



**Communique'**  
from Ugandan young people  
on Sexual Reproductive Health  
and Rights



# Background

The Health Systems Advocacy Partnership (HSAP) program started in January 2016 with the aim of facilitating national and subnational dialogues that continues to spur health accountability, citizen empowerment in addition to levelling the ground for effective implementation of existing and emerging policies.

To achieve this goal, it was critical that the civil society is empowered to ensure accountability and have health systems responding to the needs SRHR needs of citizens, especially young people. The program specifically focused on SRHR for women and girls in Uganda in the areas of SRHR services, Health Workforce and Commodities.

As a key implementation strategy, Amref

Health Africa has been building the capacity of civil society organizations and has continuously empowered them to conduct SRHR advocacy especially for women and girls. Currently, there are seven (7) organizations, one (01) at national level and six (06) organizations in rural districts have been strengthened to address subnational level advocacy.

White Ribbon Alliance (WRA) in Uganda as one of the national level partners has been supported to amplify citizen's voices in the SRHR arena as a pathway to addressing critical problems.

This is evident in the management of budget cycle processes where citizen's voices are captured and used to influence decision making to address real SRHR needs.



## **Entry point for youth engagement;** *capturing youth voices during intergenerational dialogues*

In the months of October 2018 to January 2019, youth from 6 districts of Kabala, Kisoro, Lira, Dokolo, Soroti and Serere were engaged in intergenerational conversations where issues on access to SRH services and Rights were presented to stakeholders and deliberated upon under the theme; “Nothing for Us without us”

The dialogues brought together youth leaders in local government , decision makers and other key stakeholders to meaningfully deliberate on strategies, approaches and investments in SRHR that can be made on the improvement of their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights.

During the seven (07) intergenerational dialogues, the youth and health advocates sought avenues to garner public support and political will to come up with enabling avenues and policies

that will be able to make possible the delivery on SRHR needs of adolescents and young people.

The participants deliberated on the ten (10) Family planning commitments where Uganda is signatory in the famous London summit of 2015 that must be achieved by 2020 in which the need to provide a conducive environment for adolescents seeking SRH services was paramount.

Discussions regarding the pending SRH policies for Adolescents were undertaken to forge a pathway to tackle issues facing Sexual and reproductive health in the event that there are no guiding policies for the same. The role of youth achieving better and sustainable health in regards to SRHR in Uganda and the presence of a clear roadmap to make these needs possible takes center stage.

## **We, the young people realize that;**

### **Globally,**

1. We are the majority population and we are the 2nd youngest population in the world.

### **In Uganda**

2. Over 50% of the Ugandan population is under 15 years and 75% are under 25 years.
3. Adolescents and youth account for 70% of the Ugandan population
4. High rate of teenage pregnancies standing at 25% and most of these are unwanted.
5. The rate of child marriages is very high; 10%.



### **In health facilities**

1. We have limited access to SRHR services and information.
2. Young people access to FP/contraceptives is key but there is no enabling environment due to cultural, social and legal related barriers. The National SRHR policy 2018 is still in draft.
3. Limited user and youth friendly services; traditionally medical training did not cater for needs of the 12-24 years old but combined their needs with adults whose health needs differ from those of young people.

### **In Training institutions**

- There is no adequate support and spaces for medical counseling and SRHR services in general.

### **For youth with disabilities**

- Youth with disabilities require special attention and support to fully enjoy their Sexual reproduction health rights.

## **We call on our Government, development partners and fellow youth in Uganda as follows:**

### **i) Uganda Government to:**

- Publish the Adolescent clients' charter and make it accessible to all and in the known fifty three (53) gazetted languages spoken in Uganda.



- Improve access to life skills / sexuality education – use of trained teachers and peer educators.
- Install youth friendly health services and provide appropriate training to the service providers handling adolescents.
- Expedite completion of key policies, for example, the National SRHR policy 2018 that is still in draft.
- Involve young people in policy making processes up to the grass root as the urban and rural youths seem to have different perceptions regarding SRHR services.
- Develop enabling policies and making them practical by resourcing for implementation of the policies.
- Enhance a social and cultural environment that upholds the SRHR of young people, for example, address cultural barriers.
- Include an SRHR information pack in curricula for learners in higher institutions especially in their entry year.
- Provide equal and quality services of SRH for youth living with disabilities as it is their health right too.

#### **ii) Call to Development partners to:**

- Increase the involvement of youth in all stages of program and policy making – from designing, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This will allow youth to fully explore their potential and innovation;
- Advocate for sustainable, accessible and affordable youth friendly health services;
- Form synergy in coordinating sustainable youth programs

#### **iii) Call to Fellow Youth to;**

- Get up, get involved, be innovative and take initiative in matters concerning your health because we are never too young or too small to make a change;
- Claim what is youth specific and sensitize other youth in communities on policies
- Bridge the gap; it is not us against them , let us make adults allies
- Be accountable as young people to our selves policies
- Bridge the gap; it is not us against them , let us make adults allies
- Be accountable as young people to our selves

## Contact

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