



THE SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE PROGRAMME: THREE YEARS ON

Addressing the urgent needs of youth across
Southern Africa



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United Nations Population Fund
Delivering a world where
every pregnancy is wanted
every childbirth is safe and
every young person's
potential is fulfilled

AIDS is the leading cause of death among adolescents across Africa.



45% of boys



42% of girls

aged 15-24 years demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention. Three out of every five sexually active youth are using contraceptives.



1 in 4 girls are married before their 18th birthday.

High rates of early childbearing among young women aged 15-19 years remain a concern across Southern Africa.

Zambia (36%)

Malawi (25%)

Zimbabwe (25%)

South Africa (10%)

THE FACTS

Safeguard young people programme (2014-2016)

Addressing the urgent needs of youth across Southern Africa

Africa's youth population is growing rapidly, bringing immense opportunities for economic growth and prosperity. Yet, they face many risks as they navigate adolescence – unemployment, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and gender-based violence. The life skills that many youth lack mean they are unable to negotiate healthy, equitable relationships to plan their families and their futures.

We are at a critical crossroads – if we do not invest now in our young people, they face an uncertain future. Bold action from governments and leaders is critical to address their needs, include them in decision-making, and empower them to become change-makers in their own communities.

UNFPA's flagship programme, Safeguard Young People (SYP), responds to the urgent needs of millions of young people, charting a new way forward for Southern Africa.

At the heart of the programme is the belief that young people need to be supported holistically in their own diverse and often complex environments so they can truly realize their full potential. This means the programme works at regional, national and local levels. And it works with governments, traditional leaders, civil society, parents, teachers, nurses and – most importantly – youth themselves.

The SYP Programme uses innovative approaches to achieve better sexual and reproductive health outcomes for adolescents and young people at national scale, making it the first of its kind in the region.

Three years since it was launched, the evidence shows that the programme has changed the lives of many young people. From its contribution to the development of historic laws and policy amendments, to its captivating digital and traditional communication approaches; from foundational relationships built with parents and traditional leaders, to tireless efforts in improving health and education standards – the programme had an extensive impact on communities across the eight countries.

By 2030, basic health services, including sexual and reproductive health care, can:



Avert 12.5 million
adolescent deaths



Prevent 30 million
unintended pregnancies

How the SYP Programme is changing lives

SYP addresses young people's needs by:

- Improving policy, legal and programming environments;
- Increasing young people's knowledge and skills towards adoption of protective sexual behaviours;
- Increasing access to and quality of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services;
- Promoting youth empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

Summary of results (2014-2016)



7 million

exposed to sexual and reproductive health information and education in and out of school



