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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AGYW:</b>	Adolescent Girls and Young Women	<b>MP:</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>AU:</b>	African Union	<b>MTE:</b>	Midterm Evaluation
<b>CBO:</b>	Community-based Organization	<b>MYE:</b>	Meaningful Youth Engagement
<b>CM:</b>	Child Marriage	<b>PMEL:</b>	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>CMT:</b>	Country Management Team	<b>PMERL:</b>	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organization	<b>PtY:</b>	Power to You(th)
<b>EAC:</b>	East African Community	<b>SDG:</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>ETE:</b>	End Term Evaluation	<b>SCS:</b>	Strengthening Civil Society
<b>FGM/C:</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting	<b>SEAH:</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
<b>GBV:</b>	Gender-Based Violence	<b>SGBV:</b>	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>GMT:</b>	Global Management Team	<b>SOGIESC:</b>	Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities, Gender Expressions and Sex Characteristics
<b>GSB:</b>	Global Supervisory Board	<b>SRH:</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health
<b>GTA:</b>	Gender Transformative Approach	<b>SRHR:</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>GYG:</b>	Global Youth Group	<b>STI:</b>	Sexual Transmitted Infection
<b>HP:</b>	Harmful Practices	<b>ToC:</b>	Theory of Change
<b>HTP:</b>	Harmful Traditional Practices	<b>TWG:</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>HRC:</b>	Human Rights Council	<b>UPR:</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>ICFP:</b>	International Conference on Family Planning	<b>VAWG:</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls
<b>M&amp;E:</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation	<b>YLO:</b>	Youth-led Organization
<b>MEU:</b>	Men Engage Uganda		
<b>MIYP:</b>	Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation		
<b>MoFA:</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		
<b>MoH:</b>	Ministry of Health		

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### WELCOME TO THE POWER TO YOU(TH) PROGRAMME 2024 ANNUAL REPORT!

The report highlights the progress, challenges, and key lessons of the Power to You(th) (PtY) programme in its fourth year of implementation. PtY empowers youth and adolescent girls from underserved communities to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and gender equality and address the barriers leading to harmful practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and teenage pregnancies.

In 2024, PtY continued to focus on strengthening partnerships, fostering youth leadership, and driving impactful youth-led advocacy efforts at global, national, and community levels. Taking into account the Midterm Evaluation (MTE) recommendations, 2024 saw a strengthened governance structure, Southern leadership, alignment and learning. The programme's commitment to Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP) and Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) led to innovative solutions, enhanced programme delivery and deeper engagement with key stakeholders which contributed to greater efficiency and impact.

PtY navigated several risks and contextual factors including political unrest, shrinking civic space, economic instability, and climate change. Through adaptive programming, the dedication and resilience of our young advocates and partners, the programme succeeded in addressing some of these challenges which disrupted PtY activities and heightened vulnerabilities, especially for women and girls.



### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS THE PATHWAYS

Under Pathway 1, PtY **strengthened young people's knowledge and skills on harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies through community-led approaches**. 1,213 young people (target 779) participated in policy and decision making bodies, and perceived their participation as meaningful. Youth-led advocacy influenced policies and increased youth participation in decision-making, resulting in tangible outcomes such as restored youth centers in Ethiopia and government commitment for a new health center in Malawi.

The **capacity strengthening of 114 Civil Society Organisations (CSO)** (target 72) on MIYP and GTA in Pathway 2 **contributed to amplifying young people's voices**. CSO capacity was also strengthened on lobby and advocacy. Examples of impact include increased national health budgets in Malawi and the establishment of a rescue center for girls in Kenya. CSOs also played a key role in influencing local policies and securing resources for issues like child marriage prevention in Indonesia.

Under Pathway 3 **PtY societal actors supported and promoted youth rights**. Intergenerational dialogues and community advocacy - highlighted as a key approach by the MTE - continued to prove effective in addressing harmful practices, by increasing understanding among societal actors on key youth issues. Media campaigns were strategically leveraged to influence public opinion and amplify youth voices. Community and religious leaders increasingly adopted progressive stances on youth rights and involved young people in decision-making.

Yielding results from the previous years' efforts, 2024 saw significant progress under Pathway 4 - **state actors improving policy making, budgeting, and implementation on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies**. Although the Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) indicators were not achieved in 2023, progress in 2024 showed significant improvement. SCS 1—the number of (inter)national laws, policies, norms, and practices implemented to reduce barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices and SGBV—surpassed its target by 65% (target: 29; achieved: 48). PtY's 2024 success stories reflect growing recognition of youth rights in policy discussions and the institutionalization of youth-inclusive structures. Notable examples include the integration of reproductive health education in Indonesian schools, increased budgetary allocations for youth-friendly services in Senegal, and the revision of national gender policies and strategies to end child marriage in Malawi.

## LESSONS LEARNT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Lessons learnt are outlined under each of the Pathways in the report below. Examples include the significant impact youth can have on policy and resource allocation when they are well-skilled and provided with meaningful opportunities; that tailored communication is essential, and that adaptive programming can increase programme effectiveness. Partnerships and collaborations were crucial for influencing policy and ensuring sustainability, as was the combined investment in actors and activities across the four Pathways, linking community voices to national and international policy arenas.

In 2024, PtY prioritized sustainability through the institutionalization of youth councils, supporting the adoption of legal instruments, and budget allocations. In 2025, the focus will shift toward embedding the sustainability of its approaches and documenting good practices in Gender Transformative Approaches, Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation, and shifts in policy and practice.

Despite emerging challenges such as reduced funding and declining support for SRHR, gender equality and advocacy in international development by both US and European governments, the PtY programme has laid a strong foundation for sustained impact on youth rights and gender equality. A detailed overview of PtY's Theory of Change can be found in Annex 2.



**Let's explore the programme's 2024 milestones, insights, and transformative moments that shaped the year together!**



## POWER TO YOU(TH) APPROACHES

We employ key approaches to drive our commitment to end **harmful practices**, including early and forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and advance gender equality.

01

**Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP)** was strengthened among consortium partners, policy makers and CSOs, following MTE recommendations. Tools to track MIYP progress were adapted. Youth engagement in governance bodies showed that creative formats and online spaces enhanced youth engagement

02

A Linking & Learning Symposium strengthened the integration of **Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA)** across the programme, including a provision of mentoring support. Country-level initiatives showcased diverse gender-transformative strategies.

03

To support scaling efforts, PtY placed greater emphasis on its **Learning, Research, and Evidence agenda**. Central Operational Research (COR) studies advanced, and a Young Researcher Network was established. Knowledge sharing was promoted through webinars, symposia, and cross-country learning exchanges, resulting in the replication of successful models.

04

**Innovation** through the Human-Centered Design (HCD) methodology led to tailored solutions to address SRHR access for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). Pilots in six countries were funded.

05

**Safeguarding practices** related to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), fraud and corruption, and bribery were strengthened.

06

**Southern leadership** and community led advocacy remained key in PtY's governance and implementation approach.



## 1. CONTEXT, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES

During its fourth year of implementation, the PtY programme was impacted by several key contextual risks, among them shrinking civic space, particularly concerning SRHR, growing opposition, political unrest, and the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

**Political dynamics**—such as conflict, protests, and elections—significantly affected PtY programme implementation in 2024. In Ethiopia, ongoing conflict in the Amhara region led to movement restrictions, security threats, and delayed activities. Vulnerabilities among women and girls increased, while access to healthcare and SGBV support services was severely limited. However, the program collaborated with local youth centers and schools to maintain engagement and preserve core objectives. In Kenya, anti-government protests following the passing of the 2024 Bill which raised taxes on essential goods including SRHR products, disrupted youth engagement and project activities. In Migori County, PtY youth partners were attacked and harassed for participating in demonstrations. In Uganda, some stakeholders politicized programme activities, leading to public perceptions of political bias and undermining trust in PtY.

Elections in Indonesia, Ghana and Senegal brought both challenges and opportunities for youth-led advocacy and stakeholder collaboration. In Indonesia, presidential and legislative elections resulted in

restructuring key ministries leading to structural changes within several key ministries. This required renewed stakeholder outreach to ensure programme continuity. In Senegal, the March 2024 presidential elections led to significant governmental changes, disrupting coordination with key government contacts. However, it also created new advocacy opportunities with members of the Cii Laa Bokk (CLB) platform appointed to government positions. PtY Ghana, by using the Ghana Youth Manifesto developed in 2023, influenced campaign messages and ensured that youth issues remained a priority in the political discourse leading up to the 2024 elections.

**Shrinking civic space and growing opposition to SRHR** across PtY countries and at a global level prevailed this year. In July, a new government was sworn in, in the Netherlands, and by November, it announced major budget cuts to international development, with a particular focus on reducing funding for civil society and advocacy efforts. That same month, Donald Trump was re-elected in the United States, signalling a new period marked by heightened threats to SRHR policies and broader human rights, both domestically and globally.

Ghana witnessed the Promotion of Proper Sexual Behaviour and Ghanaian Family Values Bill (passed in Parliament in February 2024) imposing strict penalties on LGBTQI+ individuals and advocates. In Uganda, the constitutional court upheld key provisions of the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act (April 2024) increasing the vulnerability of LGBTQI+ individuals, and the NGO Amendment Bill 2024, tightening government control over civil society.

Ethiopia's Federal Islamic Affairs Council proposed legitimizing FGM in healthcare, contradicting national laws. In response, PtY intensified advocacy efforts, engaged regional leaders, and raised community awareness to prevent policy adoption. Recognizing the increasing influence of anti-rights actors on SRHR and gender justice, and building on work from previous years, the cross-programmatic Community of Practice (CoP) on Dealing with Opposition (DoW) supported partners in navigating these challenges (see Global Advocacy section: Countering Anti-rights Movements).

2024 also witnessed policy advancements. In Malawi, the government finalized the National Gender Policy 2023-2028 and the Ending Child Marriage Strategy 2023-2030, launched in partnership with PtY. Budget allocations for health also improved, with the sector receiving 12.2% of the 2024/25 national budget, including funding for Youth-Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and family planning programs. In Ghana, ahead of the December 2024 elections, the government increased support for youth engagement through policies like the National Youth Policy, along with the establishment of youth resource centers and youth advisory councils, reinforcing PtY's advocacy efforts for meaningful youth participation. A persistent challenge however, is that limited government budgets continue to hinder the effective implementation of policies.

**Economic instability, including inflation and currency devaluations**, has heavily affected the PtY programme and the communities it supports. As the cost of living rises, many households are prioritizing basic survival over youth-focused (program) initiatives. In Ethiopia, this shift in combination with limited mobility due to conflict, caused delays in activities. Still, PtY worked with youth centers and schools to sustain engagement and meet core goals. In Malawi, a 3.36% currency depreciation and 32.3% inflation rate in 2024 forced the programme to reduce or merge activities to maintain cost efficiency. In Ghana, inflation reached 23% by December 2024, increasing poverty—especially in rural areas. Economic hardship caused many youth in places like Tazika/Bagtua and Kpalori to leave school for mining work. In response to these financial pressures, PtY is adopting creative strategies such as providing livelihood and

entrepreneurship opportunities for women and youth to ensure youth continue receiving support despite rising costs and shifting priorities.

**Technology and Digital Engagement** brought both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms increased the program's reach, challenges such as online safety and digital inequality affected implementation. In Ghana, women and girls faced high levels of digital violence—including cyberbullying, body shaming, revenge porn, and blackmail—leading to initiatives to boost digital literacy and safety. Kenya saw social media become a tool for youth activism, enabling young people to demand accountability on issues like the Finance Bill 2024, femicide, and FGM. However, the spread of harmful content and misinformation led to calls for responsible online engagement. To that end, both countries conducted research in 2024 on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), emphasizing the importance of equipping adolescent girls and young people with skills to safely navigate digital spaces. In Ethiopia, conflict and low digital literacy limited digital coordination, yet youth in Afar used TikTok to campaign against harmful practices. In Senegal, a digital awareness campaign educated youth and communities on rights and discriminatory provisions and contributed to lowering the average age of Senegal's 15th parliament from 54 to 47 years.

**Climate change and natural disasters** continue to pose significant challenges to the implementation of the PtY programme reversing some of the progress made in advancing SRHR and gender equality. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation have exacerbated vulnerabilities—especially for women and girls—by disrupting livelihoods, increasing poverty, and heightening risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices.

Finally, **deeply-rooted social, cultural, and gender norms** continue to perpetuate FGM and early marriages, despite PtY's ongoing efforts and achievements in raising awareness and advocating for the abandonment of these harmful practices. The following Pathway sections provide a more detailed account of PtY's successes, setbacks, and responses.





## 2. POWER TO YOU(TH) IMPLEMENTATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

The section below provides an overview of key achievements, findings and lessons learned in 2024 across the PtY implementing countries, with a selection of examples from the country reports under the different pathways. A detailed overview of PtY's Theory of Change can be found in Annex 2. A full overview of the quantitative results (linked to MoFA's SCS basket indicators, compiled overall and by country) can be found in Annex 1.

