

PARTNERING WITH YOUTH FOR IMPACT

Profiles of **MOMENTUM** Youth
Partners from Across the Globe



INTRODUCTION

AROUND THE WORLD, THERE ARE 2.4 BILLION YOUTH AGES 10 TO 29, THE LARGEST NUMBER IN HISTORY (see Box 1).¹ At this life stage,

young people are getting educated, beginning jobs and careers, forming new relationships, and learning to pursue their life aspirations. As they comprise approximately 30% percent of the total population,^{2,3} addressing the needs and rights of young people is essential for achieving national and global health and development aims, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Family Planning 2030 commitments. In the face of pressing challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict, and gender inequality that affect their daily lives, young people are demonstrating resilience, helping shape their communities, and defying perceptions of what they are capable of achieving.⁴ These young people span various developmental stages, and their diverse health needs are not always understood, respected, or valued, especially those related to sexual and reproductive health.^{5,6} Too often, the communities and systems surrounding youth and adolescents do not support their healthy development. For example, in many places gender norms place value on early marriage and early successive pregnancies as a measure of womanhood, despite evidence that such practices are harmful.⁷ Moreover, health systems and services are not always designed to respond to the particular needs of youth.⁸



BOX 1. YOUTH, DEFINED

USAID defines youth as people ages 10 to 29 years, a two-decade period where an array of life events occurs (e.g., in- and out-of-school, workforce preparation/entrance, partnerships/marriage, parenting). USAID further defines “youth” as:

10-14: Very Young Adolescents

15-19: Older Adolescents

20-24: Emerging Adults

25-29: Young Adults

Planning, delivery, and monitoring of health services should consider the needs of each of these sub-groups.

Sources: [USAID Youth in Development Policy Data Source and Definition: Youth Global and Country Population](#)

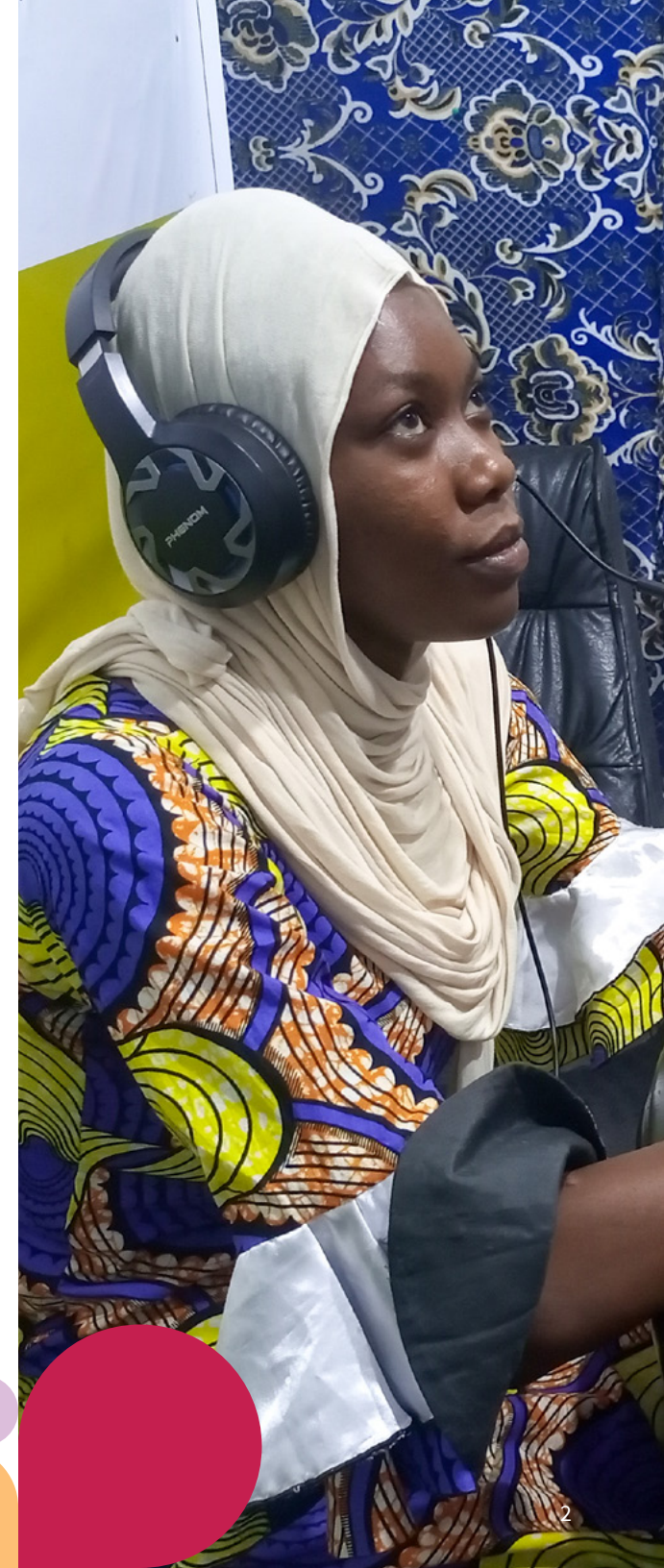


USAID's new Youth in Development Policy focuses on supporting youth to have the agency, rights, and influence to pursue their goals, access the services they need, and improve their communities (see box 2).⁹ The policy supports investments, strategies, and programs that apply the evidenced-based positive youth development approach which engages youth and their families, communities, and/or governments; empowers them to reach their full potential and build skills, assets, and competencies; fosters healthy relationships; strengthens the environment; and transforms systems.^{10,11} It also advocates for operationalizing meaningful adolescent and youth engagement (MAYE) and partnership.¹²

Increasingly, other global policies, program guidance, and tools reflect a growing understanding that youth deserve and have the right to participate in decision-making about programs affecting them and to represent their own interests.^{13,14} MOMENTUM, an interrelated suite of six awards working to improve maternal,

newborn, child health, and nutrition; voluntary family planning; and reproductive health services, is one of many USAID projects that recognizes the importance of meaningfully engaging and partnering with youth to achieve their broader goals (see Figure 1).