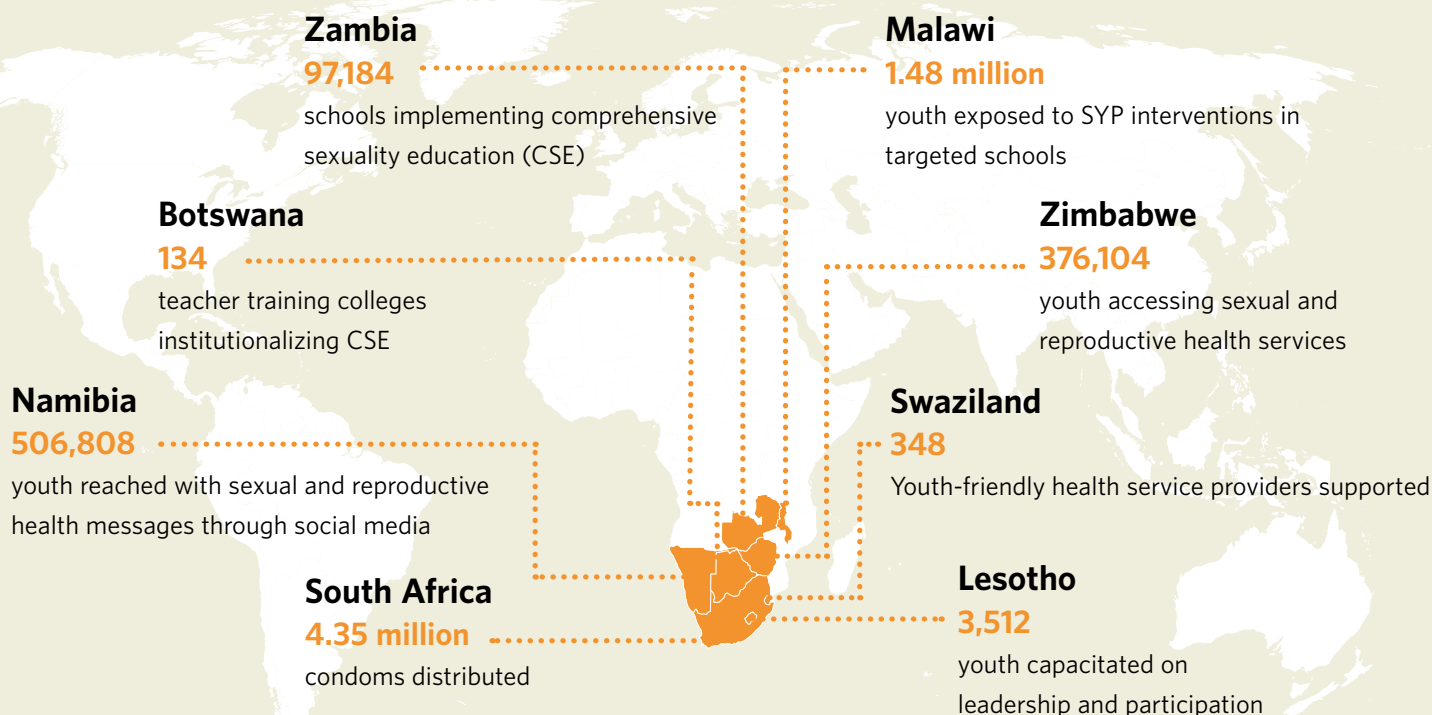
1.7 million

received sexual and reproductive health services



78 million

condoms distributed



Unleashing young people's potential

Engaging partners to positively impact youth in a multitude of ways:

1. Advocating for youth issues:

- Conducted a comprehensive analysis of laws and policies affecting adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights in East and Southern Africa;
- Supported development of the Southern African Development Community Model Law on Child Marriage;
- Worked closely with governments at country level to build evidence on a range of youth issues. These studies have been crucial in informing national policies and strategies.

2. Increasing young people's knowledge and skills to adopt protective sexual behaviours:

- Integrated a regional CSE manual for out-of-school youth;
- 'iCAN' manual on CSE for young people living with HIV, was produced in collaboration with SAfAIDS;
- Rolled out a first-of-its-kind CSE teacher training online course;
- Launched "Tune Me", a mobile site that targets adolescents and young people with entertaining content about their sexual and reproductive health;
- Piloted a manual in Zimbabwe that helps parents communicate with their children about CSE.

3. Improving the quality and access of youth-friendly health services:

- Conducted a review of standards in youth-friendly health service delivery in East and Southern Africa that will help to inform how to improve quality and coverage of service standards;
- Reviewed pre- and in-service training for health providers to better integrate health services for adolescents;
- Strengthened health services to respond to unique needs of young people and increasing service demand through in- and out-of-school social and behavioural change programmes.

4. Strengthening young people to become agents of change:

- Trained and empowered adolescents and young people in advocacy techniques and leadership skills to improve their campaigning on issues related to their sexual and reproductive health;
- Engaged young people and youth networks such as the African Youth and Adolescent Network on Population and Development (AfriYAN) to participate and influence decision-making at local, national and international platforms;
- Utilized social media strategies to recruit and multiply the number of young people who can transfer knowledge to their peers about sexual and reproductive health.

5. Enhancing coordination, documentation and dissemination:

- Built an extensive body of knowledge on young people and their needs, including sexual and reproductive health data on adolescents and youth and resource mapping of health and educational facilities.