### 2.1 PATHWAY 1: YOUNG PEOPLE DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS ON HARMFUL PRACTICES, UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES AND SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The MTE lauded the achievements under Pathway 1. In 2024, PtY reinforced its innovative, community-led approaches and strategies to strengthen youth-led advocacy and foster meaningful engagement with decision-makers. These efforts enabled young people to influence policies, challenge harmful gender norms, and drive social transformation. This year 1,213 (target 779) young people who participated

in policy and decision-making bodies perceived their participation as meaningful and demonstrated the skills and confidence to advocate, influence decisions, and claim their space in governance. The MTE recommended greater inclusion of in-school youth, an approach already proving effective in Indonesia. Examples from Ethiopia (following a learning exchange with Indonesia), as well as from Malawi and Kenya, highlighted in both the HCD section and this Pathway, demonstrate how this recommendation was adopted.



**1,213**

Young people (target 779) participated in policy & decision making bodies

### STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON HP, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

PtY strengthened young people's knowledge and skills on harmful practices, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and unintended pregnancies through creative, community-led approaches. In Kenya and Uganda, programs engaged men and boys as allies in transforming gender norms. Kenya used Human-Centered Design (HCD) to co-create solutions with communities, including positive masculinity sessions and intergenerational dialogues, leading to increased community support against GBV and

FGM. In Uganda, young men organized sports events and savings groups to raise awareness and promote social cohesion, showing how male engagement can drive both social and economic change. In Indonesia, peer educators created comics and graphic stories to campaign against child marriage and GBV, making advocacy more accessible and engaging for youth. Senegal's Penccco initiative used forum theatre and HCD to provide young people with safe spaces to explore SRHR issues and identify local solutions, while also engaging parents and religious leaders to support girls' education. In Malawi, legal clinics improved awareness of protective laws, strengthening school structures and leading to actions like the annulment of child marriages. These country examples highlight how youth-driven, context-specific interventions can effectively challenge harmful practices and promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights.

part in Musrenbang forums, where they influenced village and district development plans by proposing initiatives focused on mental health, GBV prevention, and child protection services. Youth advocates in Malawi in turn secured government commitments for the construction of a new health centre and a youth-friendly clinic, significantly improving access to SRHR services for both young people and children under five. Additionally, in Chilinda Village, Malawi, a topless initiation ceremony triggered a response from PtY volunteers and the Social Welfare Office. Collaborating with local leaders, they succeeded in bringing a stop to the ceremony. As a follow-up, PtY Malawi plans to develop a model Initiation Curriculum through its HCD program to address the risks posed by informal initiation rites, which often expose adolescents to age-inappropriate content information and increase the risk of early sexual debut.



*PtY Indonesia created comics and graphics to campaign against child marriage and GBV.*

## YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH DECISION MAKERS

PtY supported youth-led advocacy efforts that led to tangible outcomes and enhanced youth participation in decision-making processes. In Ethiopia, youth clubs influenced national and regional platforms, successfully lobbying for the reopening of a youth center in Afar. In Indonesia, young people took

Uganda's youth advocates successfully influenced the Ministry of Health to prioritize adolescent-friendly services, and their recommendations—such as appointing adolescent focal persons and supporting school re-entry for teenage mothers. Youth now have official representation at the District Committee on Adolescent Health (DICAH). An unintended outcome emerged when youth advocates, through advocacy efforts, acquired land from a model farm in Isingiro district and began cultivating pineapples. This livelihood initiative supports both economic empowerment and the programme's sustainability strategy, aligning with Assumption 1.2 in the Theory of Change, which posits that organized youth, when supported through youth-adult partnerships, are able to claim civic space. Youth General Assemblies were institutionalized in Tamale and Mion, Ghana providing inclusive spaces for AGYW, out-of-school youth, and persons with disabilities to engage with local authorities.

In Ethiopia, the “Ask the Officials” forum allowed students to question senior leaders on GBV policy, fostering accountability and youth empowerment. Meanwhile, in Senegal, a high-level advocacy meeting with parliamentary champions led to renewed political support for youth-focused policy and budget decisions. To secure long-term sustainability of advocacy gains ongoing collaboration with both outgoing and incoming parliamentarians was negotiated.

## YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Capacity-building efforts have equipped youth with the tools to speak out, organize, and push for accountability within their communities. In Ethiopia, the Aramis Youth Club in Afar encountered an unexpected obstacle when the government issued a warning and temporarily banned their activities. This came after the club publicly criticized the lack of transparency in regional youth council elections,

exposing flaws in the selection process. With support from PtY, the restrictions were lifted, restoring the youth's right to participate in civic and leadership spaces. In Ghana, young people challenged traditional power structures by partnering with the Ministry of Youth to advocate for youth inclusion within the Dogbanli Traditional Council. Their efforts led to a historic breakthrough: the appointment of two youth representatives, one male and one female, who now participate in weekly council meetings, effectively voicing youth priorities with strong backing from their communities.

## LESSONS LEARNT

Engaging men and boys as allies, building trust with traditional leaders, and leveraging youth-adult partnerships have proven essential in shifting gender norms and challenging power dynamics. The use of small grants and innovative methods such as Human-Centered Design (HCD) has supported adaptive programming and strengthened both youth and male engagement, contributing to greater programme flexibility and sustainability. Another key lesson is the value of tailored communication tools, which help make advocacy messages more accessible and resonant for young people. While the MTE highlighted the difficulty of empowering youth to influence national-level decision-making, an increased focus in 2024 has led to promising developments. Examples from Ethiopia, Uganda, and Senegal show that, when equipped with the right skills, support, and platforms, young people can go beyond claiming civic space—they can actively influence policy, demand transparency, and advocate for equitable resource allocation.

### Educating with Local Wisdom: Innovations in Nadzam<sup>1</sup> and Wayang Botoi (Bottle Puppet) Shows for Child Marriage Prevention

Culture-based approaches have proven to be effective in addressing reproductive health education and child marriage prevention, especially in regions like Central Lombok and Jember - Indonesia. By integrating local traditions such as nadzam and wayang botoi, these initiatives have successfully engaged communities and gained support from influential local figures. In Jember, nadzam, a traditional pesantren practice, was adapted by the Islamic foundation Yayasan Pendidikan Islam Al Fariqi in co-creation with the students and the community to deliver Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education (RHSE). By embedding critical messages within a form that resonated culturally, this method broke the taboo surrounding reproductive health education but also made the learning experience more engaging and meaningful for adolescents.

In Central Lombok, a different yet equally powerful approach was employed using wayang botoi performances. In collaboration with the Sasak Puppet Performing Arts School, the youth forums (FAD) and the community-based child protection groups (PATBM) organized traditional puppet shows that doubled as educational tools. Initially viewed solely as entertainment, wayang botoi was reimagined as a platform for conveying messages about gender-based violence and the prevention of child marriage. The inclusion of traditional leaders lent credibility and cultural legitimacy to the performances, especially in villages that had been resistant to digital campaigns or formal outreach efforts. By merging entertainment with education, these initiatives facilitated meaningful community engagement and fostered broader understanding of key social issues also by audiences who were previously unreceptive to conventional strategies.

## 2.2 PATHWAY 2: CSOS AMPLIFY YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES TO CLAIM, PROTECT AND EXPAND CIVIC SPACE

In 2024, PtY made significant strides across its countries in strengthening youth advocacy, CSO capacity, and partnerships for social change. Key activities included gender-transformative training, policy advocacy, and collaborative efforts to address issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), child marriage, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). PtY's collaborative work empowered grassroots organizations, influenced national policy, and mobilized resources to sustain efforts toward gender equality, youth leadership, and social justice.



114

Civil Society Organisations (CSO) (target 72), were strengthened

### CSOS HAVE INCREASED CAPACITIES AND INCREASED LEGITIMACY

In line with the MTE recommendation, in 2024 PtY focussed on strengthening 114 (target 72) CSOs, government institutions, and grassroots groups' capacity in MIYP and Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) - as a key strategy to challenge power dynamics and harmful social norms to develop more context specific approaches and tools.

<sup>1</sup>Nadzam Al-Ijabiyah: A traditional method of teaching used in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), where religious and social messages are conveyed through rhythmic poetry or verses. Nadzam is typically recited in a musical or chant-like manner, making complex or sensitive topics more engaging and easier to remember.

In Ethiopia, CSOs received training in advocacy, lobbying, and GTA, leading to increased funding and stronger community mobilization against FGM and GBV. In Kenya, 49 youth- and women-led CSOs were trained on GTA integration, resulting in practical changes such as engaging men and boys as allies, mentoring women and girls, and incorporating GTA tools in advocacy strategies.

PtY Malawi continued working with 39 CSOs, strengthening advocacy on SRHR, GBV prevention, and male engagement. Following a GTA training with youth-led CSOs and government departments in Machinga and Dedza a health clinic in T/A Sale was established, improving youth access to health services. Ghana's Learning Hub empowered CSOs to conduct step-down training and build local advocacy networks, ensuring long-term sustainability. The training initiatives have strengthened CSOs' advocacy efforts, institutionalized gender mainstreaming, enhanced access to family planning services for young people in underserved areas, fostered sustainable coalitions, and empowered communities to challenge harmful norms. By equipping CSOs, government agencies, and grassroots groups with critical advocacy tools, PtY contributes to improved sustainability of youth leadership, gender equality, and social justice across PtY countries.

### **CSOS WHOSE CAPACITIES HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION THROUGH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY**

PtY Malawi, alongside other SRHR-focused civil society organizations (CSOs), collectively engaged key government stakeholders, including the Ministries of Finance and Health, and Parliamentary Committees on Health and Financing, through coordinated advocacy efforts. This joint action led to a notable increase in Malawi's national health budget, from 8.9% in 2023/24 to 12.2% in 2024/25, with 13% dedicated to sexual and reproductive health (SRH). This increased investment is expected to enhance the availability of essential SRH commodities, such as contraceptives and menstrual health products, particularly benefiting young people.

The CSOs' collaboration also extended to partnering with the Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN) to conduct a National Health Budget Analysis, which informed continued advocacy of the PtY consortium and CSOs in which they successfully lobbied Parliamentary Committees to further prioritize SRH funding. Members of Parliament committed to using the analysis report to guide mid-term budget reviews and strengthen health sector financing and accountability.

PtY Malawi also deepened collaboration with the Girls Not Brides Malawi Network, showcased its work at the 7th National Girls Summit in Uganda, and partnered with Men Engage Africa (MEA) Malawi and the SRHR Alliance to support adolescent girls' access to SRH services.

In Senegal, the National Girls' Club Day, organized with the Department of Social Protection for Young People (DPSJ), led to the launch of the "New Deal" community pact to prevent child marriages, prompting a call for national scale-up. In Ethiopia, PtY facilitated partnerships between CSOs and government bodies, securing \$23,000 from GIZ, 150,000 ETB (± €1,000) from EWLA, and €6,000 from Internews Europe for FGM and GBV prevention and youth peacebuilding. In Uganda, CSO coalitions developed a referral pathway for SGBV services and held quarterly meetings to improve local by-laws and access to health and legal support. These strategic partnerships have strengthened policy influence, resource mobilization, and intervention sustainability, ensuring that youth issues remain on national and regional policy agendas beyond 2025. A positive unexpected outcome was established in Kenya when a rescue center for girls was established in Kenya as a result of the cross border dialogues on FGM between Uganda and Kenya.



Despite progress made in shifting harmful norms, in Kenya, a reported peak in FGM led to intensified joint interventions to rescue over 300 girls at risk of FGM during the Christmas school break through coordinated operations and support services. Plans are in place to follow up on the county government's commitment to fund a rescue center in FY 2025/2026. Continued awareness campaigns in schools, stronger engagement with men and state actors, and the empowerment of AGYW will support long-term prevention. This example stresses the importance of working across the four Pathways.

## CSOS AMPLIFY YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES BY INFLUENCING DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

In Indonesia, local CSOs such as FAD (Village Children Forum) and PATBM (Community-Based Integrated Child Protection Unit) have played a key role in budget advocacy for child marriage prevention. Their efforts have influenced village policies and secured IDR 52,865,500 (EUR 3,141) from Village Funds to support educational activities on child marriage prevention. At the district level in Garut, Indonesia, a CSO-led consortium has successfully influenced policy through local regulation reviews and recommendations. Notably, they advocated for reactivating the Women and Children Protection Task Force and implementing an application-based child marriage registration system. Similarly, in Jember, youth organizations like IPPNU have taken the lead in sexual and reproductive health education, reaching over 20 schools at both junior and senior high levels. Across multiple PtY countries, these advocacy wins highlight the power of grassroots mobilization, youth leadership, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in influencing policies, securing budgetary commitments, and advancing gender justice.

### LESSONS LEARNT

In the implementation of Pathway 2, it is clear that strong partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and international bodies are critical for influencing policy, mobilizing and securing funding, and achieving long-term impact and sustainability. These collaborations have been further strengthened by the growing capacity and legitimacy of CSOs. One on one mentorship visits are reported as an effective support mechanism overall in CSO capacity strengthening in Uganda. Collective CSO action has played a key role in increasing national budget allocations for sexual and reproductive health in Malawi and in advancing policy reforms in countries such as Indonesia and Ethiopia.

However, CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and even government partners have reported that limited resources continue to pose challenges, particularly in fully integrating Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) and other concepts, scaling interventions, or maintaining progress, underscoring broader sustainability concerns.

Youth-led advocacy has also proven to be a powerful force in elevating young people's voices within decision-making spaces. However, youth activists face significant risks, as shown in Ethiopia and Kenya. This underscores the urgent need for protection and safeguarding measures to ensure that young people can engage in advocacy safely and meaningfully.

## 2.3 PATHWAY 3: SOCIETAL ACTORS TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE YOUTH RIGHTS AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL NORMS

In 2024, the PtY program deepened its focus on community-driven approaches to promote lasting change in the protection and advancement of youth rights. By engaging influential societal actors, such as religious and traditional leaders, caregivers, teachers, health workers, and media professionals, the programme worked to shift social norms and increase youth participation in decision-making, particularly around SRHR. The MTE affirmed that PtY continues to make a meaningful contribution to this pathway by raising awareness, enhancing knowledge, and strengthening commitment among these key stakeholders. Many of them not only began actively supporting youth rights but also worked to integrate young people more equitably into local decision-making processes. However, the MTE also emphasized that transforming deeply embedded social norms is a long-term endeavor that demands sustained and strategic engagement. In response to these findings, PtY refined its approach by scaling targeted strategies such as intergenerational dialogues, community advocacy, collaboration with gatekeepers and champions, (social) media campaigns, and improved legal support mechanisms.

### Effective approaches: (intergenerational) dialogues and community advocacy

Intergenerational dialogues and community advocacy are among the program's most distinctive and effective approaches, involving collaboration with community champions and gatekeepers. The mid-term evaluation identified intergenerational dialogue as a best practice, noting its success in increasing adult openness to youth perspectives and boosting young people's confidence to challenge harmful social norms. In 2024 this approach was intensified across countries. In Senegal and Uganda, structured dialogues brought together elders, parents, and youth to address practices such as FGM, child marriage, and gender-based violence. In Ghana, youth led community discussions using theatre and role play to start conversation around sexual and gender-based violence. In Kenya, storytelling sessions and community barazas with elders and local leaders created safe spaces to discuss the need to end FGM and child marriage. In Uganda, PtY began digitizing these traditional dialogues by hosting webinars, Twitter Spaces, and podcasts in partnership with cultural and religious institutions, including the Buganda Kingdom and the Interreligious Council.

## SOCIETAL ACTORS HAVE INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ACT ON KEY ISSUES

In 2024, PtY's multi-layered engagement led to increased understanding among societal actors on key youth issues. In Indonesia, workshops led to a significant shift in religious leaders' feminist reinterpretation of religious narratives (referred to as Aisyah's marriage age), the promotion of reproductive health education and responsible parenting.

As a result, these leaders and gender justice advocates became vocal advocates for these issues including an increase of marriage age within their communities. In Ethiopia, over 330 community stakeholders, including elders and members of the Women Development Army, received training supported by Islamic and social affairs offices. The training resulted in stronger community commitments to protect adolescent girls' rights, especially during marriage ceremonies.

In Malawi, dialogues with traditional and religious leaders addressed GBV and child marriage, resulting in joint work plans and increased collaboration with educators and health workers. In Uganda, a comprehensive toolkit on GTA, MIYP and advocacy was developed and reviewed with civil society organizations and youth advocates to simplify understanding and improve implementation.

Community champions were also identified and supported across various countries. In Senegal collaboration with The Grandmother Project worked through intergenerational forums, where grandmother leaders openly addressed harmful practices, leading to tangible shifts: no cases of FGM or early marriage were reported in the 12 intervention districts.

PtY Ghana broke barriers around family planning in the Tombo community by engaging men through collaboration with the Ghana Health Service, community development, and traditional leaders. This reduced resistance to family planning, increased male participation, and encouraged local health services to replicate similar sensitization efforts, reflecting a shift in community acceptance and dialogue. To ensure action against offenders of harmful practices, awareness and dialogues for social norm change were complemented with stronger reporting mechanisms. For example in Ethiopia and Kenya, youth-led accountability structures were established, enabling young people to track commitments made by service providers and local leaders. In response to the MTE recommendation to apply insights from learning questions, economic empowerment, particularly focused on youth and women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship, was integrated into existing SRHR trainings across several countries with an aim to support long-term advocacy engagement by promoting financial stability.

## (SOCIAL) MEDIA CAMPAIGNING TO INFLUENCE SOCIETAL ACTORS AND PUBLIC OPINION

To influence public opinion, raise awareness, and amplify youth voices on GBV, harmful practices, and youth empowerment PtY used educational campaigns delivered through diverse media platforms - including cultural media, radio, social media, TV, print, and face-to-face engagements. Across countries, a variety of creative approaches were used.

In Ethiopia, the 16 Days of Activism campaign used live performances, symbolic ceremonies, radio broadcasts, and an animated video to promote gender equality. Ghana's media strategy blended radio for mass reach and face-to-face sessions for personalized engagement. In Kenya, trained media partners and social media channels supported youth advocacy on issues like femicide and FGM, while also flagging the risks of digital misinformation. Malawi used radio plays and jingles to increase awareness about gender and child protection laws, fostering sustained public engagement. These examples of campaigns helped shape public discourse, influence community norms, and promote accountability on youth issues.

In Indonesia where patriarchal norms also remain deeply ingrained in society, sexist behavior persists despite SRHR and gender equality education. In Indonesia, peer educators used comics and graphic storytelling to educate peers and teachers on GBV and child marriage.



## SOCIETAL ACTORS EXPRESS A COMMITMENT

The MTE report also highlighted a positive change in the attitudes of societal actors towards youth rights. Due to capacity building, dialogues, and community advocacy, community and religious leaders have adopted a more progressive stance on addressing harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies.

In Malawi, PtY continued to work with the Chiefs Forum Group Village Heads who have enacted by-laws protecting adolescent SRHR and enabling the re-enrolment of girls affected by early pregnancy and marriage. Chiefs were also trained on gender-transformative leadership and supported anonymous reporting systems, which led to a decrease in school dropouts due to teen pregnancy.

Similarly, religious and community leaders in Ethiopia directly intervened to prevent more than 50 child marriages and five FGM cases in 2024, using locally enforced by-laws and continuous engagement from youth and civil society. In Indonesia, youth empowerment messages were embedded within religious and cultural narratives, helping to expand community buy-in. Religious leaders there played a crucial role in updating harmful interpretations of scripture, such as promoting reproductive health education and responsible parenting over early marriage. In Malawi, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings evolved into advocacy platforms where issues such as SGBV and child rights were addressed openly. One reported case of defilement led to swift legal action following its discussion in a PTA meeting, underscoring the new accountability these spaces offer.

## SOCIETAL ACTORS INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION MAKING

In Kajiado, Kenya, PtY addressed harmful practices through community dialogue forums with the Morans - young Maasai men that hold significant cultural influence and are often involved in community leadership and decision-making. These forums provided a platform for in-depth discussions on issues affecting adolescent girls and young women, fostering community-driven solutions. As a result, the Moran's Network was established, leveraging the cultural significance and influence of traditional groups within Kajiado County to combat harmful practices.

In Senegal, intergenerational community dialogues in 12 districts have encouraged open discussions between adults and adolescents, helping to break long-standing taboos around FGM and raise awareness of its harmful effects. In the Matam region, these conversations have begun to shift perceptions, with some practitioners and parents starting to question the continuation of the practice. The dialogues have also empowered young girls to speak out and advocate for the abandonment of excision within their communities.



## LESSONS LEARNT

Shifting social norms requires sustained, long-term engagement rather than short-term interventions. A combination of approaches—media, intergenerational dialogue, capacity strengthening, and economic empowerment—proved most effective in reinforcing consistent messaging and driving lasting change. While media remains a powerful tool for engagement, its effectiveness depends on responsible use to prevent backlash and misinformation. Efforts to engage men and promote positive masculinity have successfully influenced social attitudes and gender norms.

Building trust within communities by involving respected figures such as grandmothers and religious leaders has been instrumental in fostering meaningful behavior change. Youth-led accountability mechanisms and locally enforced by-laws have helped translate awareness into concrete action. Culturally grounded, community-led strategies are essential for promoting youth rights in a meaningful and sustainable way. To effectively address harmful practices, SRHR programming must go beyond raising awareness and shifting norms. It should be reinforced by strong accountability mechanisms and active partnerships with cultural and religious institutions.

### Religious actors advocating against Harmful Practices - Ethiopia

My name is Shimels Tadesse, and I am 55 years old. I serve as the chairperson of Bergebi Idir and have received training on key Youth SRH issues including FGM, child marriage and SGBV. Recently, I organized a meeting that brought together 75 Idir members to discuss the elimination of harmful traditional practices. During this meeting, we reached a consensus to incorporate these critical SRH issues into our Idir by-laws, establishing penalties for those who facilitate FGM/C or arrange marriages for minors. Members found in violation of these by-laws will face fines ranging from 3,000 to 30,000 Birr (approx. \$27 - \$227).

The updated by-laws now also address issues like school absenteeism and emphasize the importance of girls' education. To further promote these initiatives, we are collaborating with youth art clubs, schools, the School Advisory Committee, organisations which are against Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) and influential community leaders. Together, we aim to engage youth in creative educational programs that foster positive change.



## 2.4 PATHWAY 4: STATE ACTORS IMPROVE POLICY MAKING, BUDGETING AND IMPLEMENTATION ON HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

In its fourth year, the PtY programme has demonstrated significant progress under Pathway 4, which focuses on building youth engagement with government and state actors, leading to improved policies, budgeting and implementation on harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies. Investments in capacity building, awareness raising, and youth-state collaboration have led to growing recognition of youth rights in relevant policy discussions. These efforts are rooted in youth leadership, multi-stakeholder collaboration, evidence-based advocacy<sup>2</sup> and long-term strategies aimed at institutionalizing change for sustained impact.

Across several implementation countries, youth-inclusive structures and platforms have been institutionalized, embedding youth voices in formal decision-making processes. While the MTE acknowledged the strong progress made under this pathway, it also noted that SCS indicators were not achieved in 2023. However, 2024 has seen significant improvement. For instance, under SCS 1, PtY surpassed its target of 29 by 65%, implementing a total of 48 (inter)national laws, policies, norms, and practices aimed at reducing barriers to SRHR and eliminating harmful practices and SGBV.



As for SCS 2 (SRHR H), the programme fell slightly short of the target by 2 (target: 18), though this masks overperformance in countries like Kenya and reflects the scheduling of major national strategy launches in 2025. Much of the foundational work for these achievements was already completed in 2024 or earlier<sup>3</sup>.

## STATE ACTORS RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ERADICATING HARMFUL PRACTICES, SGBV AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Health prioritized adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) through the establishment of a National Adolescent and Youth Health Council, replicated at the regional level in Amhara and Afar with support from PtY. These inclusive councils, featuring gender and disability representation, have enhanced youth participation in the health system, with commitments from regional bureaus to sustain and integrate their work. In Ghana, preparations for the 2024 general elections prompted the government to reinforce youth involvement through policies like the National Youth Policy and initiatives such as youth resource centres and advisory councils within local governance. This reflects a growing political will to institutionalize meaningful youth engagement.



In Indonesia, sustained collaboration with government offices in Garut District, including the Education Office and the DPPKBPPPA, has led to the successful integration of reproductive health and sexuality education (RHSE) into 395 junior high schools. This model was scaled up unexpectedly to Jember and East Lombok districts, with regional authorities issuing directives to replicate Garut's approach. This outcome highlights the impact of evidence-based advocacy and strong local ownership in driving policy adoption. Further institutional commitment was shown through the issuance of a Regent's Decree establishing a task force on sexual violence prevention. PtY Global's visit to Garut in August 2024, co-organized with local authorities and schools, further reinforced the programme's alignment with district development priorities.

<sup>2</sup>Page 17 of the Power to You(th) Annual Plan sets out details of the PtY advocacy Themes and asks.

<sup>3</sup>For narrative details, please refer to the full indicator sheet: [PtY Indicator Value Reporting sheet Final.xlsx](#)

## STATE ACTORS ENGAGE WITH YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES ON RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ERADICATING HARMFUL PRACTICES THROUGH EXPRESSING THEIR COMMITMENT

State actors in several countries are actively engaging youth on critical SRHR issues and expressing their commitment through policy and budgetary support. In Senegal, the decentralization of citizen hearings provided a platform for young people, trained by PtY, to interact directly with local authorities. In a notable and unexpected outcome, four mayors publicly committed to advancing youth issues. The Mayor of Keur pledged increased budgetary allocations to cover medical costs related to early pregnancies and hygiene services, and to include youth in municipal debates. Despite the financial constraints faced by local municipalities, this high level of commitment stood-out.

