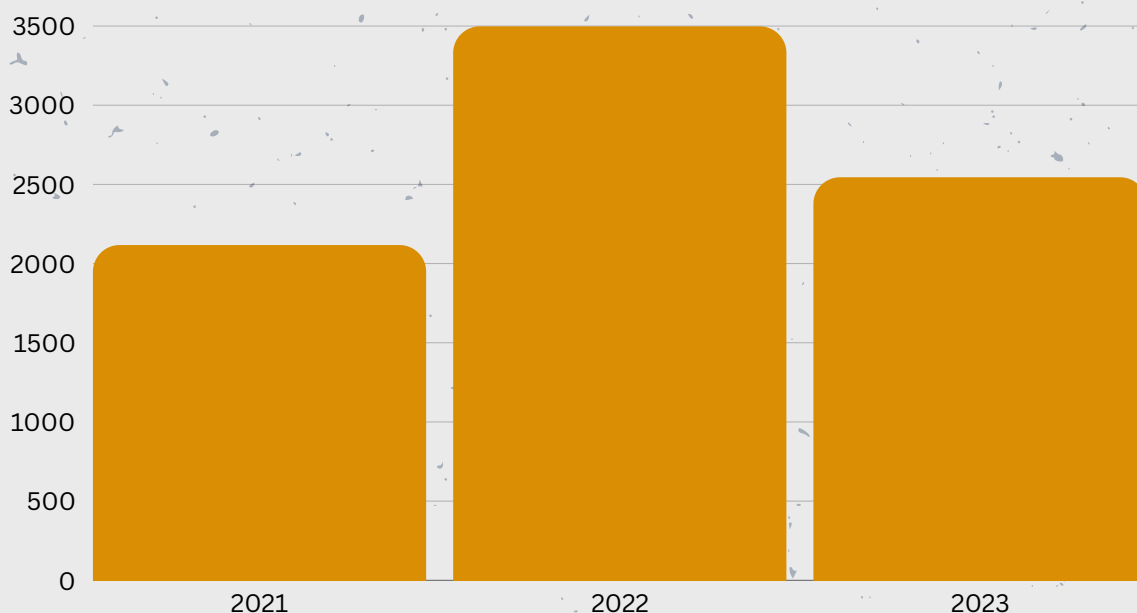
The SYP programme continues to make progress in strengthening national systems to respond to, expand and deliver quality integrated SRHR, GBV and HIV services that are sustainable and adolescent and youth friendly within universal health coverage, education and social protection frameworks.

This included capacity development at the institutional level, strengthening skills, knowledge and mentoring, as well as developing training manuals and guidelines for health management information systems in six SYP implementing countries – Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**Number of adolescents and young people reached with integrated SRH, GBV and HIV services**



**Number of pre-service and in-service providers trained in adolescent/youth friendly health service delivery**



# REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- UNFPA and UNICEF collaborated to create draft implementation briefs to serve as a resource for programme implementers, offering practical strategies and insights into potential barriers to scaling up effective interventions for adolescents and young people (AYP). The briefs focus on five key areas affecting youth, including those living with HIV in East and Southern Africa. These briefs address the following:
  - Mental health and psychosocial support for AYP living with HIV
  - HIV testing services tailored for AYP
  - Extending SRH and HIV services beyond health facilities to better reach AYP
  - Interventions addressing gender-based violence among AYP
  - Strategies for preventing, treating and mitigating substance use among AYP in ESA
- UNFPA, the South African Medical Research Council and the Center for Disease Control collaborated to develop a user-friendly Disability Awareness Checklist, which was piloted in Angola with health providers. The checklist enables health providers to identify immediate and future actions to make health facilities and the quality of services more accessible to persons with disabilities. The tool has since been disseminated to other partners in ESA.



Photo credit: @UNFPA Zimbabwe



Photo credit: @UNFPA Angola

# STORIES OF CHANGE

*FINDING MY OWN VOICE - I STOPPED FOLLOWING ADVISE  
THAT I KNEW WAS WRONG FOR ME*



*Photo credit: @UNFPA Angola*

Carla Yulima, 16, lives in Zango with her parents and has been an active presence during SYP activities. For her, SYP is not just a programme, but a beacon of hope for teenagers and young people.

“For me,” she says with conviction, “SYP stands for saving, protecting, helping, transforming lives, changing mentalities, actions and so on.”

She shares how her life has changed since she started taking part in the programme.

“I stopped following advice that I myself knew was wrong for me,” confesses Carla. Her journey with SYP has helped her find her voice and the courage to challenge this harmful advice.

As a teenager, Carla highlights another significant transformation.

“I learned to understand my body better and to discuss topics like sex openly,” she reveals. She now feels confident enough to take part in SYP group discussions, demonstrating a remarkable growth in her self-confidence.

But Carla is not just thinking about herself. She has hopes and dreams for the future. In a heartfelt request to the mobilizers and implementers of the programme, she expresses her desire for additional opportunities for all young people.

“I would like them to offer courses, scholarships, to help us achieve future dreams.”

Read the full story [here](#).

# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

## ANGOLA

- The SYP programme reached 3,991 adolescents and youth at the adolescent and youth-friendly services units in the five SYP provinces.
- UNFPA trained 149 health-care providers on SRHR, provision of adolescent- and youth-friendly services and the standard package of the strategy.