ADVOCACY

Protecting the right to sexual and reproductive health

Harmonizing laws and policies

Sexual and reproductive health is an intrinsic part of an adolescent's development, and a fundamental right for all. Yet, far too often, it is a missing piece in a young person's journey from adolescence to adulthood. UNFPA works with local, national and regional stakeholders to improve laws and policies that prevent young people from accessing sexual and reproductive health.

UNFPA, in partnership with the University of Pretoria and in collaboration with the African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities, developed a 23-country study that reviewed the laws and policies that impact adolescents and young people. Validated by key stakeholders, the analysis has helped form a legal framework that will be adopted by the Southern African Development Community and its member states.

The study has been a central advocacy tool for policy makers and legislative drafters, providing concrete recommendations to help improve countries' policy and legal environments. Yet laws alone cannot respond to the realities and vulnerabilities of young people.

Communities, including traditional and faith-based leaders, have significant influence over the health and rights of young people. For this reason, UNFPA has begun working closely with traditional leaders, gaining their support to bring life-saving sexual and reproductive health information and services to youth.

Model law to help eradicate child marriage

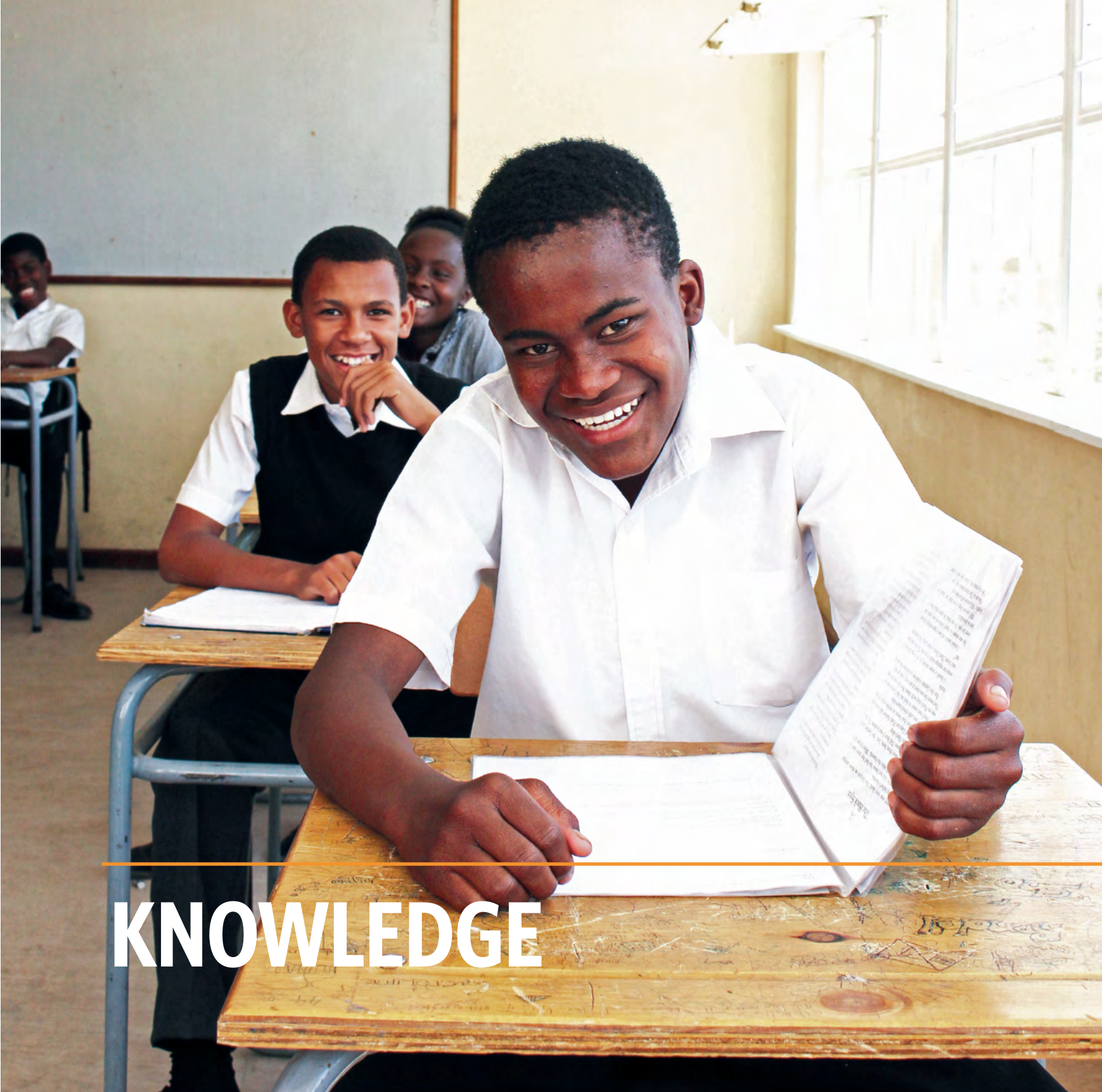
The SYP Programme supported the development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Model Law on Child Marriage. Led by the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the historic model law is already guiding member states on how to eradicate child marriage and protect those already in marriage. Zambia – a country with one of the highest child marriage rates in the world – has begun a review of its Marriage Act, with the aim of criminalizing child marriage. Malawi has also taken steps in eradicating child marriage by removing a provision in its Constitution that allowed children between the ages of 15 and 18 years to marry.