As the Deputy Mayor of Bambey noted, young people are increasingly stepping into leadership roles, and their involvement in local governance is becoming both visible and influential. In Uganda, youth advocates supported by PtY contributed to the revision of the SRHR and Life Skills Education Guidelines by the Ministry of Education and Sports, replacing the previously contested National Sexuality Education Framework. These revised guidelines are expected to positively influence SRHR outcomes across the country. In Ghana, the Youth General Assembly (YGA) continues to serve as a structured platform for co-creation between youth and local assemblies, reinforcing the broader goals of Pathway 1 and Pathway 4.

## STATE ACTORS IMPROVE POLICY MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION ON KEY ISSUES

Government actors have also shown improved responsiveness in policy making and implementation. In Ethiopia, youth-led campaigns advocated for stronger enforcement of child marriage laws, improved youth employment opportunities, and expanded SRHR services. This advocacy contributed to the adaptation of family law in Afar and catalyzed the expansion of youth-friendly health services. However, in conflict-affected regions such as Amhara, ongoing instability has delayed policy responses, highlighting the difficulty of sustaining advocacy efforts in fragile contexts.

In Kenya, PtY's contributions in Siaya County led to the formulation of youth-focused legislation, including the Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child, and

Adolescent Health Bill and the Siaya Adolescents and Young People Action Plan (2024). An unintended result was the publication of the Citizen Public Participation Report in the County Annual Development Plan (2025–2026) by the Department of Finance and Economic Planning marking a new level of transparency. This was facilitated by PtY's support in mobilizing youth to submit a memorandum of priorities, reflecting growing government responsiveness to youth advocacy.

In Uganda, PtY continues to lead regional advocacy on the East African Community (EAC) Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Bill. Through strategic engagement with EAC ministers, MPs, and UN agencies, the programme has secured high-level commitments. In 2025, efforts will focus on re-tabling the bill as the Cross-Border FGM Bill, strengthening civil society coalitions, and mobilizing resources to support regional adoption and enforcement. Indonesia further institutionalized reproductive health education by collaborating with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Youth coalition YGSI secured government approval to implement the Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education (PKRS) programme in madrasahs (Islamic educational institutions) and Islamic boarding schools. The pilot of the SETARA module for 7th graders, incorporating Islamic values, has laid the groundwork for scaling to 8th grade curricula in 2025.



Across all programme countries, sustainability remains a priority. Efforts have been institutionalized through the formation of youth councils, adoption of legal frameworks, and budget allocations at both local and national levels. Unexpected successes such as public mayoral pledges in Senegal, cross-district policy replication in Indonesia, and increased online transparency in Kenya illustrate the powerful, catalytic role of youth-led advocacy and collaborative, partnership-based models.

## LESSONS LEARNT

2024 emphasized that strategic collaboration with high-level decision-makers can expedite law reform advocacy processes. Overall, partnerships and coordinated actions were essential in sustaining momentum, achieving meaningful policy change, and promoting long-term impact. Within the PtY programme, this was reflected in the combined investment across all four Pathways, involving both key actors and complementary activities. Examples include the pooling of resources, partnering with local media, across ministries, at the policy level (e.g., through Technical Working Groups), and within advocacy networks. However, joint advocacy efforts sometimes encountered coordination challenges, often due to differing priorities or frequent turnover in local leadership. Improved early communication could have mitigated some of these difficulties. Despite progress in shaping policy, the effective implementation of these policies continues to be hindered by limited budget allocations—a persistent challenge also reported in 2023—as well as a broader lack of political will.

### National Gender Policy Approval in Malawi: A landmark achievement for equality

PtY Malawi played a pivotal role in influencing national-level frameworks. Collaborating with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare, the programme contributed to the revised National Gender Policy (2024–2030). Between 2016 and 2021, the Ministry of Gender had solely relied on gender mainstreaming as the principal strategy for implementing the National Gender policy.

During the review process, PtY Malawi identified the need for a broader approach and advocated for the inclusion of Gender Transformative Approaches alongside gender mainstreaming.

Through a consultative process across all sectors, the Ministry recognised the need for a holistic approach to tackling gender disparities throughout the economy. As a result key gaps were identified in the draft policy and addressed through a technical review process that involved extensive stakeholder engagement. New priorities identified included: Gender in Governance, Laws, Human Rights, Peace and Security; Sexual and Gender-Based Violence; Gender and Social Protection; and Gender in Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change.

Following stakeholder validation, the Gender Management Team endorsed the 2024–2030 National Gender Policy. The Ministry of Gender has since approved the updated policy, which now awaits final endorsement by the Cabinet and the President. PtY also supported the finalization of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and the SRHR Policy. By introducing GTA, the programme aimed to shift underlying norms and address structural barriers.





### 3. GLOBAL & REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

#### 3.1 GLOBAL ADVOCACY

In 2024, PtY collaborated on a range of advocacy initiatives to strengthen SRHR, gender justice, and youth engagement while countering anti-rights movements. Joint efforts spanned international advocacy, grassroots capacity building, and policy influencing. Key activities included digital campaigns, engagement in global policy spaces like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Commission on Population and Development (CPD57), and the Summit of the Future, and participation in regional and national advocacy fora.

#### INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

An important advocacy moment for the consortium in 2024 was the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). Representatives of the PtY consortium participated in the CSW Youth Forum over the course of three days, attended several sessions and hosted two side events. One focussed on “Empowering Local Leaders for Gender-inclusive Education” with participants from PtY Malawi, Uganda, and Ghana, underscoring the instrumental role of local leadership in advancing gender equality within the realm of education. The other focussed on youth-friendly feminist funding, bringing together 40 participants to discuss the need for sustainable financing of youth-led organizations (YLOs). CSW68 also saw

close collaboration between the Lobby and Advocacy and GTA TWGs within the side events and abstract presentations, where partners from Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Ghana showcased the integration and contribution of GTA in addressing and preventing harmful practices.

PtY was also heavily involved in language advocacy for the CSW68 Agreed Conclusions, ensuring that youth perspectives were reflected despite opposition from anti-rights groups. PtY partners provided technical input, focusing on strong references to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), bodily autonomy, and SRHR.

To equip youth advocates for meaningful engagement, virtual pre-CSW knowledge-sharing sessions were held. These sessions introduced young people to the CSW space, provided advocacy strategies, and emphasized the connection between national and global advocacy efforts. Following CSW, youth-friendly resources were developed and disseminated, breaking down CSW outcomes in an accessible way. Post-CSW engagement included a debrief with youth participants, conducted in partnership with the MenEngage Global Alliance, to reflect on their experiences and strategize on how to implement CSW outcomes at the national level. For the Commission on Population and Development (CPD57), PtY partners organized a high-level reception on the Heart of the Matter shadow-report at the Netherlands Mission to the UN in New York, in collaboration with Right Here Right Now (RHRN2) partners, Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Health Network (LACWHN), and SheDecides. Co-hosted by the Netherlands and

Morocco, the event featured supportive statements from the Permanent Representatives on young people's SRHR. Additionally, five youth speakers, each representing a different region, shared their perspectives during the session.

PtY actively engaged in the language advocacy for the CPD. UN Member States adopted a Political Declaration that reaffirmed the ICPD Program of Action and maintained the 2019 balance of the first and previous Political Declaration, adding references to human rights for all, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In February 2024, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on the rights of the child during its 55th session in Geneva, that included a reference to SRH information, education and care services, despite several attempts to delete and qualify these references. PtY actively engaged in the text negotiations.

Furthermore, PtY led efforts to make the UNHRC's Youth and Human Rights resolution more inclusive of Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP) and digital rights. PtY was also actively involved in the Summit of the Future process, engaging in negotiations on the Pact of the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations to ensure inclusion of references to SRHR and the ICPD in the outcome documents.

In the Netherlands, several advocacy initiatives were carried out both in collaboration with the Dutch SRHR advocacy network and independently by Power to You(th). With a new Parliament formed at the end of 2024, it was crucial to inform incoming parliamentarians about the importance of youth-led SRHR interventions in the Global South and efforts to reduce harmful practices such as FGM/C. As part of these efforts, PtY facilitated a visit by Kenyan activist and international award-winner Nice Nailente Leng'ete, who engaged with several members of parliament to advocate for the eradication of FGM/C. Her contributions influenced parliamentary debates and the adoption of motions reaffirming the need to prioritize SRHR, support the fight against FGM/C, and maintaining strong commitments to women's rights worldwide. To further amplify the message, the involved parliamentarians published an opinion piece in *Algemeen Dagblad* (4 Oct 2024)<sup>4</sup>, in which they highlighted Nice Leng'ete as an important example as a defender of women's rights.

## REGIONAL & TREATY ADVOCACY

At the regional level, PtY Uganda made significant progress in FGM policy reform, successfully advocating for the EAC Prohibition of FGM Bill to be added to the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) agenda (for

details see Pathway 4). PtY partners also played key roles in treaty and charter body advocacy, including the provision of technical assistance in relation to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) guiding national partners through the shadow report process. And, in relation to the Right to Health Index (RTHI) – PtY provided human rights training in Kenya and Ethiopia to policy accountability, enabling grassroots advocates to monitor compliance with SRHR commitments.



## YOUTH-LED GRASSROOTS & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

PtY partners supported multiple youth-led digital campaigns, leveraging the [Mighty Networks](#) platform to connect young advocates. Over 120 young people engaged in discussions on key takeaways from CSW68 and ICPD, localization of global commitments at national and grassroots levels and, GBV prevention and policy accountability mechanisms. The Mighty Networks platform has also been a powerful collaboration tool for hosting digital campaigns like the 16 days of activism against GBV. PtY also focused on youth-friendly policy development, providing technical assistance to Ethiopia and Senegal to create Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) frameworks.

In Ethiopia, this resulted in the Ministry of Health adopting MYE as part of its revised Adolescent and Young People strategy, ensuring sustained youth engagement in policy decisions. In December 2024, PtY partners leveraged the upcoming AHAIC conference to create a networking space for youth advocates that the PtY partners are working with at grassroots level to network with other youth advocates across Africa. This was through hosting a virtual youth consultation to co-create the AHAIC 2025 youth summit agenda. The consultation was attended by 135 participants hailing from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Senegal, Malawi, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Lesotho, Nigeria, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Burundi and South Africa.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.ad.nl/opinie/opinie-vvd-en-sp-nederland-moet-mondiale-voortrekkersrol-bij-vrouwenrechten-vasthouden~acb09ebb/>

## COUNTERING ANTI- RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

Recognizing the increasing influence of anti-rights actors on SRHR and gender justice, and building on work from previous years, the cross-programmatic Community of Practice (CoP) on Dealing with Opposition (DoW) supported partners in navigating these challenges. In 2024, the CoP, led by Rutgers, had 50 registered members from 17 countries, including 18 members from PtY. The CoP hosted three virtual sessions aimed at equipping SRHR advocates with strategies for dealing with opposition. The online sessions focussed on 1) Working with Allies.

Focusing on coalition-building and creating a safe, coordinated advocacy environment. 2) Ballots & Backlash. Examining the impact of the 2024 elections on SRHR globally and 3) Culture as a Catalyst. Exploring ways to build public support for SRHR through cultural frameworks.

Recognizing that three online sessions per year were insufficient to fully address challenges, three cross-programmatic collaborative forums in Benin, Kenya, and Indonesia were organised. These fora brought together 113 participants. One of the key outcomes was the emphasis on crisis preparedness, with strategies including Rapid Response Teams, coalition-building, and clear messaging. Insights from these fora will contribute to the Strengthening Resilience within Our Movements Toolkit, which will be updated in 2025.

## 3.2 COMMUNICATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

In 2024 the Communications and Campaign work built on the lessons learned from the MTE and focused on three areas. First profiling the results and impact stories of the PtY programme, secondly strengthening our online presence and engagement and finally, continued investment in sharing and learning between Country Management Teams and global partners on communication methods and campaigns.

### PROFILING THE RESULTS AND IMPACT STORIES OF THE PTY PROGRAMME

Several trajectories were set in motion in 2024. Documentation of best practices and stories from the PtY country teams as highlighted in the MTE have been identified by an external Storytelling consultant who was on-boarded in 2024. Based on existing documents and in the case of Uganda, additional data gathering best practices across the Pathways will be documented professionally and shared through the PtY website in 2025. At the same time GTA case studies have been documented and Youth stories of Change. All materials will be finalised and published in 2025.

