



# Rwanda Youth Network

## About the Network

Over the past few years, the importance of promoting and improving young people's health – particularly sexual and reproductive health – through strengthening policy, strategy and community has come to the fore.

Young people and adolescents are exposed to multiple reproductive health-related problems, and youth volunteers in Rwanda have taken up the important challenge of ensuring that young people are able to assert their rights and take on their responsibilities when it comes to their health.

Through the Make Way project, the youth interventions cover eight districts, working with four consortium members, and eight collaborative partners.

## Sexual reproductive health and rights

In the aftermath of Covid-19, the challenges to sexual reproductive health services have only compounded, namely, lack of information on services, social and cultural stigma, low self-esteem, conflicting religious beliefs, and poor policy implementation.

The consequences of a lack of adequate SRHR information can be life-changing – unwanted/unplanned pregnancies, booming rates of STDs, unsafe abortion, and school drop-out. Unwanted pregnancies in particular can lead to maternal and/or child death, newborn abandonment, infanticide, and many kinds of physical and psychological violence.

Young people have been involved in piloting an Intersectional Community Score Card (ICSC) scheme, which unearths challenges in the community through awareness, evaluation and discussion of people's rights and provision for them. It also helps in tracking the perception, provision and impact of SRHR services over time.

Young people have been advocating for SRHR in their communities and helping their peers build the confidence to speak up for their rights and speak out against challenges to them.

### Youth-led advocacy training

Through three days of youth-led advocacy training, young people learn how to better participate in and influence decision-making that affects them, through all levels of governance from village- to nation-level.

Through the training, young people and vulnerable youth gained an in-depth understanding of essential services and practical knowledge and experience in assessing and developing action plans to improve them

### Community advocacy training

With the support of VSO's local partner, Empower Rwanda, 32 teen mothers in the Nyagatare district have been acting as community-based peer educators, with training in leadership, self-advocacy, and the use of social accountability tools.

The training also provided personal support for the teen mothers in mood management, self-esteem, confidence, communication, and self-advocacy.

The training helps to build girls' and women's knowledge and skills in using social accountability and advocacy tools, reporting and case documentation, and supporting other teen mothers in need.



**32 teen  
mothers  
are leading,  
educating  
and  
advocating  
in their  
communities**



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