Key findings from the study:

Only six countries have set the minimum age of consent without exception, which prevents other laws, including customary law from overriding this age.

There is lack of legal and policy provision on age of consent to medical treatment, which creates major barriers for adolescents in accessing health care.

Only half of countries across East and Southern Africa have provisions to manage learner pregnancy but the majority of those countries approach it from a punitive perspective.



KNOWLEDGE

Scaling up comprehensive sexuality education

Equipping teachers to deliver sexuality education in the classroom

Adequately trained and supported teachers are critical for quality comprehensive sexuality education to be delivered, yet research has pointed to a crucial lack of supervision and support for teachers across East and Southern Africa. To address this gap, UNFPA, in partnership with UNESCO, developed training programmes for pre- and in-service teachers to aid the delivery of sexuality education in the classroom. Incorporated in the training programmes is a personal reflection on the teachers' own attitudes, beliefs and values on issues related to sexuality, gender and relationships. This helps them become more aware of how this influences the way they teach sexuality education topics to students.



2,300

teachers trained in
CSE through an online
module



42,000

teachers trained in CSE
through a face-to-face
approach

Improving sexuality education for marginalized youth

The region is witnessing growing investments in sexuality education – the East and Southern Africa (ESA) Commitment made by ministers of health and education in 2013 has helped accelerate efforts to ensure young people receive universal access to sexuality education. Although there has been a notable move towards integration of CSE in formal curricula in the region, specific strategies are needed to reach marginalized young people. UNFPA, through the SYP Programme, has developed two manuals tailored to out-of-school adolescents and young people, and young people living with HIV. The newly developed tools have been adopted and adapted by governments and community organizations, which will strengthen national capacity to respond to the unique needs of marginalized youth.

"My work, as a teacher, is to help learners develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life challenges, such as peer pressure, bullying and discrimination. I found the training very helpful. I feel much more prepared to enter a classroom and teach."

- Tsuses Constancia, a Life Skills teacher at Auas Primary School in Katutura, an informal settlement in Namibia's capital city, Windhoek.



UNFPA Namibia/Emma Mbewe

Engaging and empowering youth through mobile technology



525,000
users accessed
the mobisite



1 million
page views



400
stories

“Tune me” is youth-speak for “tell me” in Southern Africa. It is also the name of a mobisite for young people, launched by UNFPA and the Ford Foundation. Launched in six countries in Southern Africa, the mobisite is designed specifically for low- and high-end devices in environments where high data charges and poor network coverage limit access to online services.