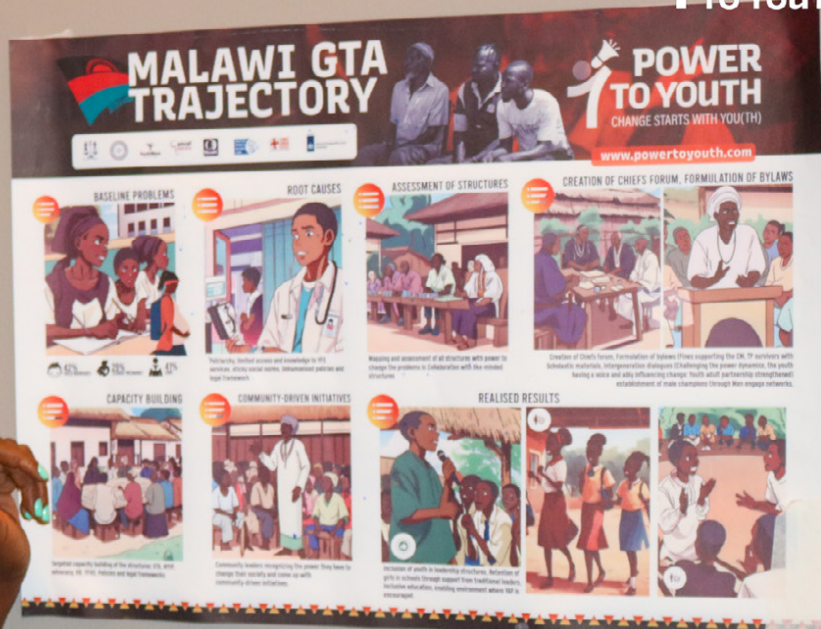
## STRENGTHEN OUR ONLINE PRESENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

At a global level this included support to CSW68 to maximize visibility and engagement while prioritizing sustainability. Key initiatives included launching a dedicated website landing page, executing a cohesive social media campaign, and providing eco-friendly conference materials such as plantable notebooks and recycled lanyards. To streamline branding and accessibility, PtY provided digital business cards for each PtY representative, standardized presentation materials, and adopted a digital-first approach for session branding. During the conference, live social media updates, centralized session information via the Linktree platform, and interactive content that kept audiences connected increased engagement.

Post-conference, PtY sustained momentum by sharing content recaps, collecting feedback, and repurposing created materials to reinforce PtY's presence beyond the event. This multifaceted approach provided valuable insights into audience expectations and needs, directly informing the development of communication materials. This strategic alignment not only improved outreach effectiveness but also reinforced PtY's presence within the global advocacy space. In 2024, cross TWG collaboration (recommended by the MTE) with the GTA and PMERL working groups materialized at the GTA Symposium. The communications team played a vital role in capturing and amplifying the event's impact through providing professional photography and facilitating interviews for the GTA case study. These resulted in a robust content collection to support advocacy and partnership efforts.

### SHARING AND LEARNING BETWEEN CMTS AND GLOBAL PARTNERS ON COMMUNICATION METHODS AND CAMPAIGNS

A key campaign launched during the reporting period was the [#HearUsOut Campaign](#), launched on International Youth Day (August 12) aiming to amplify youth voices and engagement. PtY developed and disseminated tailored campaign content, integrated the message into existing communications and the programme's brand. The strategy prioritized social media platforms, ensuring posts were linked to the campaign through consistent visuals, hashtags #HearUsOut, and messaging to facilitate easy sharing across countries. This approach established a unified campaign identity that our audience could recognize over the ensuing months. Social media coverage and collaboration with youth, youth-led organisations and decision makers will be continued into 2025 to extend the campaign's social media reach. On reflection, earlier alignment, increased co-creation of content would have supported an increased buy-in and ownership of the campaign across the countries.



## 4. RESULTS, PROGRESS AND LESSONS LEARNED ON CROSS CUTTING THEMES

### 4.1 MEANINGFUL AND INCLUSIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION

In 2024, the Global Youth Group (GYG) and PtY partners made significant strides in promoting MIYP at national, regional, and global levels. These efforts were informed by key recommendations from the 2023 Midterm Review, particularly the identified gap around the absence of standardized tools to assess MIYP.

To address this, the GYG supported Ethiopia and Senegal in adapting Y-ACT's<sup>5</sup> Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) Scorecard as a tool to track progress in youth participation. With virtual technical support, the GYG guided both countries through tailoring the tool, forming youth-policy working groups, identifying context-relevant indicators, and initiating collaboration with policymakers. In Senegal, the tool was piloted in 14 districts, where youth-led meetings

resulted in action plans for tracking key indicators into 2025. Despite delays in engaging policymakers due to the November 2024 elections, the GYG used the PMEL validation workshop to explore integrating the MYE scorecard with the Ci Laa Bokk platform. This highlighted the importance of strengthening capacity to monitor youth participation in political processes.

In April 2024, the GYG partnered with Youth Wave Malawi to deliver a week-long Training of Trainers workshop focused on MIYP and Youth Leadership. During the training, partner organizations developed six Action Plans to integrate MIYP into their work. The GYG provided ongoing support through regular check-ins with Youth Wave Malawi to ensure implementation.

Building on this, the GYG hosted a two-day learning exchange event in November 2024, that brought together young leaders from the MenEngage Youth, Power to You(th), and SRHR4ALL programs across Malawi and Uganda. Participants shared experiences and tools around resource mobilization, advocacy, and sustainability. Those who had attended the April MIYP training contributed to peer-learning and knowledge exchange. A strong commitment to regular in-country follow-ups emerged, fostering collaborative efforts in advocacy and joint resource mobilization.

<sup>5</sup><https://yactmovement.org/home/>

Through GYG seed grants, two youth-led initiatives in Kenya and Ghana demonstrated how youth can lead sustainable and transformative change. In Kenya, Tunaweza implemented youth-led dialogues in Migori, creating safe spaces for AGYW to identify priority issues and develop action plans. The project trained youth leaders on MIYP, leadership, and the Flower of Participation framework, and established a village-level steering committee. Tunaweza also collaborated with Men United Ready for Action (MURA) to host male engagement forums tackling harmful norms and building male allyship. In Ghana, the Girls Advisory Council (GAC) overcame initial delays in funding to implement innovative MIYP activities in the Tamale region. The project successfully secured two youth seats on a traditional council, supported by community elders. GAC used creative platforms such as Sip and Paint sessions and exhibitions to facilitate intergenerational dialogue. It also provided governance and leadership training for youth and completed its organizational registration, increasing its visibility and capacity for sustainability.

At the global level, the GYG increased visibility and engagement in MIYP through several key activities. Visual notes from Youth Engage Community of Practice (CoP) sessions emerged as a creative and digestible format for sharing knowledge, moving away from conventional text-heavy approaches. A monthly MIYP newsletter was also launched to support MIYP Focal Points in each CMT, providing resources, updates, and a platform for contributions. It now reaches over 40 subscribers across the program. In collaboration with the Comms TWG, MIYP tools were uploaded to the [PtY website](#) and [Mighty Networks](#) platform. A dedicated MIYP landing page links the two platforms and provides a centralized hub for resources. Through Mighty Networks, the GYG also hosted interactive Advocacy Hangout Sessions, engaging more than 120 young people. Resources such as the Stories of Change booklet and the MYE Knowledge Piece were finalized in 2024 and will be showcased in 2025. Additionally, the GYG facilitated the onboarding, mentoring, and continued participation of two youth representatives in high-level governance bodies (GSB and the GMT). The GYG provided both logistical and technical support to ensure their meaningful participation in strategic decision-making spaces.

Several key lessons emerged from the MIYP efforts in 2024. First, the adaptation of the MYE scorecard in Ethiopia and Senegal demonstrated that tools tailored to national contexts can support structured tracking of youth engagement, and inform action plans and policy making. Second, online spaces such as Youth Engage CoP, Town Halls, WhatsApp groups, and Mighty Networks allowed for inclusive participation, especially for young partners with limited physical access to in-person events. However, challenges such as poor internet connectivity persist. To mitigate this, detailed guides and presentations were distributed in

advance of meetings to support offline engagement. Third, initiatives like Sip and Paint in Ghana and community edutainment sessions in Kenya showed how creative formats can break barriers, stimulate dialogue, and build stronger intergenerational partnerships. Fourth, during Mighty Networks sessions, new partnerships emerged, such as a WhatsApp group for youth engagement during global events like CSW, initiated by a UN youth panelist. Advocacy Open Houses connected youth with new allies and provided guidance on leveraging global campaigns to advance national and local advocacy.

“Finally, as the PtY programme approaches its conclusion, there is a deliberate move toward a more member-led, user-driven model to ensure the continuity of online platforms and MIYP practices. Embedding MIYP into national systems and partner organizations’ ways of working is critical for sustainability.”



## 4.2 GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES (GTA)

### AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The GTA remains a core pillar of the PtY programme. GTA in PtY is built on five key elements: amplifying the voices of AGYW, strengthening men and boys as allies, promoting human rights and youth agency, addressing harmful gender norms and power imbalances, and embracing sexual and gender diversity. In 2024, the focus was on harvesting GTA results, mentoring key stakeholders, fostering collaboration, scaling up effective strategies, and developing new approaches to further gender equality. 2024 also saw close collaboration between the GTA TWG and other working groups, such as the Lobby & Advocacy TWG during CSW68 (see international advocacy chapter), the PMEL TWG and Engage4Change during the GTA L&L Symposium and the Communications TWG in the production of GTA case stories for the partnership.

## ACROSS COUNTRIES

A key highlight of 2024 was the GTA Linking & Learning Symposium, held in April in Nairobi, Kenya, which brought together 37 participants from all PtY country programmes and Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The symposium aimed to strengthen mutual capacity on further GTA integration with CSE and advocacy. It facilitated the sharing of best practices, challenges, and lessons learned. Sessions covered key topics such as GTA and CSE, gender transformative advocacy, MIYP and GTA, measuring GTA impact, and gender transformative communication, fostering synergy among TWGs and addressing the midterm evaluation recommendation on improving collaboration between TWGs. Co-creation with partner organizations and GTA focal teams has promoted continuous learning and ownership of GTA. The symposium's agenda and session plans were collaboratively developed and sessions facilitated by nearly all participants. This collaboration has extended beyond the symposium, reinforcing GTA as a cross-cutting theme across all PtY pathways and ensuring better capturing of GTA successes and strategies in annual planning and reporting cycles.

As a result of the symposium, the GTA TWG supported the country programme partners with tailored capacity strengthening and shared learning focusing on further GTA integration in programming, advocacy, reporting and documentation. For example, in Indonesia, YGSI and Rutgers participated in a mutual learning trajectory on contextualized GTA and MIYP, which culminated into a joint research project showcasing best practices and case examples of GTA and MIYP from the PtY, Generation Gender (GenG) and RHRN2 programmes in Indonesia. The symposium also led to more cross-learning and innovation on GTA between country programmes.



For example, the Uganda team has replicated the Model Gendered Household intervention from PtY Ghana<sup>6</sup> and adopted this approach within PtY Uganda's Male Engagement Forums. This adaptation emphasizes household-centered learning, male-led knowledge transfer, and the integration of cultural and religious perspectives to address resistance to challenging harmful practices. These modifications have enhanced the model's acceptance, sustainability, and effectiveness in promoting gender-equitable norms and raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

## WITHIN COUNTRIES

2024 saw a myriad of gender transformative strategies, activities and innovations at country level - a majority of which is already captured under the pathways. Examples include the comprehensive toolkit on GTA, MIYP and Advocacy that was developed by PtY Uganda to support ongoing learning and implementation in the programme areas (see pathway 3). In Kenya, CSO networks were trained on incorporating GTA into lobbying and action planning. PtY Malawi implemented a range of gender-transformative interventions, including capacity strengthening on gender-transformative advocacy for CSOs, gender mainstreaming for gender focal persons in government ministries, departments, and agencies, and transformative dialogues with religious leaders to address GBV and child marriage. In Ethiopia, to foster acceptance and overcome resistance, targeted capacity-building sessions were conducted with community leaders and influential figures, leading to the development of a Guiding Manual on Education for Harmful Traditional Practices and Gender-Based Violence, integrating scientific and faith-based perspectives to ensure cultural relevance and accessibility. In Senegal, the programme created the "Change Through Culture" approach to empower grandmothers, leveraging their significant influence within families to raise awareness about harmful practices like early marriage and FGM.

In Ghana, the programme prioritized male engagement for gender equality, establishing forums and safe spaces to discuss positive masculinity and harmful practices like FGM, contributing to a decline in GBV cases and improved family well-being. In addition to the continued Model Gendered Household initiative, PtY also empowered adolescent girls and women through creative interventions and advocacy efforts, such as forming youth-led anti-child marriage committees. PtY Indonesia applied a gender transformative lens to CSE activities through creative methods like puppet shows and Islamic poetry involving both students and religious teachers (see Pathway 1).

<sup>6</sup><https://powertoyouth.com/model-gendered-family-householdmgf-h-ghana/>

YGSI also organized two GTA trainings including a Training of Trainers—collaborating with partners from other MoFA-funded programs (GenG and RHRN2).

### CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Since 2021, the programme has supported partner organisations with strengthening capacity on and integration of GTA within activities, strategies and organisations, through various initiatives and through establishing a structure of GTA focal persons at both the national and organizational levels. However the GTA TWG realized that the lack of involvement of senior management from many capacity-building activities challenges the sustainability and institutionalization of GTA within partner organizations. Their involvement is essential for fostering commitment, securing buy-in, and long-term sustainability at the programmatic and institutional levels. This will be addressed in the 2025 work plan to foster commitment and long-term integration of GTA beyond the program's lifespan.