This document features profiles of some of MOMENTUM's dynamic youth partners. MOMENTUM's youth-focused partners work across different geographies and contexts to increase health knowledge and demand for health services, shift social and gender norms in their communities, improve access to quality health services, and create adolescent-responsive systems across the humanitarian-development nexus. MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience is partnering with the Government of Tanzania on a first-time parenting program for young people, training peer leaders who facilitate first-time parent interventions in their communities. In Burkina Faso, the project is working with local associations to support young people as champions for sexual and repro-



BOX 2. OBJECTIVES OF USAID'S YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Access: Youth are better able to access high-quality information, safe services, and livelihood opportunities and build the skills they need to lead healthy, productive, and engaged lives.

Participation: Youth have the right to fully participate in decision-making as key partners to contribute to individual, household, community, and national well-being.

Systems: Youth have a stronger collective voice in, and are better served by, local and national systems through more coordinated and effective services, practices, and policies that embody the principles of positive youth development.

Source: [Youth in Development Policy: 2022 Update](#)



ductive health. In South Sudan, the project partners with a youth health alliance addressing HIV, sexual reproductive health and rights, and gender equality. In Benin and Mali, MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery is strengthening the capacity of youth-led organizations and a youth council to support sexual and reproductive health awareness and drive demand towards contraceptive access. MOMENTUM Safe Surgery in Family Planning and Obstetrics meaningfully engages youth in India as champions in their communities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership partners with a civil society organization in Sierra Leone to connect and strengthen organizations focused on youth sexual and reproductive health through a unified platform. The project also supports partners in Kenya and Ghana to lead social accountability initiatives that improve health system responsiveness and facilitates a campaign in India that creates safe spaces for youth to discuss sexual and reproductive health.

This collection of organization and youth champi-

FIGURE 1.
MOMENTUM
SUITE OF
AWARDS



on profiles spotlights this dynamic body of work occurring across nine countries. Collectively, MOMENTUM's experiences and lessons on putting MAYE into practice can offer insights to others working toward similar goals. The profiles highlight how to meaningfully partner with youth to ensure they have access

to high-quality, evidence-based programming; ideas for ways that young people can help shape responsive health systems; and strategies for addressing the diverse needs of young people around the world through community-led programming, health services, and advocacy.

OUR YOUTH PARTNERS

Kenya 5
Youth for Sustainable Development



Tanzania 7
Tanzania Ministry of Health



India 9
Purpose
MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child
Solidarity and Action Against the HIV Infection in India



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South Sudan 15
Social media spotlight on Shabab
Le Shabab



Burkina Faso 16
Youth champions Samira Maiga and Kamireni Kevin Ouoba



Sierra Leone 18
Health Alert Sierra Leone



Mali 20
Réseau des Jeunes Ambassadeurs pour la Santé de la Reproduction et la Planification au Mali



Ghana 22
Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities



KENYA



Youth leading social accountability for reproductive health in Machakos County, Kenya



YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (YSD) is a youth-led organization striving to promote inclusive approaches to youth empowerment through youth participation and social accountability. YSD elevates the voices of young people to advocate for their health and rights and equips them with skills and knowledge to improve their livelihoods and leadership abilities. It is the only youth-led organization working on social accountability for health in Machakos County, Kenya. The team has strong relationships with community members and youth and has developed a meaningful partnership with the Ministry of Health through their youth-led social accountability project. The Ministry has positioned YSD as a key champion and called on them to review the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy.

Social accountability for health: Holding public officials and service providers accountable for the provision of quality, equitable, and accessible care.¹⁵

MOMENTUM Country and Global leadership is meaningfully engaging and partnering with youth through YSD to conduct youth-led social accountability activities to improve the quality of sexual and reproductive

health services and information for youth. The YSD team takes a three-pronged approach that begins with increasing awareness among young people and other community members about adolescents' and youth's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Next, using a community scorecard approach, they create spaces for adolescents and youth, health staff, and duty bearers, like parents and religious leaders, to engage and assess how well health services are meeting the needs of youth. YSD then collaborates with young people, health staff, and community members to create action plans with solutions to improve services and collectively monitor implementation. They also use social media to engage and educate youth and community members about the sexual and reproductive health and rights and entitlements of adolescents and youth, as well as about youth-led social accountability.

To date, across four sub-counties within Machakos County, YSD has engaged more than 340 adolescents and youth and more than 200 health staff and community members in community scorecard activities. Their work is intentionally gender-balanced and aims to increase the use of health services among adolescents and youth ages 10 to 24, including ado-



Youth for Sustainable Development

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership

LOCATION

Machakos County, Kenya

AREAS OF FOCUS

Sexual Reproductive Health & Mental Health | Youth Leadership | Social Accountability | Civic Education | Youth Entrepreneurship and Employability

FACEBOOK

[@MachakosChapter](#)

TWITTER

[@machakos_ysd](#)

lescents living with HIV; adolescents with disabilities; and adolescents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual. Their work has also led to improvements in the quality and responsiveness of contraceptive and reproductive health services for youth and helped facilitate a common understanding of issues affecting young people among community, opinion leaders, policy-makers and health staff. More specifically, YSD has contributed to the following improvements:

- Establishment of integrated, youth-friendly health services.
- Education and capacity strengthening of health staff on how to engage with young people and increase their access to sexual and reproductive health services.