In partnership with the Praekelt Foundation, Tune Me has been built and operated to deal with issues related to love, sex and relationships in an open and honest environment. It invites readers to share their personal stories as they navigate the tough terrain of adolescence. Tune Me’s newest feature is designed to help users find youth-friendly clinics by geo-location, and it includes feedback mechanisms to track quality of care.

Launched in five countries in Southern Africa, including Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe - Tune Me will be expanded to other countries in the region, including Lesotho and Swaziland in 2017.



UNFPA/Corrie Butler

“I like the session for questions which allows me a chance to ask questions on a topic that I’m not sure about.”

- Young user

“Through Tune Me stories, I realized that every action I take in life will bring about a reaction, so I have to decide wisely.”

- Young user



UNFPA/Corrie Butler

Universal language: Using music to connect youth to life-saving information



294,000

adolescents and young people reached with sexual and reproductive health messages through the SYP Music project

Music is an international language that transcends race, colour, culture, class and creed. It allows young people to relate not only to the artists but also to the songs, which allow personal interpretation of the messages within their own individual contexts.

The SYP Programme has launched a hip hop album collaboration by seven talented and award-winning artists across Southern Africa. The album, entitled *We Will*, uses the power of music to encourage young people to make safe and healthy decisions about their relationships and sexuality. The music incorporates positive messages about young

people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as ways to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Music videos of the songs were produced in 2016, enabling young people to share these empowering messages online while also reaching them through traditional media channels. The artists continue to incorporate key messages learned from the sexuality education training they received from UNFPA, to continue the discussion about issues facing their young fans, including HIV and teen pregnancy.



UNFPA/Helene Christensen

How sexuality education is changing lives in Zambia

"I have seen girls become pregnant, become victims of violence and become HIV-positive and I don't want to become one of those girls," says Lydia Mwelwa, aged 13 years.

"I'm happy they have taught us in school how we girls can protect ourselves," she says.

A student at Kabulonga Basic School in Lusaka, Zambia's capital, Lydia is benefiting from UNFPA-supported comprehensive sexuality education.

Emade Sakala is head teacher at Kabulonga Basic School. "For a long time, learners have been hungry for information that is now being delivered through comprehensive sexuality education in school," he says.

CSE was integrated into the national education curriculum for grades 5 to 12 and launched nationally by the Ministry of Education in 2014. Zambia's CSE curriculum covers six thematic areas: relationships; values, attitudes and skills; culture, society and human rights; human development; sexual behaviours, and sexual and reproductive health. Teachers are trained using interactive and participatory methods to guide learners through discussions, team work and role plays.

The CSE curriculum is taught under the subjects of Biology, Civic Education, Home Economics, Integrated Science and Religious Education.

The teachers' hard work in communicating CSE to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights among learners is paying off.

"We have seen a significant shift in gender norms among the students," says Chipso Chisango, a teacher at Twalumba Primary School in Lusaka. "We see critical thinking, confidence, assertiveness, communication, respect for others and responsible sexual behaviours."



HEALTH SERVICES

Strengthening health services to become youth friendly

How can health services become youth friendly?

Youth-friendly health services understand and respond to the unique and evolving needs of young people, ensuring they feel safe and supported and honouring their right to make decisions for themselves.

UNFPA uses the World Health Organization's 'quality of care' framework to guide youth friendly health-care approaches, ensuring services are accessible, acceptable, equitable, appropriate and effective.

Responding to the unique needs of youth

UNFPA's SYP Programme has worked with health service delivery points in both urban and rural areas across the region to strengthen their approach and ensure this is grounded in what young people truly need and want. Supporting ministries of health, UNFPA trained nurses, equipped facilities and created greater demand for health services.

The programme has emphasized both static and outreach sexual and reproductive health services, including distribution of contraceptives, promotion of HIV testing and treatment and antenatal and postnatal care for young mothers. Many UNFPA-supported facilities provide corners where young people can gather socially, share knowledge and access services.

The quality of youth-friendly services varies significantly across the region – restrictions in laws and policies, insufficient budgets, poor institutional capacities and unhelpful attitudes of service providers are some of the factors that affect the quality of delivery. UNFPA conducted a 23-country review of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health service delivery standards and guidelines. The evidence presented in the study is helping guide governments in improving service delivery in the future.