### 4.3 CLIMATE CHANGE

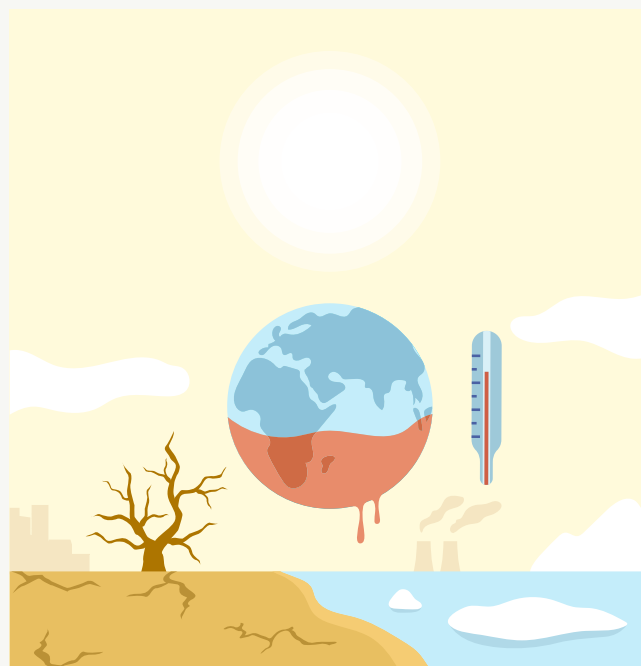
Climate change continues to pose significant challenges to the implementation of the programme, reversing some of the progress made in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender equality. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation have exacerbated vulnerabilities—especially for women and girls - by disrupting livelihoods, increasing poverty, and heightening risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices. In Ghana, temperatures reached up to 44°C, with PtY implementation districts among the hottest in the country.

The extreme heat reduced the duration of social activities, limiting community engagement. In northern Ghana's farming areas, prolonged droughts worsened food insecurity in turn leading to increased risks in relation to child marriages, teenage pregnancies, and domestic violence. In response, PtY has incorporated climate change awareness into community outreach, promoting afforestation and green energy.

In Indonesia, seasonal flooding has severely impacted access to intervention sites. In Central Lombok, roads leading to Tumpak Village and SMPN 6 Pujut became impassable due to runoff from poorly drained hills. This limited YGSI Lombok's access, increasing reliance on WhatsApp-based coordination during rainy periods.

In Malawi, last year's flooded farmland and loss of livelihood caused by Cyclone Freddy intensified poverty. Families struggling to recover are increasingly unable to support their children, exposing them to early marriages, SGBV and other risks.

In Senegal, floods in the Matam region submerged villages and destroyed crops and homes, deepening food insecurity and economic hardship. Ethiopia, faced both conflict and climate disasters. Flooding in Afar, caused mass displacement and reduced access to education and health services. As a result, school dropouts, child marriages, and unintended pregnancies rose. According to the Amhara Region Education Bureau, over 4.1 million children were out of school as of November 2024.



In Homabay, Kenya floods displaced over 1,700 households, converting schools into shelters and disrupting education—negatively impacting girls' physical and emotional well-being. In response, PtY integrated SRHR into climate resilience efforts by holding community dialogues, training AGYW in life skills and reproductive health, and deploying mobile clinics during emergencies. Eco-friendly income initiatives like poultry farming and kitchen gardening were introduced to enhance economic resilience. In Uganda, floods in Bugisu blocked roads and displaced families into IDP camps, heightening SGBV risks and school dropouts. In Isingiro, rising temperatures and droughts disrupted food supplies and forced girls to walk long distances for water, increasing exposure to sexual violence and health issues.

In response, PtY supported the development of Uganda's Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP), which emphasizes SRHR and gender-responsive climate programming. By embedding climate resilience into its approach, PtY ensures that adolescent girls and young women remain at the center of climate adaptation efforts, empowering them with the resources and knowledge needed to navigate climate-induced challenges while protecting their rights and well-being.

#### 4.4 SEAH, FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY

In 2024, our efforts were primarily directed towards providing technical support to CMTs with the aim of strengthening safeguarding practices, particularly in relation to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH). While multiple reporting mechanisms were made available, under-reporting of SEAH incidents continues to be a significant challenge. During this reporting period, two cases were recorded in the [Safeguarding Registry](#), one concerning fraud and the other involving sexual harassment. In both instances, CMTs were provided with guidance and support throughout the resolution process.

Under-reporting continues to hinder our capacity to effectively mitigate risks, prevent violations, and provide appropriate responses. To address this, the consortium has emphasized the need to gather and analyze robust evidence that identifies vulnerabilities and highlights permissive environments where SEAH and fraud may occur. This information is essential for informing targeted interventions and prioritizing corrective actions that can meaningfully reduce the risks of abuse and exploitation.

Despite these challenges, CMTs have demonstrated positive progress in institutionalizing safeguarding measures. Across different countries, internal policies have been updated to reflect a zero-tolerance approach to SEAH and fraud. In Uganda, safeguarding registries have been developed and disseminated to raise awareness among staff and communities. In Kenya, Amref has conducted online SEAH training for its teams. In addition, several CMTs have initiated regular meetings to assess their safeguarding progress and address country-specific challenges, which reflects a growing commitment to maintaining high standards of accountability and safety.

Building on the strong foundation established through PtY, in 2024 PtY expanded the use of its SEAH tools developed to other initiatives, including the MenEngage Africa network and GenG. This expansion is a strategic move towards creating a cohesive and standardized approach to safeguarding across all our projects.

**In 2024 PtY expanded the use of its SEAH tools developed to other initiatives, including the MenEngage Africa network and GenG.**

Harmonizing safeguarding tools and practices ensures that best practices are applied consistently, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of our prevention and response efforts. Our goal is to fully integrate these tools into all programmatic structures so that SEAH is addressed in a comprehensive and effective manner, contributing to our broader goals of gender equality and empowerment. From our experiences across PtY countries, two important lessons have emerged. First, when sub-granting to grassroots organizations, a tailored approach is essential. This means adopting a subgrantee-centered methodology that helps partners meet minimum audit and procedural standards, while also offering ongoing support to improve their financial management and internal controls. Second, in situations where the prevention of fraud and mismanagement cannot be assured, it may be necessary to implement direct payments to beneficiaries. Such measures should be paired with collaborative decision-making involving CMTs and grantees to ensure transparency, trust, and shared ownership of outcomes.

#### 4.5 INNOVATION

##### HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN TRAJECTORY

Following an intense and collaborative year of sensitization, research, and prototyping using the Human-Centered Design (HCD) methodology, six PtY countries successfully presented their innovative solutions to a broad audience from the PtY network. These initiatives were developed to respond to persistent challenges facing AGYW in accessing their SRHR. A panel of judges, representing the participating countries, evaluated each proposal based on creativity, feasibility, and potential impact. Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana emerged as the top three, receiving an award of €30,000 each to pilot their innovations.

In Uganda, the winning initiative titled "[Safe Haven: Empowering Youth with Contraceptive Options](#)" was piloted in districts like Kalangala, where teenage pregnancy rates far exceed the national average. The Safe Haven model is a user-centered approach informed by the voices of AGYW. It addresses structural barriers in access to contraception by fostering collaboration among AGYW, peer educators, and health workers. Through tailored training, youth participation, capacity-building, and community advocacy involving male engagement forums, the model creates supportive environments for informed decision-making. By emphasizing accountability, youth-friendly service delivery, and the recognition of outstanding service providers, Safe Haven has helped transform access to contraception, offering high-quality, responsive, and inclusive care.

In Ghana, the pilot project [“YouthaTalk”](#) seeks to elevate the voices of AGYW, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and other marginalized youth by enabling their active participation in local governance. Drawing inspiration from Ghana’s National Youth Parliament model, YouthaTalk organizes structured youth engagement sessions and provides training and mentorship to build young people’s confidence and leadership capacities. It connects them directly with district planning and review forums, ensuring their perspectives are incorporated into local development agendas. The platform is implemented in partnership with local governments and community-based organizations to promote inclusive and accountable decision-making. Kenya piloted an initiative in Migori County that addresses harmful cultural practices linked to [sexual and gender-based violence, with a specific focus on FGM](#). This multi-faceted approach involves three interlinked interventions.

First, intergenerational forums bring together young and older men to facilitate open dialogue and mutual reflection on traditional practices and gender norms. Second, positive masculinity sessions and school debates target adolescent boys to instill values of respect and equality. Third, film-based edutainment is used to spark critical conversations, with post-screening discussions connecting the themes of the films to everyday experiences. These strategies aim to reshape community perceptions, promote alternative rites of passage, and advance gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors.

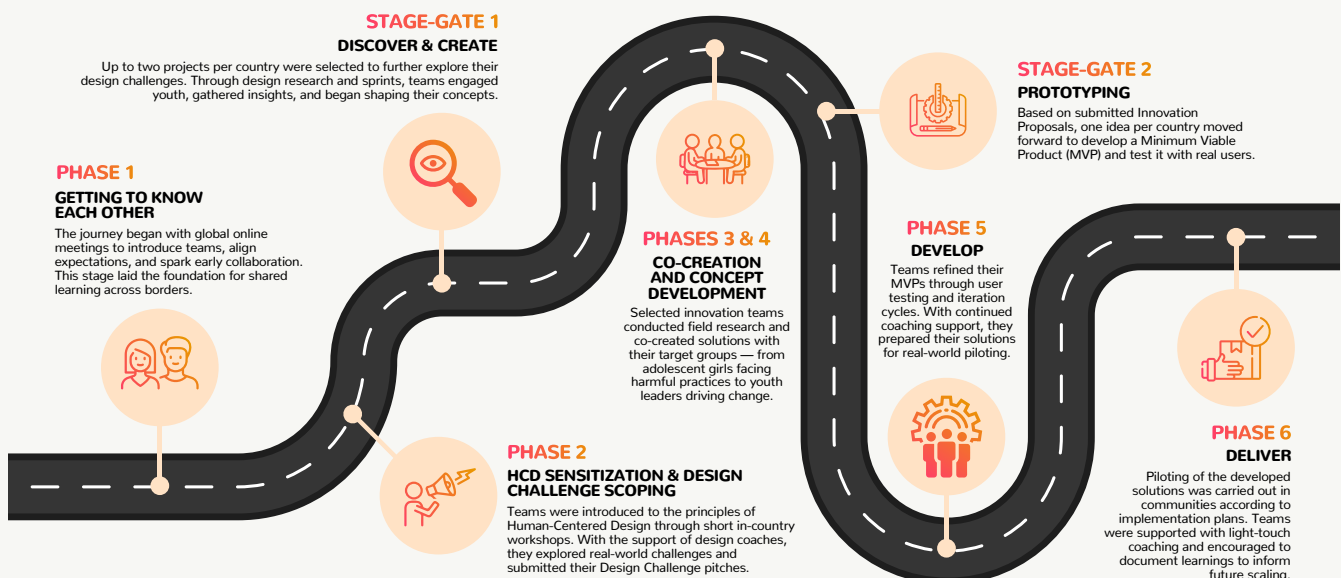
While Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana were selected as the top three winners, the margin between all six

countries was narrow. As a result, additional financial support was also provided to Malawi, Senegal and Ethiopia to implement their equally promising HCD pilots.

Malawi launched a project focused on tackling the deeply rooted cultural practices and social norms tied to initiation ceremonies. The initiative uses community engagement and storytelling to critically examine these rites and promote safer, more empowering alternatives for young girls. In Ethiopia, a unique board game was developed to stimulate open conversations about sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) within schools. The game provides a safe, interactive space for students to learn, share experiences, and build understanding around SGBV issues in an age-appropriate and impactful way. Senegal also implemented its HCD pilot to address SGBV through community-based activities aimed at combating early marriage and teenage pregnancy in schools. The pilot, carried out in the Matam region, involved parents and local health structures. Named the ‘Pencco’ initiative—meaning ‘consultation, collaboration, and harmonization’ in Wolof—it draws inspiration from the traditional practice of community dialogue, often held while ‘sitting under the tree’.

These country-led innovations are testament to the creativity and commitment of PtY partners in leveraging the HCD approach to center the voices of youth, promote inclusive participation, and design locally relevant solutions to pressing SRHR and gender-based challenges. As the pilots unfold, they offer valuable opportunities for learning and scale-up across the broader PtY network.

## THE INNOVATION JOURNEY





LINKING & LEARNING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

## SINERGI LINTAS NEGARA: INDONESIA-ETHIOPIA MENUJU PERUBAHAN BERKESINAMBUNGAN



## 5. REACHING SCALE: LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND EVIDENCE

### 5.1 CENTRAL OPERATIONAL RESEARCH

In 2024, the Central Operational Research (COR) trajectory made significant progress, with data collection completed in all countries. Research on 'Social Accountability in Addressing SRHR Policy Implementation Gaps' in Kenya, Malawi and Senegal, as well as the study on 'Effective Ways of Engaging Religious and Community Leaders in Sexual and Gender Based Violence Programming in Amhara and Afar Regions' in Ethiopia, were finalized. The findings from these studies are being shared throughout the partnership via regional learning events and conferences. The Malawi COR team is currently

developing a manuscript for submission to academic journals and preparing a presentation for the AHAIC 2025 summit. The Ghana COR team has written a policy analysis on technology-facilitated and online SGBV. It is currently being edited and transformed into a policy brief. Data collection on social norms and SGBV in Uganda has been completed, with a first draft report expected in early 2025.

