

Building capacity for increased youth agency through human-centered design and AYSRH in Francophone West Africa

HCDEXchange partners with PATH and YUX to expand capacity for human centered AYSRH programming

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In parts of West Africa, three out of five women are married before age 20 and more than half of all women begin childbearing during their adolescence, putting them at elevated risk for complications during pregnancy as well as infant mortality.¹ Many young people face social and structural barriers when it comes to reproductive health because communication about sex is often taboo, male partners dominate in sexual and reproductive decision-making, access to safe and legal abortion is limited, and early/child marriage as well as female genital mutilation are still practiced in some areas. They are underserved, unrepresented and not consulted. Human-centered design (HCD) approaches increase youth engagement in identifying and implementing solutions to AYSRH challenges and unlocking their potential to ensure that interventions are appropriate and appealing to young people.

The HCDEXchange is investing in a new HCD+ASRH Network to increase awareness and build the capabilities of practitioners and develop a community, exchange learning and share skills and knowledge. This network will offer a significant opportunity to transform ASRH and HCD linkages in francophone Africa and create solutions that are co-designed by youth themselves.

“The HCDEXchange is excited by this partnership which is a win for not only adolescents and young people in Francophone West Africa but also practitioners seeking to apply design to improve the quality of AYSRH programs”, said Muthoni Wachira, HCDEXchange Project Director.

To support this effort, the HCDEXchange is partnering with PATH and YUX Design to serve a growing community of practitioners, designers and youth through connection and capacity strengthening. The partnership is expected to run from September 2022- June 2023.

The outcomes and activities of this partnership will include:

1. Expand the network of practitioners driving HCD+ASRH learning and practice and engaging as members of the HCDEXchange community of practice in francophone Africa
2. Increased documentation of HCD+ASRH work across francophone Africa

¹. World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Africa. Sexual and Reproductive Health Fact Sheet. WHO; 2020. <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2020-06/Sexual%20and%20reproductive%20health-%20Fact%20sheet%2028-05-2020.pdf>.



3. Increased skills and experience applying HCD+ASRH among practitioners through capacity-building initiatives in a local context, and
4. Increased awareness and adoption of quality, design led ASRH by field practitioners by fostering links between the region and East Africa and South Asia organizations

“The HCD-ASRH Network will infuse the Francophone community with new opportunities, new skills and new connections. This kind of platform brings together not only people, but their ideas, cultures and best implementation practices, and pushes us all to engage young people in the most meaningful way possible”, said Ida Ndione, PATH Senior Project Manager

“The YUX Academy is deeply committed to upskilling HCD in African contexts, both francophone and anglophone, and thrilled to share knowledge and resources in order to support the impact of AYSRH programs”, said Caroline Grellier, YUX Academy Lead.

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Notes to the Editor:

About the HCDEXchange: The [HCDEXchange project](#), hosted by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. is a Knowledge Hub dedicated to exploring how human-centered design can improve sexual and reproductive health needs and rights for youth and adolescents. We convene a global Community of Practice that drives, shares and increases learning to help shape this field.

About PATH: PATH is a global nonprofit dedicated to achieving health equity. With more than 40 years of experience forging multi sector partnerships, and with expertise in science, economics, technology, advocacy, and dozens of other specialties, PATH develops and scales up innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing health challenges.

About YUX: Since 2016 the YUX Academy has been offering design training to implement its mission of democratizing design and human-centered design in Africa. With over 300 designers trained in over 15 African countries, we work to support a network of design professionals across the African continent, bridging the francophone-anglophone gap.