## ESWATINI

- SYP supported the review of the National Adolescent- and Youth-Friendly Standards and the Adolescent SRH Training Manual to incorporate emerging issues such as mental health and climate change.
- UNFPA increased the capacity of health service delivery points to cater to the needs of adolescents and young people by providing on-site training on youth-friendly services for 25 health facilities, reaching more than 400 health-care workers.

## MALAWI

- Thirty-one outreach service centres in areas affected by Cyclone Freddy in Chikwawa District reached more than 45,000 young people with sexually transmitted infection management, family planning, condom provision, HIV testing services, GBV screening and counselling, antenatal care, psychosocial support, and SRHR information. Overall, more than 1 million young people received similar services across all programme districts.

## BOTSWANA

- UNFPA trained 255 health-care workers to provide quality youth-friendly health services, addressing the low uptake of SRH and HIV services and improving service provider attitudes. Supportive supervision was conducted in nine districts where facilities identified challenges; remedial measures were implemented to address gaps.

## LESOTHO

- UNFPA monitored 35 health facilities across five districts for the use of GBV registers. Staff received capacity building on completing forms and reporting sexual and gender-based violence, with supportive supervision conducted by the Ministry of Health.
- The SRHR/HIV testing services/GBV outreach programme (implemented through the Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association and the Ministry of Health) distributed over 250,000 condoms and reached more than 120,000 adolescents and young people with SRHR services.

## MOZAMBIQUE

- A total of 120,448 people in remote communities in Memba and Erati Districts, Nampula Province, were reached by mobile brigades providing integrated adolescent SRH services, along with malaria screening and nutrition, vaccination and GBV support.
- The programme trained 138 trainers on the provision of youth-friendly services and the standard package of the strategy.

## NAMIBIA

- The SYP programme reached more than 18,000 young people through mobile outreach with integrated SRHR, GBV and HIV information and services, and distributed over 80,000 condoms to young people across seven regions.
- UNFPA trained 87 health-care providers on family planning, including the insertion and removal of long-acting reversible contraceptives (implants and intrauterine devices), through two UNFPA-supported sessions in Oshana and Kunene Regions.

## SOUTH AFRICA

- Over 1.2 million adolescents and youth aged 10–19 have accessed health services in districts supported by the SYP programme. The most frequently utilized services include mental health support for individuals under 18 years, medical male circumcision for those aged 10 to 14 years, and delivery services for those aged 15 to 19 years.

## ZIMBABWE

- UNFPA trained 586 pre-service and in-service health staff in adolescent- and youth-friendly service delivery.
- In order to increase the accessibility of SRHR services within tertiary institutions, 22 college nurses and counsellors were trained on youth-friendly service provision. Additionally, Know Your Services campaigns were conducted across various provinces and colleges. The campaigns provided a comprehensive 'one-stop shop' comprising health, life skills and mentorship services, all integrated and conveniently accessible within the same space, with more than 1,500 students accessing the integrated services.

## RWANDA

- The SYP programme supported the capacity building of 255 health-care providers on youth-friendly health service provision. In addition, 27 health facilities were provided with basic equipment to improve the quality of adolescent SRHR information and service provision.
- Three Golden Standard Youth Corners were established in Karongi, Nyamasheke, and Rusizi Districts through SYP and Korea International Cooperation Agency collaboration. Equipped with the necessary materials and trained staff, these corners offer quality SRHR services and are integrated into the community health system for sustainability.

## TANZANIA

- The programme reached almost 15,000 young people with SRHR information and more than 16,000 with integrated SRH, GBV and HIV services.
- UNFPA handed over a refurbished health facility to the Yombo Vocational and Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities, which will serve two wards with a population of 16,000.

## ZAMBIA

- The SYP programme trained 150 healthcare providers; more than 200,000 adolescents were reached with youth-friendly services and SRH information; and 1,500,000 condoms were distributed through condomize campaigns.
- UNFPA has continued to scale up the selfcare model, which is a positive approach using the peer-to-peer approach in the delivery of SRH services. A training manual was developed and successfully piloted in Kabwe.

# LOOKING FORWARD



Photo credit: @UNFPA Rwanda

In 2023, the implementation of the SYP programme at both regional and country levels yielded tremendous results. Strategic partnerships with regional institutions, countries, civil society, and youth-led and youth-serving organizations; enhanced youth engagement; and innovative approaches to capacity building have driven progress towards universal access to CSE and youth empowerment in the region. Interventions in all three outcome areas largely met or exceeded programme goals, noting the continued engagement of strategic actors in the programme.

Looking forward, the SYP programme will continuously work on further increasing the sustainability of the programme and institutionalizing good practices and interventions. UNFPA remains committed to leveraging the SYP programme to accelerate the full enjoyment of rights and choices by young people in the region. SYP is made possible through support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Embassy of Switzerland in Mozambique and Rwanda, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Mozambique.



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**Safeguard Young People Programme**

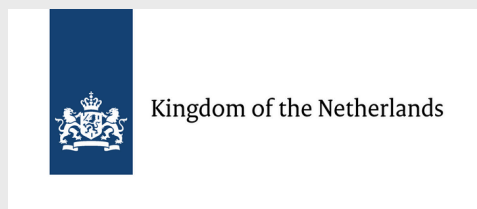
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