453

youth-friendly service delivery points supported



2,383

youth-friendly health service providers trained



1.7 million

adolescents and young people reached with youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services



EMPOWERMENT

Empowering young people to become agents of change



6,000

young people
capacitated on
leadership and
participation

“Nothing about us, without us.” This mantra by youth is central to UNFPA’s work with them. By empowering more than 6,000 young people in sexual and reproductive health and rights, the programme has ensured that they are knowledgeable about issues related to their own SRHR, that they help their peers in their communities access critical information and services, and that they have the confidence to advocate on issues that matter to them with decision makers at national, regional and global levels.

The involvement of young people – not only as beneficiaries, but also as partners and leaders in the programme at all levels – has brought a fresh perspective to policy discussions. UNFPA supported AfriYAN to establish platforms for youth to influence policy at local, national and international meetings and events, including UN General Assemblies and conferences. By the end of 2016, AfriYAN had established chapters or youth advisory panels in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



UNFPA/Corrie Butler



Halting sexual violence in rural Lesotho: transforming herd boys into change makers

A life of herding sheep, goats and cattle in the mountains of Lesotho is almost all Tihoare Makere, 21, has ever known. Like many herd boys in his community, Tihoare never attended school. Marginalized, isolated and with little access to information and guidance, he began to exhibit violent behaviour towards others.

However, this has now changed thanks to a UNFPA-supported programme that is reaching herd boys, including Tihoare, with life skills information and health services. The programme also teaches anger management and how to communicate and negotiate respectfully with others.

"I have learned to stop the violence. I want to teach and inspire others to do the same," Tihoare says.

Before joining the programme, Tihoare admits he abused girls, by confronting them on their way home from school and forcing them to have sex with him.

"I felt strong in those moments because I had learned that this is how women should be treated," he recalls.

In Basotho, there is a saying that 'Fighting is the only solution to conflict'. In the highlands, most herd boys learn to fight against each other and over territory.

"Fighting became a means of communication and demonstration of power," says Sello Matsoso, Officer for Out-of-School Youth at Help Lesotho.

Having learned more about women's rights and approaches to communication and negotiation, Tihoare has stopped abusing girls – but his knowledge hasn't stopped with him. He continues to share what he learns in the programme to fellow herd boys, friends and family in the hope of preventing further violence in his own community.

"I now know violence is wrong. Communicating and agreeing is my new approach to the opposite sex. I feel like a real man now, with respect for girls and women," says Tihoare with a grin.

One day, he hopes to have his own family and provide his children with the opportunity for schooling, which he never had.

Enhancing coordination, documentation and dissemination

SYP leads and coordinates at both local and region level which has fostered greater information sharing and sharpened interventions. It has enabled the programme to build breadth of evidence and knowledge of young people and their needs across the region, and this has framed advocacy and programming for three years.

Highlights include:

- Development of the Africa Adolescents and Youth Dashboard, with 35 indicators relating to adolescents and young people's sexual and reproductive health;
- Mapping health and education facilities in relation to geographical concentration of young people and schools, to enable sound programmatic decisions;
- Regional coordination and annual steering committee meetings with principle secretaries from ministries of health, education and youth across Southern Africa to share information and best practices. The meetings also help to make decisions on how best to achieve desired results.

Looking ahead

The SYP Programme has made great strides over the past three years: advocating for youth issues, increasing young people's knowledge and skills, improving the quality of and access to youth-friendly health services, and strengthening young people's leadership and participation.

Thanks to the generous support of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Department of International Development (DFID), UNFPA is changing the lives of youth. Young people are empowered to make healthier and more responsible decisions and are confident to advocate for and exercise their rights.

Looking ahead to 2017, UNFPA will continue its work, through strong partnerships and locally-owned initiatives, to create a supportive environment in which young people can thrive.



With the generous support of:



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United Nations Population Fund, East and Southern Africa

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