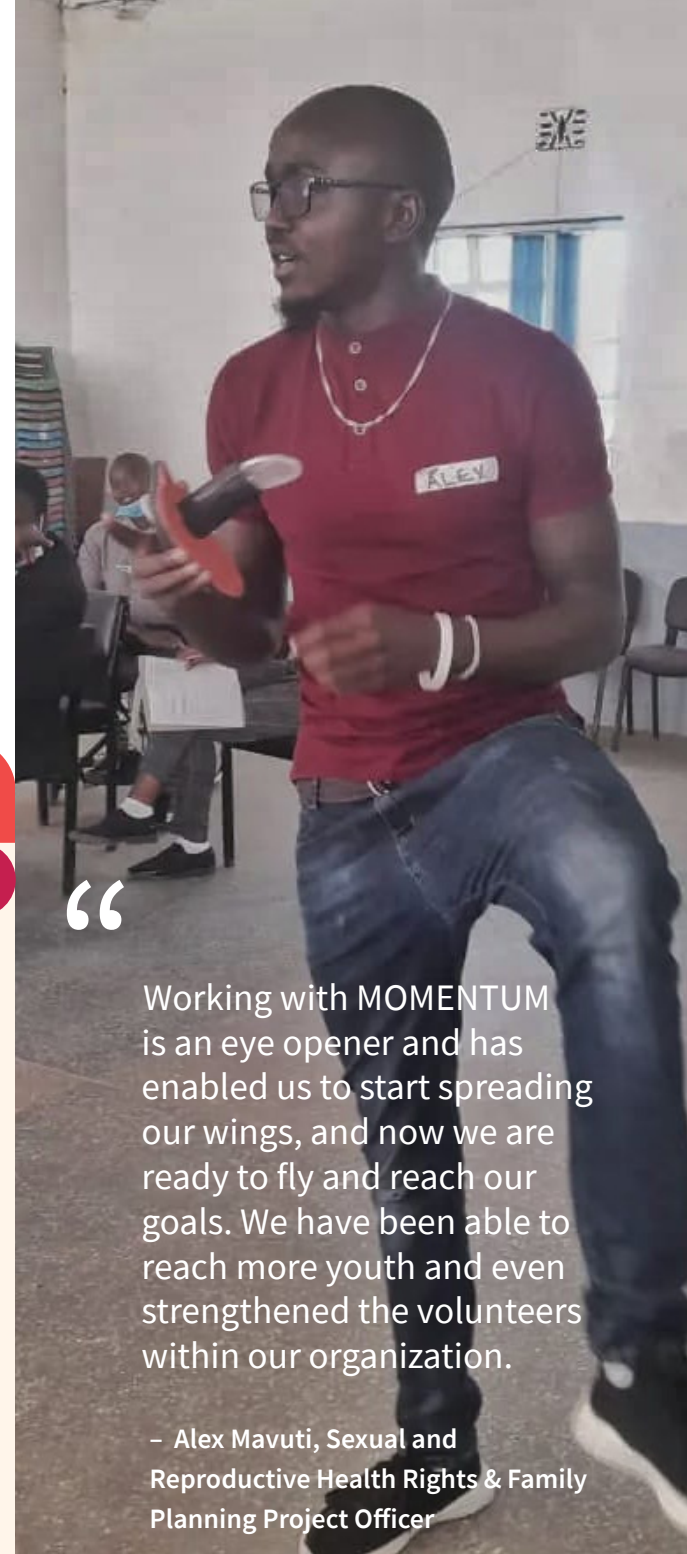
- Relocation of condom dispensers to private spaces in 10 facilities where adolescents and young people can comfortably access condoms without fear of embarrassment or victimization.

Organizational development is also an integral component of this partnership. MOMENTUM supported YSD to undertake a process of self-reflection and self-assessment using the [Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment](#) (ITOCA) tool. This resulted in a change action plan to address self-identified priorities for strengthening staff knowledge and skills, and developing key operational and governance systems. Since then, YSD has recruited and inducted new board members, developed a leadership succession plan, and provided financial management training for staff.

TAKING A LEARNING-FOCUSED APPROACH TO IMPROVE ACTIVITIES

YSD takes a learning-focused approach, continuously monitoring and improving their activities and adding to the body of evidence surrounding youth-led social accountability mechanisms. In partnership with MOMENTUM, the team meets monthly to discuss their activities and reflect on what went well and how to course correct for the future. Meeting participants are encouraged to speak candidly so that timely decisions can be made to improve programming in real time. In one example of this type of learning in action, team

members said that when carrying out awareness activities and community score card assessments, young people repeatedly mentioned that religious and traditional leaders from several communities were creating barriers for them to access sexual and reproductive health information and services. As a result, the team adjusted the agendas of an upcoming Facebook Live event and a large meeting to include religious/traditional leaders who could speak about the benefits of YSD's work. As part of this ongoing learning and knowledge exchange, the team also regularly shares successes with youth colleagues and provides advice and guidance for other organizations seeking to implement youth-led social accountability activities.



“

Working with MOMENTUM is an eye opener and has enabled us to start spreading our wings, and now we are ready to fly and reach our goals. We have been able to reach more youth and even strengthened the volunteers within our organization.