Additionally, an exciting, new initiative for youth researchers, the Young Researcher Network, was launched in January 2025. This platform connects COR youth researchers from various countries to share knowledge and experiences, with the goal of presenting study findings and conducting panel discussions at the PtY Learning Festival in September 2025. Furthermore, Rutgers is undertaking an evaluation of MIYP in research to assess the meaningful participation of youth researchers as co-researchers in COR. The evaluation report is anticipated in Q2 of 2025.

## 5.2 LEARNING

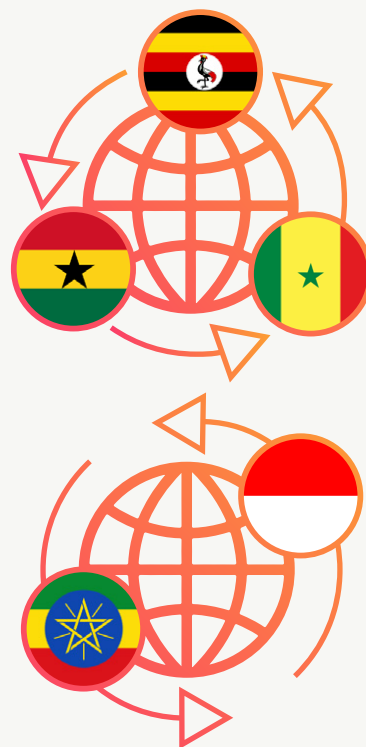
Webinars with Partos, Share-Net, and MoFA facilitated external learning, while internally a one-day refresher training on partnership brokering took place in November. Learning also continued through the regular fora such as the bi-monthly Global Coordinators Group meetings, Youth Engage for Change, the MIYP focal point platform and regular TWG meetings. The GTA Linking and Learning symposium has been described under the GTA section of this report. Between September and December 2024, an intern examined the PtY learning cycle and Southern leadership through a desk study and interviews with country teams. The findings from both studies were validated during the PMELR and outcome validation workshop held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2024. Draft reports have since been shared with the End Term Evaluation consultants for inclusion in their review.

Successes identified from the learning cycle have been reflected across this report and include: 1) Adaptive programming is key to tailor interventions to local needs 2) Stakeholder engagement fosters ownership and 3) human-centred design approaches ensure cultural alignment. The report concludes that the PtY program learning cycle demonstrates a successful framework for adapting global strategies to local contexts. The study on Southern leadership explored core principles such as decentralization, local ownership, and grassroots participation. The report highlights how PtY puts these principles into practice by empowering Country Management Teams (CMTs) in decision-making and aligning implementation strategies with locally identified needs. Key findings emphasize the effectiveness of participatory mechanisms such as Youth Parliaments and culturally grounded advocacy, in strengthening community engagement and empowering young people. While notable progress has been made in promoting equitable governance, the study also identifies ongoing challenges, particularly in resource distribution and representation within global decision-making spaces. Ultimately, the report reinforces the critical role of Southern leadership in achieving inclusive, equitable, and community-driven outcomes.

## 5.3 COUNTRY LINKING AND LEARNING EXCHANGES

As part of its mandate to promote linking and learning amongst programme partners, the PtY Coordination Lab facilitated two linking and learning exchange visits in 2024: one between Uganda, Ghana and Senegal (held in Ghana), and another between Ethiopia and Indonesia (held in Indonesia). This was after a successful pilot exchange between Malawi and Kenya (held in Malawi) in 2022.

The learning session in Ghana highlighted key lessons and models for replication that can strengthen youth empowerment and community engagement across PtY countries. Key lessons included: 1) the importance of empowering youth through co-chairing CMT meetings and engaging in decision-making; 2) fostering community ownership by working closely with traditional leaders; and, 3) strengthening advocacy through partnerships with Members of Parliament (MPs) and CSOs. Strategies to address political and religious opposition to SRHR initiatives included adjusting advocacy language and aligning community by-laws with national standards. Models for replication include the Model Gendered Household (MGH) in Ghana, which promotes shared household responsibilities and gender equality (see GTA section); Senegal's [Cii La Bokk](#) platform, which enhances youth participation through structured advocacy; and [Uganda's Young Emanzi Toolkit](#), which engages men and boys in gender equality. Ghana's success with youth-led advocacy through smart journalists and media engagement also offers a scalable approach.



The Indonesia session highlighted key lessons on the importance of engaging young people in research and advocacy, as demonstrated by Ethiopia's youth involvement in village assessments and Indonesia's Youth Advisory Garut, which informs policy changes through evidence-based research. Community-led initiatives, such as the Village Children and Youth Forums in Indonesia, empower young people to take action against child marriage and SGBV, while Ethiopia's Haraqe platform provides a space for intergenerational dialogue on SRHR. Religious leader engagement was identified as a key strategy, with Indonesia successfully addressing SRHR misconceptions by contextualizing religious texts.

Ethiopia recognized the need for structured partnerships between schools, local government, and religious institutions to support SRHR education. Models for replication include Indonesia's SETARA module, which integrates SRHR into school curricula under guidance and counseling, and Ethiopia's youth-led resource mobilization from local government. Strengthening partnerships, empowering youth through research and advocacy, and engaging religious and community leaders were identified as critical success factors for scaling and adapting these models across PtY countries.

#### 5.4 GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ON END TERM EVALUATIONS

As part of its learning agenda, PtY PMERL joined a knowledge exchange event hosted by Partos. During the hybrid seminar, reflections on the Mid-Term

Review were shared, covering the fundamentals of contribution analysis, challenges in implementing the methodology, key insights, and lessons learned as valuable takeaways for the upcoming End-Term Evaluation. The second session included an overview of the realist approach and its relevance to the alliance, considering programme complexity, methodology selection, implementation processes, and a comparison between contribution analysis, process tracing, and the realist approach.

During the final session participants discussed experiences related to challenges faced by alliances, collaborative approaches to address them, and key considerations such as criteria for methodology selection, decision-making points, developing the Terms of Reference, alignment with IOB criteria, and the use of participatory methods. These exchanges fostered valuable learning to strengthen the end-term evaluation.

**Successes identified on the learning cycle have been reflected across this report and include**



**Adaptive programming is key to tailor interventions to local needs.**



**Stakeholder engagement fosters ownership.**



**Human-centred design approaches ensure cultural alignment.**



## 6. PARTNERSHIPS & SYNERGIES

### The Power of Partnership: Strengthening Synergy Through Shared Learning

One of PtY's key strengths lies in its emphasis on cross-partner learning and collaboration. Synergies are amplified through the joint efforts of consortium members and technical partners. For example, Rutgers and Sonke facilitated a capacity strengthening symposium on Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA), which enhanced implementation across seven countries. CHOICE and Amref also continued to strengthen the MIYP approach, through the Global Youth Group (GYG), which hosted a two-day learning exchange with youth from MenEngage, Power to You(th), and SRHR4ALL in Malawi and Uganda. Learning is also deeply rooted at the country level (as demonstrated in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia) and fostered through cross-country exchanges. Examples include learning visits between Uganda, Ghana, and Senegal (hosted in Ghana), as well as between Ethiopia and Indonesia (held in Indonesia), further detailed in the MEL section.

### 6.1 INTERNAL COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

In 2023, the PtY Mid-Term Evaluation assessed the partnership using the Alliance Thermometer<sup>7</sup>. The evaluation revealed high ratings in processes, strategy, connection and cooperation, learning and innovation, and steering culture. However, key challenges also emerged, including competing priorities that limited country teams' participation in global activities, a lack of a joint vision and clear roles in the MIYP strategy design, limited understanding of the Gender Transformative Approach (GTA), power struggles at the country level with lead partners making unilateral decisions, and an unclear Southern leadership structure for some partners (particularly those who joined after the programme had started). At the global level, challenges identified included the lack of joint documentation on learning and best practices, competing priorities that limited country teams' participation in global activities.

At the country level there was a focus on strengthening CMTs and Southern leadership to strengthen communication and collaboration across the partnership. The PtY Ethiopia Technical Team improved joint planning, implementation, and monitoring. Amref provided training on the Meharebe curriculum for YNSD and Hiwot Ethiopia, while YNSD supported Amref and Hiwot Ethiopia in peer-to-peer education facilitation.

<sup>7</sup>Power to You(th) Mid-Term Evaluation Partnership Report. Final October 2023.docx 33

Regular review meetings and joint learning workshops enhanced knowledge-sharing and collaboration. In Kenya, the diverse expertise within the CMT enhanced grassroots engagement and policy advocacy, fostering collaboration and mutual learning that led to innovative solutions. In Uganda, the CMT successfully mobilized resources through joint proposals, such as a funding call from the Danish Embassy, and improved technical support among partners. Joint capacity-building initiatives strengthened programme delivery, and the co-development of key tools, including the GTA, MIYP, and advocacy toolkits, enhanced advocacy efforts.

In Malawi, improved coordination through monthly meetings, annual planning sessions, and joint advocacy ensured strategic alignment and progress tracking. Programme delivery and alignment in Senegal improved through the publication of a periodic consortium newsletter (English-French) to inform partners of the joint achievements. In Indonesia, an opportunity to strengthen the capacity of local CSOs through joint training and advocacy was identified in Lombok where working with 17 youth and children's organizations greatly enhanced CSO skills in village budget advocacy, which will have a lasting impact on their communities.

Some challenges persist at the country level. In Ghana, inconsistent partner commitment to joint activities and limited follow-through on agreed actions have affected collaboration and coordination. In Indonesia, differences in stakeholder priorities have sometimes caused friction and slowed decision-making. Leadership changes at the regional office level have disrupted continuity and decision-making effectiveness, while limited political access in some provinces has made it difficult to monitor and influence local processes. Coordination between partners remains challenging, especially when overlapping activities require careful alignment of schedules and efforts. The teams will continue with efforts to improve coordination and collaboration in 2025.

At the global level several actions were taken to improve collaboration. This included the revival of the quarterly joint technical working group meetings where representatives of the different TWGs meet to share lessons, challenges and best practices. Also, TWGs are invited to the bi-monthly Global Coordinators forum to elaborate on their role within the programme and the support they extend to country teams and partners. A joint working group with country and global advocates in preparation of CSW68 was set up to ensure coordination and alignment during global events and a separate budget line was allocated from the global level to support

CMTs to document GTA results better and increase awareness on GTA. Finally a joint Communications & PMEL task force on dissemination of MTE results was established to ensure joint documentation on learning and best practices. Continuous engagement between consortium partners and country teams on Southern leadership has also been taking place.

## 6.2 EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

At the country level, PtY has fostered strategic partnerships with other Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) funded programs, Dutch Embassies and other like-minded CSOs enhancing coordination, advocacy and learning across initiatives. PtY programs in Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and Senegal have also actively engaged in joint learning meetings, advocacy efforts, and knowledge-sharing platforms with MoFA-funded initiatives such as She Leads, RHRN2, GenG, and Break Free. These collaborations have strengthened evidence-based advocacy, particularly on SRHR, gender equality, and youth empowerment. PtY teams regularly participate in national and regional multi-stakeholder meetings, influencing policies such as the Sexual Offences Bill (Uganda), National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (Malawi), and youth-friendly health service frameworks (various countries). In Malawi and Senegal, PtY's collaborations with the Break Free Consortium and Grandmother Project have driven grassroots advocacy, leveraging intergenerational dialogue to challenge harmful norms and support youth-led change.



In Ghana and Uganda, PtY collaborated with other CSOs to amplify advocacy on reproductive health education and expand civic space for youth-led organizations. In Kenya, partnerships with Stawisha Africa and AWEAPON<sup>8</sup> have provided digital literacy and entrepreneurship training for adolescent girls and young women, fostering economic independence and reducing vulnerabilities to SGBV.

<sup>8</sup>African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEAPON).

Dutch Embassies have been key partners in PtY's growth, facilitating high-level engagements, capacity-building workshops, and networking opportunities. In Ethiopia, Kenya, and Indonesia, PtY representatives have benefited from embassy-led training on digital security, storytelling, and organizational capacity strengthening. Similarly, in Ghana, an organizational capacity assessment led by the Dutch Embassy resulted in systemic improvements among implementing partners. Embassy-organized events, such as the SDGs Brunch (Indonesia) and policy validation meetings (Uganda), have provided platforms for PtY to showcase best practices and strengthen relationships with other partners.