– Alex Mavuti, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights & Family Planning Project Officer

TANZANIA



Bridging the gap between communities and providers to provide sexual and reproductive health information and services to first-time parents in fragile settings

In fragile settings, factors including political and financial instability, lack of parental permission to participate in youth programming, and limited government funding often make it challenging for youth organizations to operate. To fill this gap, in Tanzania, the **MINISTRY OF HEALTH** works with Pathfinder, a consortium partner on MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience, to support local organizations to deliver sexual and reproductive health education to young people. Young Tanzanians often lack access to sexual and reproductive health information, have difficulty communicating with partners about contraception, and face many life challenges, including unintended pregnancy. These challenges can sometimes lead to feeling depressed, dropping out of school, or being isolated from families who are not supportive of pregnancy outside of marriage.

Through the MOMENTUM partnership, community health workers, peer leaders, and facility staff are trained to identify structural barriers and equip and provide information and services to first-time parents in local, often remote or marginalized, communities. First-time parents—either married couples or single people below age 25 who have had their first child—

learn about family planning from community health workers. The first-time parents also improve their livelihoods by forming entrepreneurship groups that increase individual and family income, as well as increase their decision-making power within their families and broader communities. Embodying key principles of MAYE to engage young people in decision-making and governance, youth are an integral part of the program, not only as participants but as implementers, conducting home visits and inviting other young people to attend group meetings to help achieve the goal of creating a safe and educated community.

The first-time parents program is implemented in the Greater Mahale Ecosystem, covering 44 villages across the Uvinza district in Kigoma and the Tanganyika district in Katavi. It seeks to enhance the uptake, access to, and quality of family planning and maternal, newborn, and child health services to improve the health and well-being of women, children, and their families and to empower women, girls, and youth. Since the program's inception, there has been a 33% increase in the use of contraception among first-time parents and a 12% increase in the use of contraception for adolescents and youth ages 10 to 19.¹⁶



Tanzania Ministry of Health

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience

LOCATION

Kigoma and Katavi regions, Tanzania

AREAS OF FOCUS

Family planning | Parenting |
Economic Strengthening | WASH

WEBSITE

www.moh.go.tz

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS ADDRESS MISPERCEPTIONS TO INFORM FIRST-TIME PARENTS

The first-time parent program seeks to improve knowledge, attitudes, care-seeking, and self-care practices related to family planning and reproductive health and maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH). The approach focuses on building first-time parents' knowledge about healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, family planning, MNCH, and providing increased access to these services within their communities. James Makwaya is a community health worker (CHW) trained through MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience. Makwaya is one of the CHWs supporting the first-time parent program in Karema village, providing voluntary family planning and public health education, counseling, and services to fellow villagers. At first, the community was reluctant about his messages, with many fearing that contraception would cause infertility and other reproductive issues. The project's interventions with first-time parents, as well as voluntary reproductive health and family planning counseling services, aim to reduce rates of unintended pregnancies. Makwaya notes that his training from MOMENTUM has helped him and other CHWs to sensitize the community and address challenges, leading to increased contraceptive uptake and reducing the maternal, neonatal, and child mortality rates in Karema.



“

The work I do with MOMENTUM [helps] us, as a health facility, to reach young people [and first-time parents] easily and quickly. It has helped many young people, especially women, feel comfortable to come [to] the facility for counseling and health care...I also appreciate the great cooperation from community health workers and peer leaders, who are key implementers [in] the community.

– Lusajo Minga, community health worker supervisor at Kibo Dispensary in Tanganyika district, Tanzania

INDIA



Creating safe online and offline spaces for youth leaders to discuss sexual and reproductive health and rights

The social impact agency **PURPOSE** uses public mobilization and storytelling to shift policies and change public narratives on a range of critical issues from climate to COVID-19. In partnership with MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership: India-Yash, Purpose aims to build a youth-led movement on sexual and reproductive health and rights. They recently launched *Baatein Unlocked*, or Conversations Unlocked, a unique campaign focused on creating safe spaces for conversations led by young people on sexual and reproductive health and rights. This is done through activities in the community and online to generate interest, engagement, and participation from young people through partnerships with civil society organizations; digital media platforms; radio platforms; and colleges and youth collectives focused on climate change' lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual peoples rights; sexual

and reproductive health and rights; and other thematic issues. The campaign launched in Bhopal, the capital city of the state of Madhya Pradesh in June 2022 and has since started work in two additional states: Jharkhand and Odisha. Since its launch, the *Baatein Unlocked* movement has received an incredible reception from the community, reaching more than 3 million people across digital channels and engaging young people, activists, youth leaders, and representatives from organizations working in and around the three states.

MOMENTUM strengthens Purpose's links to a range of private, public, and government stakeholders, ensuring that the goals and activities of the *Baatein Unlocked* campaign translate into advocacy. Through the *Baatein Unlocked* movement, Purpose aims to continue facilitating and creating these safe spaces for young people.