At the global level the PtY Lab coordinator and the Amref NL PtY Consortium lead continue to engage with other representatives of all SRHR MoFA NL-funded programs. Taking into account the announced funding cuts for International Development, during the final part of 2024, the platform has focussed its effort on keeping SRHR as a priority in the new funding framework of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The relationship between PtY and MoFA NL's Health Advisor, Sterre van Campen, continued to be characterized by mutual respect, flexibility, learning and constructive dialogue.

In May 2024 she joined the Country Exchange and Learning Program in Ghana. Sterre (and now her successor Fabian Schipper - Feb 2025) was also a member of the End Term Evaluation (ETE) Global Reference Group (see MEL section). PtY is grateful for the ongoing fruitful collaboration experienced in 2024. The PtY team would also like to thank Sterre for her support over the last few years and extend a warm welcome to Fabian.

## 6.3 PROMOTING LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

PtY has effectively fostered local ownership by empowering youth, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community structures through small grants, capacity-building, and inclusive collaboration. These initiatives enabled local actors to lead community-specific projects addressing sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), gender equality, and harmful cultural practices. In Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya, youth played key advocacy roles, while in Malawi, school forums and community partnerships helped sustain local engagement. Despite challenges like cultural resistance and youth turnover, efforts focused on building long-term local capacity and ensuring program continuity beyond its formal end.

At the government level, PtY successfully aligned programme activities with local priorities across all implementing countries. Engagements included public consultations, collaborative planning, and integrating youth into local decision-making. Uganda, Ethiopia, and Ghana saw active government support through shared responsibilities and infrastructure development, such as youth centers. Indonesia and Kenya made progress in advancing local policy reforms and securing resources for SRHR and gender-based violence prevention, despite encountering delays and funding constraints. Overall, PtY's integrated approach strengthened both community and government ownership, laying the foundation for sustained impact and accountability.

Examples of how CMTs worked on the promotion of local ownership have been provided in the section above.





## 7. CONCLUSION

2024 marked a year where the foundations laid in previous years began to yield visible results, as demonstrated throughout this report. Through strategic partnerships, advocacy achievements, and targeted capacity-strengthening efforts involving youth, community leaders, and institutions, PtY has empowered local actors to drive transformative change within their communities. These initiatives have strengthened community accountability, improved access to services, and laid the groundwork for sustained impact on national policies, ensuring that youth-related issues, especially in gender equality and SRHR, remain a priority well beyond 2025. Partnerships and collaboration played a vital role in shaping policy outcomes and ensuring long-term sustainability. PtY's integrated investment across the four Pathways, connecting grassroots voices with national and international policy arenas, was a cornerstone of this progress. The year also yielded several unexpected positive outcomes, such as public pledges from mayors in Senegal, the replication of policy initiatives across districts in Indonesia, and enhanced online transparency from local governments in Kenya.

However, it was not without challenges. Online safety risks and digital inequality emerged, prompting Kenya and Ghana to take pioneering steps in addressing Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV).

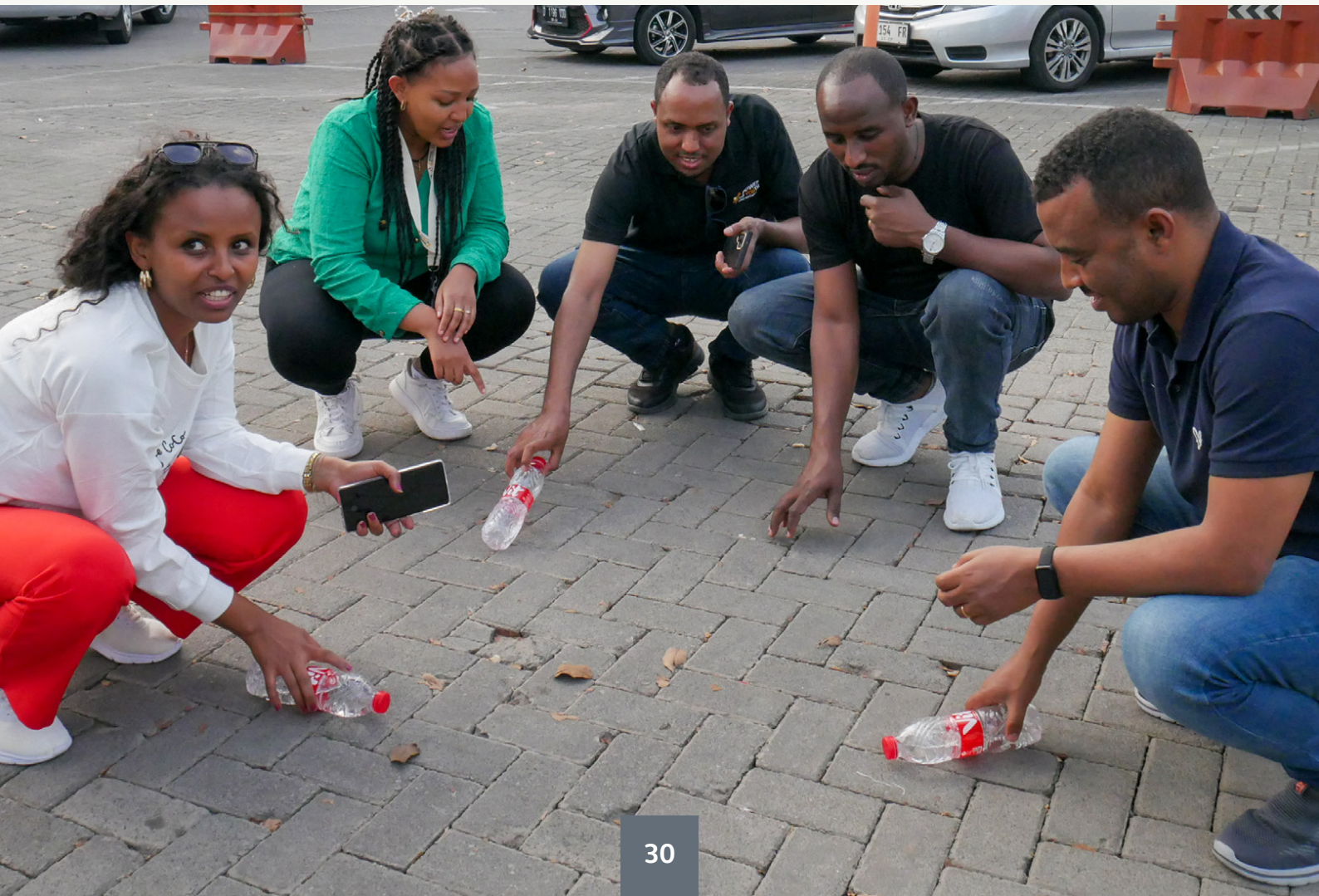
Despite ongoing political resistance and a shrinking civic space, PtY continued to demonstrate resilience and adaptability. Countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Ghana provided strong examples of effective responses to pushback, highlighting the programme's capacity to operate under pressure. Still, significant challenges remain, particularly in the face of growing global opposition to SRHR and major funding reductions by key donor countries.

As we enter our final year of implementation, our focus will shift to firmly embedding the sustainability of our approaches. In 2025, efforts will concentrate on documenting best practices related to Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP), Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA), and policy and practice shifts, ensuring the continued inclusion of adolescent girls and young women in decision-making processes, especially in addressing harmful practices, SGBV, and unintended pregnancies.

## ANNEX 1: INDICATOR OVERVIEW

[Link: PtY Indicator Value Reporting sheet Final.xlsx](#)

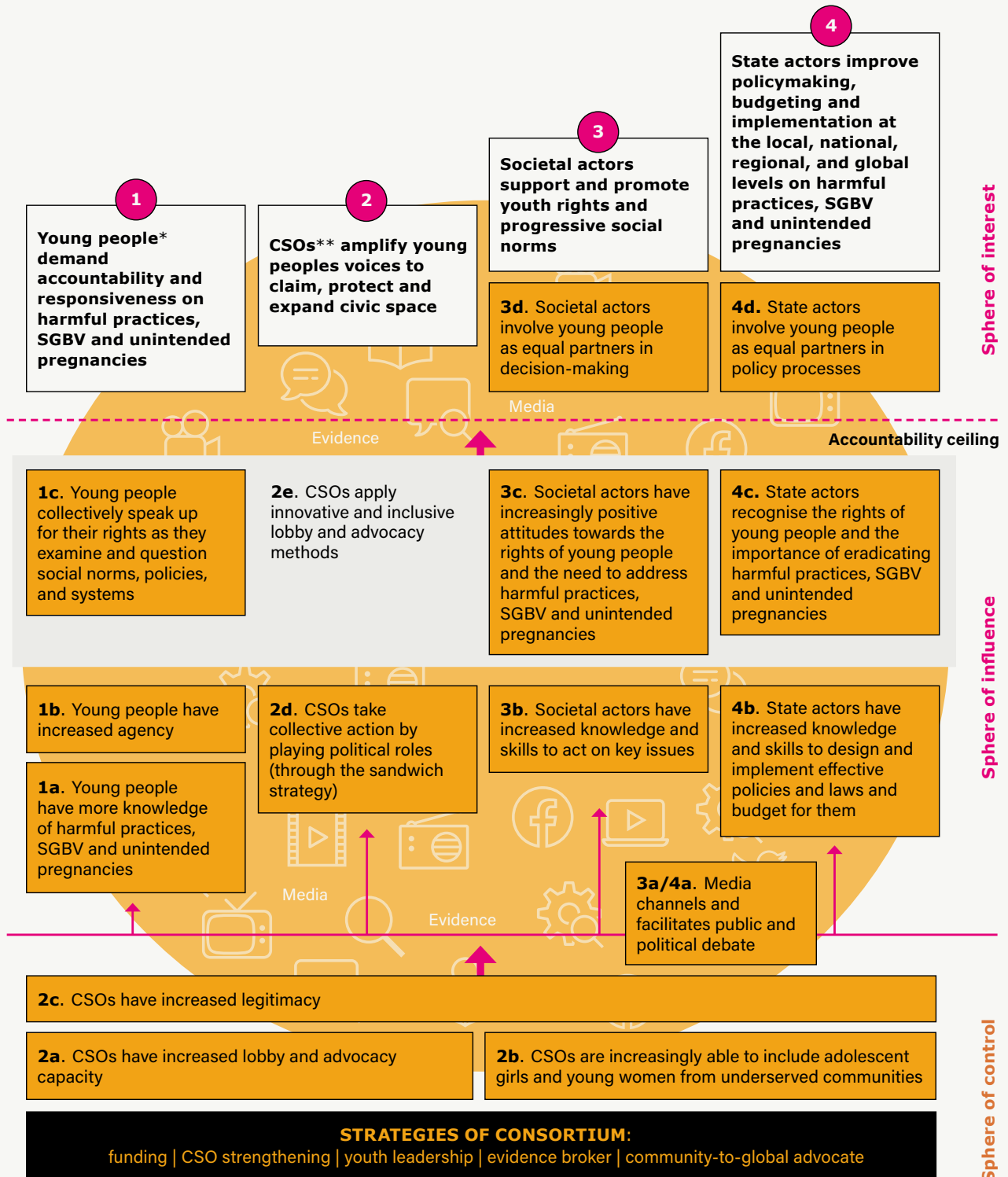
PATHWAY	CORE INDICATOR	REFERENCE CODE PTY	BASELINE	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL	2022 TARGET	2022 ACTUAL	2023 TARGET	2023 ACTUAL	2024 TARGET	2024 ACTUAL	2021-2025 ACTUAL	2021-2025 TARGET
<b>PATHWAY 1:</b> Strengthening youth to claim civic space	PW1.A2	# of young people (disaggregate by gender identity (fimix)) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies (disaggregate type and level) and perceive their participation as meaningful (SRHR A)	0	662	603	741	764	787	1162	779	1213	3742	3162
<b>PATHWAY 2:</b> Strengthening civil society	PW2.A1	# of CSOs participating in Power to You(th) (SCS 6)	0	78	135	106	165	214	125	16	114	539	414
	PW2.A2	# of communities, CSOs, and advocacy networks with increased lobbying, advocating, thematic and/or research capabilities (SCS 5, SRHR J)	0	64	59	300	261	276	143	110	16	579	827
	PW2.A4	# of CSOs who have advanced on using a Gender and Social Inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle with specific attention to youth (SCS 8)	0	28	36	120	123	168	85	72	114	358	431
<b>PATHWAY: 4</b> Policies & policy implementation	PW4.A2	# and type of (international laws and policies blocked, adopted, maintained, improved including the number of detrimental policies, which are prevented or blocked from adoption or development to decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices and SGBV (SCS 2, SRHR H)	87	5	10	10	19	26	20	18	16	65	77
	PW4.A3	# of (international laws, policies, norms and practices implemented to decrease barriers to SRHR and prevent harmful practices, and SGBV (SCS 1)	62	7	8	16	18	45	31	29	48	105	117



## ANNEX 2: PTY THEORY OF CHANGE



**More adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities are meaningfully included in decision-making processes regarding harmful practices, SGBV and unintended pregnancies.**



\*Young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, from underserved communities

\*\*CSOs include Youth-Led Organizations (YLOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Women-Led Organizations (WLOs)



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