Purpose

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership: India-Yash

LOCATION

Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Odisha states in India

AREAS OF FOCUS

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

WEBSITE

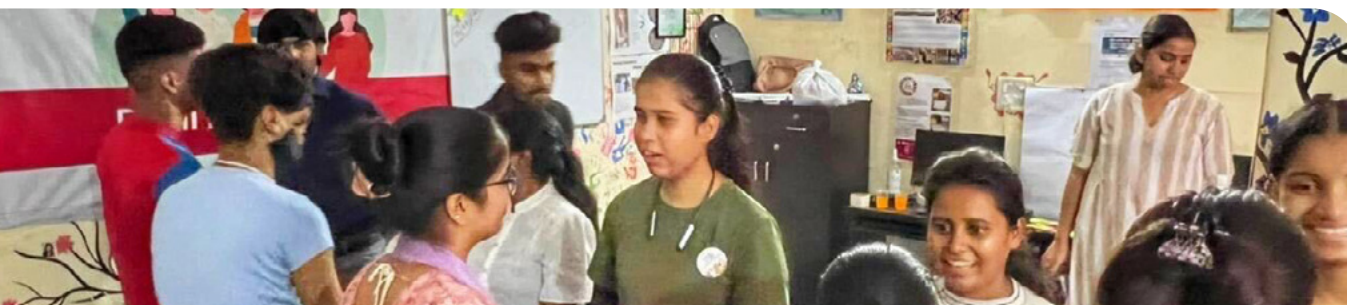
www.purpose.com

TWITTER

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BAATEIN UNLOCKED

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CAMPAIGN LAUNCH MOBILIZES YOUNG PEOPLE TO CREATE SAFE SPACES TO DISCUSS THEIR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

With support from MOMENTUM, Purpose's *Baatein Unlocked* campaign launched in June 2022 to facilitate youth-led conversations on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The launch included a three-day roadshow in partnership with RedFM, a national radio station, that reached 5,000 young people in Bhopal, India, engaging them in conversations around sexual and reproductive health and rights through open mics, games, and other activities across colleges, universities, and public spaces. In partnership with the local organization Pravah, the launch also included a closed-door workshop for 50 young people that created a safe space to engage in depth on issues surrounding sexual and reproductive health and rights and introduce them to *Baatein Unlocked*. Finally, the campaign launch provided an opportunity for youth to take the stage, assume control of the narrative, and “unlock” conversations around sexual and reproductive health and rights that they had not previously been comfortable discussing or had an inviting, appropriate forum in which to discuss them. The event mobilized 200+ young people from diverse backgrounds.



“

Young people are not talking with each other, and they often don't have safe and confidential spaces to discuss these critical issues. As young people, Baatein Unlocked provides us with that platform where we can come together to overcome our taboos and prejudices together.

– Sakshi Patel, launch attendee; lead facilitator of the Sambhavna Fellowship at Had Anhad; founder of “Express Yourself Community”

INDIA



Youth champions leading the way to address gender-based violence

MOMENTUM Safe Surgery in Family Planning and Obstetrics works with two local organizations to address gender-based violence (GBV) in India. **MAMTA HEALTH INSTITUTE FOR MOTHER AND CHILD** (MAMTA HIMC) is a leading contributor in improving the sexual and reproductive health of young people and works to empower the underserved and marginalized through gender-sensitive participatory processes. **SOLIDARITY AND ACTION AGAINST**

“

When youth understand [GBV] and take responsibility to change the situation in their villages, it will impact society.

- Ritanjali Nayak, 21-year-old youth volunteer from Puri and second-year undergraduate student

THE HIV INFECTION IN INDIA (SAATHII) works to ensure universal access to health care, justice, and social protection for socio-economically marginalized women and children, communities impacted by the HIV/AIDS and TB epidemics, and groups marginalized because of their sexuality and/or gender identity.

In India, one in three ever-married women (aged 15 to 49) is likely to have been subjected to intimate partner violence¹⁷ and an estimated one in four married adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) has faced emotional, physical, or sexual violence.¹⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities including the perpetuation of GBV. Through the *Samanta Samarthak* (Gender Equality Advocates) Initiative, MOMENTUM Safe Surgery in Family Planning and Obstetrics meaningfully engages youth aged 15 to 30 across six Indian states to act as champions in their communities in preventing and responding to GBV. These champions participate in orientations on gender and GBV prevention and response, including context-specific messaging designed and led by MAMTA HIMC and SAATHII. With support from project staff and community health workers, they then work in their communities as youth champions, designing and conducting



MAMTA HIMC & SAATHII

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Safe Surgery in Family Planning and Obstetrics

LOCATION

Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha states in India

AREAS OF FOCUS

Gender-Based Violence | Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights | Advocacy

WEBSITES

mamta-himc.in and saathii.in

TWITTER

[@MamtaHIMC](https://twitter.com/MamtaHIMC) and [@SAATHII](https://twitter.com/SAATHII)

FACEBOOK

[MAMTA HIMC](https://www.facebook.com/MAMTA.HIMC) and [SAATHII](https://www.facebook.com/SAATHII)

awareness sessions with women and adolescent girls. The youth champions feel deeply connected to the issues of gender and GBV as many have witnessed violence in their communities since childhood. Through this program, these youth are embracing their power by acting to influence and mobilize their communities to change norms around GBV and to support girls, women, and people from marginalized groups to seek help and services.

Thus far, 1,482 youth (822 females and 660 males) have volunteered to become GBV prevention cham-

pions and participate in orientations and sensitizations on GBV prevention, response, and referral mechanisms. The capacity-building efforts use an activity-based module specifically designed for youth that prioritizes the “Do No Harm” principles. Trained volunteers lead awareness-raising activities with their peers, support community members as they seek out GBV information and services, and connect survivors to one-stop centers and health care workers that can provide them with timely and responsive care.

INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED CONVERSATION ON GBV

ANJALI TIWARI, a 21-year-old woman who studied commerce, resides in a village in Raigarh District composed of approximately 33 households. Around half of the women and one-third of the men are illiterate. Since childhood, Anjali has seen women physically abused by their family members. A MOMENTUM-trained community health worker from the State’s Department of Women and Child Development approached her with an opportunity to get involved. Her curiosity and initiative led her to participate in a MOMENTUM-organized volunteer sensitization organized in a nearby village. There, Anjali shared her experiences, and those of

other women in her village, and listened to similar stories shared by peers. Many families faced violence and financial difficulties resulting from male household heads spending the majority of their earnings on alcohol. Girls had been forced to leave their education early. Now, women in some of these households are coming out to seek their own employment. Some mothers have started supporting their daughters to return to school or for vocational training. “This path is not easy, yet it is important for me to earn, then only I can send my sons and daughters back to school and make them financially independent”, said one woman from the community. Learning about GBV, domestic violence prevention strategies, and local resources convinced Anjali that she can encourage change in her community.

ANJALI TIWARI

A Youth Agent of Change in India



“

Today I feel very happy to be part of this cause and be able to help women and girls suffering from the effects of violence around me.

- Anjali Tiwari

BENIN



Youth empowering youth to address gender and health in their communities

Located in Kandi in the northeast of Benin, the **ASSOCIATION MAIRIE DES JEUNES**—or Kandi Youth Council—made up of individuals aged 18 to 35—but with a core focus on young people—uses the weight of their voices as young people to convince their peers to be active citizens and volunteer in their communities. They focus on issues like reducing unemployment through entrepreneurship, education—particularly for young girls living in rural areas—and improving youth sexual and reproductive health and rights. In partnership with MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery through the New Partnerships Initiative, the *Association Mairie des Jeunes* holds sexual health education sessions, radio broadcasts, communication sessions with health workers, and awareness campaigns for young people. Throughout their programming, the *Association* seeks to address gender through training and skills-building sessions, as well as ensuring equitable gender representation among the members of the Council. These activities strive to give young people the information they need to flourish.

As part of the partnership's commitment to MAYE, capacity-strengthening sessions have equipped members of the Association with leadership skills and information on sexual and reproductive health

and rights, while organizational development coaching has supported the Association to formalize and expand its work. The *Association* team has been using their newly honed skills to hold health officials accountable for ensuring that young people have access to quality health information and services by holding sessions with local leaders to orient and sensitize them to the issues in their community. To date, two sessions on accountability and advocacy have been organized for the mayor and local health officials in Kandi. In addition, the *Association Mairie des Jeunes* has held 10 awareness campaigns for approximately 900 young people.

The energy, determination, and advocacy of the *Association Mairie des Jeunes* has led to many successes, including a local radio station with more than 5,000 listeners in the Kandi community granting them a free slot in its radio campaign about sexual and reproductive rights to speak about sexually transmitted infections (STI). The program addressed callers' concerns and questions about STI prevention, transmission, and care. Through the interactive program, *Association* representatives spoke candidly with callers, who expressed positive feedback about the content and program overall.



Association Mairie des Jeunes

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery

LOCATION

Kandi, Benin

AREAS OF FOCUS

Sexual Reproductive Health | Youth Leadership | Social Accountability | Civic Education | Youth Entrepreneurship and Employability

EMAIL

mairiedesjeuneskandi@gmail.com

FACEBOOK

[Mairie des Jeunes de Kandi](#)

FOSTERING DIALOGUE WITH COMMUNITIES TO CHANGE ATTITUDES AND IMPROVE HEALTH

As part of their recent programming, the *Association Mairie des Jeunes* initiated a meeting with members of the Peul community in Kandi, who typically do not visit health centers for women's health issues. Led by a Peul member of the *Association*, the meeting focused on the importance of prenatal health for healthy birth outcomes. While the session began with some reluctance on the part of community leaders, over the course of the meeting the mood shifted and by the end, the Peul leaders of that community had committed to allowing women to attend health centers for their sexual and reproductive health needs. The *Association Mairie des Jeunes* members are leaders in their communities, mobilizing not only other youth to make change, but reaching the broader community to shift norms and enhance health outcomes.

“

Young people are capable of many positive things. You just need to have confidence in them and entrust them with responsibilities. [Translated from French]

– Jérôme SACCA, Cabinet Director,
Mairie des Jeunes de Kandi



SOUTH SUDAN



Social Media Spotlight: Five Insights from International Youth Day 2022

In South Sudan, MOMENTUM partners with **SHABAB LE SHABAB**, or “Youth-to-Youth.” This consortium of youth-led and youth-focused organizations seeks to address sexual reproductive health and rights, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS among young people. They do this by creating awareness, engaging grassroots communities, building the capacity of member organizations, and engaging stakeholders to create a conducive environment.

For International Youth Day 2022, *Shabab Le Shabab* participated in MOMENTUM’s #YouthTruths social media campaign.

HERE ARE FIVE INSIGHTS OR TRUTHS THEY SHARED IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

More than 70% of South Sudan’s population consists of people under 30. It’s critical that we are part of the decision-making process here because we’re the future of our country!

Peace and security are prerequisites to sustainable health and development in South Sudan. To achieve our dreams and aspirations, young people should be assured of an environment devoid of conflict and bloodshed.

South Sudan’s youth deserve gainful employment. Loans and favorable policies will provide us with the capital to start businesses and decrease crime and dependence on aid in the long run.

One-third of girls in South Sudan are pregnant before age 15. As a result, they are at risk of health complications and often become school dropouts or unemployed. Let’s work together and increase access to information on sexual and reproductive health so youth make informed decisions.

We call upon all stakeholders to support the youth of South Sudan by providing technical and financial support to address critical issues that affect the young people of this country, including forced marriage, displacement due to war, and unemployment.



Shabab Le Shabab

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience

LOCATION

South Sudan

AREAS OF FOCUS

Sexual Reproductive Health & Mental Health | Youth Leadership | Social Accountability | Civic Education | Youth Entrepreneurship and Employability

WEBSITE

www.shabableshabab.org

TWITTER

[@ShababLe](https://twitter.com/ShababLe)

BURKINA FASO



Two youth champions leading change in their communities



SAMIRA MAIGA



SAMIRA MAIGA, a 23-year-old marketing and business management student, is the youngest of four siblings living with their single mother in Sabou, a small, unassuming town in Boulkiemdé Province, in the Center-West of Burkina Faso. She has been an active youth leader for several years and has big plans for herself and the youth of her country.

Samira is part of the Lagamtaba Association, a local youth association in Sabou that works with MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience. She decided that being a youth champion would be a good match for her interests. In this role, she will engage with her peers and address issues around sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies by sharing her knowledge, raising awareness, and guiding her colleagues on how to use reproductive health services.

In Burkina Faso, 44% of the population is under the age of 15.¹⁹ At 4.7, the total fertility rate, or average number of births per woman is relatively high.²⁰ As more and more young women reach reproductive age, it is more important than ever to empower them with information about options for their own sexual and reproductive health.

By developing skills in resilience and gender-based violence, Samira's work with MOMENTUM will help to build resilience for herself, her family, and her community. She enjoys her leadership role in sensitizing peers and helping strengthen their knowledge of health issues. Her long-term vision includes a population of responsible, mentally, and financially independent youth who are ready to lead the country into a healthy and resilient future. In the short term, Samira says: *"I am ready for the [youth-related] activities to be implemented. I am in a hurry to find myself on the ground."*



“

Young people need to have information about the risks associated with these types of behaviors ... They need to know how STIs and HIV are spread. They need to take precautions to avoid STIs, and to understand the consequences of unwanted pregnancies and these diseases.

– Samira Maiga

KAMIRENI KEVIN OUOBA

A Youth Agent of Change in Burkina Faso



“

I now intend to be an agent of change for my family and in my community. I hope that our young people in the future are conscientious, emerging, and responsible for their reproductive health.

– Kamireni Kevin Ouoba

KAMIRENI KEVIN OUOBA is a 26-year-old student who lives with his single mother and younger sister in the small town of Tenkodogo in Boulgou Province in the Center-East Region in eastern Burkina Faso. Growing up, he saw his mother continuously taking on the challenges of caring for the family and meeting their needs.

During and after his high school studies, Kevin became engaged in leadership positions in various youth organizations. After completing a number of training sessions and workshops, he joined the Forum for Another Africa (FORA), an association that works with youth at the community level. He was also elected as a “youth champion” by his peers.

MOMENTUM Integrated Health Resilience is working with FORA to help establish a cadre of community youth champions like Kevin who are trained in leadership as well as important issues related to sexual and reproductive health.

Burkina Faso needs young leaders like Kevin to help address common challenges among young people, including marrying and having children at early ages before they are ready. These choices can increase the risk of death and illness among mothers and infants and can also curb young people’s educational and vocational aspirations. Kevin is a good role model for his peers because of his dynamism and keen desire to share his health knowledge with other young people and help them adapt their behavior in ways that will improve their lives.

Kevin agrees that his role on MOMENTUM through FORA contributes to improving the health of his community: *“With the different activities in the program, I will be able to reach many young people and teen-*

agers on themes related to sexual and reproductive health and family planning; preventing unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS; avoiding gender-based violence; and especially, I will get peers to proactively visit health centers and use contraceptive methods.”

Reflecting on his connection with MOMENTUM and looking to the future, Kevin is glad that he now has the skills and confidence to help his mother discuss reproductive health with his sister and cousins, and to more widely share information that young people in his community need to make free and informed health choices.



SIERRA LEONE



Convening civil society and youth organizations to increase affordable, accessible, and available quality health care service for young people

HEALTH ALERT SIERRA LEONE (HASiL) is a civil society organization that brings together other organizations focused on youth sexual and reproductive health. Through advocacy, training, networking, policy analysis, and lobbying, it seeks to create a unified platform of youth-led or youth-focused organizations pushing for improved sexual and reproductive services and equal rights in Sierra Leone. HASiL believes that health is a right that must be demanded for all, and that the government must provide quality, affordable, and equitable services that respond to the needs of youth. The project operates in the Kailahun, Pujehun, Western Rural, and Western Urban districts of Sierra Leone.

HASiL uses bottom-up approaches to solve health care service delivery problems related to maternal, newborn, child health, and family planning, and, in particular, issues related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Through the partnership with MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership, HASiL is offering their network of youth organization counterparts training on how to advocate for family planning in a “SMART”—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound—way. This represents the

first time in Sierra Leone that these organizations have been unified in one coalition and benefitted from formal training in evidence-based advocacy and accountability. Many youth leaders are now equipped to use their new skills to advocate across various levels of government to raise awareness around issues impacting their livelihoods and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

SMART advocacy training uses local policy and funding ecosystem data to develop and prioritize evidence-based family planning/sexual and reproductive health advocacy strategies.

In collaboration with MOMENTUM, HASiL is strengthening its organizational capacity in program planning and management, strategic planning, and gaining donor support. The team also developed a comprehensive Gender Strategy and participated in gender training, gaining knowledge on the important intersection of gender and youth sexual and reproductive health rights. To strengthen its evidence-based advocacy and program implementation, MOMENTUM also supported HASiL to develop a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan and trained its team on MEL concepts.



Health Alert Sierra Leone

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership

LOCATION

Kailahun, Pujehun, Western Rural, and Western Urban districts of Sierra Leone

AREAS OF FOCUS

Family Planning and Reproductive Health | Adolescent and Youth Rights and Advocacy | Health Financing

WEBSITE

healthalert-sl.webs.com

TWITTER / FACEBOOK

[@healthalerts](https://twitter.com/healthalerts)

APPLYING ADVOCACY TRAINING TO ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Using its training in SMART advocacy, HASiL and the organizations it convenes identified priority SMART objectives to advocate for change by engaging with policymakers and decision-makers. Successes to date include:

- Discussing issues such as last mile distribution and stockouts of contraceptive commodities and teen pregnancy with District Medical Officers in four districts.
- Advocating that Ministry of Health Sanitation Directors include funding for the Teen Pregnancy Reduction Secretariat in Sierra Leone's Family Planning 2030 commitment and National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan.
- Working with medical officers in the West Rural district to lead the localization of the Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Strategy, resulting in the District Medical Officer asking adolescents and youth to design a workplan for achieving this goal. Similar work is occurring in the Western Urban district.
- Inviting the Manager for Family Planning at the Directorate of Reproductive Child Health to speak at their upcoming National Youth conference on reproductive health.



“

Working with MOMENTUM has been very fulfilling and enriching as its SMART approach continues to equip advocates to see solutions and not barriers.

– Darlton John, HASiL Program Officer

MALI



Spread the word! Using digital networks to improve youth sexual and reproductive health

The **RÉSEAU DES JEUNES AMBASSADEURS POUR LA SANTÉ DE LA REPRODUCTION ET LA PLANIFICATION AU MALI** (the Network of Youth Ambassadors for Reproductive Health and Voluntary Family Planning in Mali) mobilizes young people ages 15 to 35 to advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights and helps implement Mali's National Family Planning Action Plan. The Youth Ambassadors are made up of young people from various youth-led and youth-focused civil society organizations. In partnership with MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery, Youth Ambassadors create social media content and use their online networks to raise awareness and advocate for youth-friendly sexual, reproductive, and other health services in Mali's Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro, Ségou, and Sikasso regions. This important work seeks to strengthen political commitment for improving equitable access to contraception and promote adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health,

thus reducing the rate of early and/or unwanted pregnancies, increasing contraceptive prevalence, and reducing unmet need for family planning.

Embodying a MAYE approach to partnership, the *Réseau's* ambassadors take the lead in all decision-making for their MOMENTUM work, including proposing activities and developing implementation plans. Going forward, the *Réseau* seeks to expand its reach to other regions in Mali, such as Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, as well as develop its organizational capacity so that one day it will be an autonomous organization. With improved project management and communication skills developed through the partnership, the *Réseau* team is successfully achieving their goals and doing what they love—using their social media networks to support their peers. To date, they have reached 1575 young people through educational sessions and radio announcements and referred 525 to private clinics. Nearly 250 people called into a family planning and reproductive health information hotline.



Réseau des Jeunes Ambassadeurs pour la Santé de la Reproduction et la Planification au Mali

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery

LOCATION

Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro, Ségou, and Sikasso regions, Mali

AREAS OF FOCUS

Family Planning | Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights | Advocacy | Maternal Newborn Health and Nutrition | WASH

FACEBOOK

[@rjasrpf](https://www.facebook.com/rjasrpf)

TWITTER

[@RJASRPFMALI](https://twitter.com/RJASRPFMALI)



KENEYA YAALA BA: A CARAVAN FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

In collaboration with MOMENTUM, 82 Youth Ambassadors in Mali joined forces to advocate for providers to make health services more youth-friendly. They put their skills into action during the *Keneya Yaala Ba Caravan* activity from July 15 to August 2, 2022. This creative, mobile campaign sought to reach young people—including the most marginalized, like sex workers and those living in mining areas—in Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, and Bamako with sexual and reproductive health information and services. Through the *Keneya Yaala Ba Caravan*, the Youth Ambassadors used their digital networks to reach more than 600,000 young people, offering innovative, in-person awareness-raising campaigns using slam poetry, rap, and other entertainment to get their messages across, as well as coordinating free STI testing, cervical cancer screening, and family planning services for more than 1,000 women.



“

We are proud of the Keneya Yaala Ba Caravan activity because, through it, we were able to reach the most marginalized groups and isolated areas to raise their awareness of family planning and reproductive health issues and offer [related] services. [translated from French]

– Younouss Dicko, the Network of Youth Ambassadors for Reproductive Health and Voluntary Family Planning’s Secretary General

GHANA



Improving reproductive health outcomes through innovative youth-led social accountability

YOUTH ADVOCACY ON RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES (YARO), a youth-serving organization, promotes sustainable human development for youth by sharing experiences and developing model strategies that respond to both changing needs and challenges of children, youth, women, and marginalized populations. Focused on family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and youth rights and advocacy, YARO raises awareness and facilitates implementation of youth-led social accountability to increase health system responsiveness to address the family planning and reproductive health needs of youth—particularly adolescents. Youth-led social accountability provides an opportunity for youth to lead efforts toward improving the health system and fosters their development and leadership skills. YARO brings passion and innovation to their work, engaging with high-level stakeholders at the Ghana Health Service to address issues and stigma affecting reproductive health uptake and outcomes.

Taking a MAYE approach, MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership partners with YARO to implement youth-led social accountability activities. Focusing

on 28 facilities across four districts, youth hold stakeholders accountable for addressing the barriers they face accessing and using reproductive health services. YARO uses a three-pronged approach to improve youth-led social accountability. First, they increase community awareness of adolescents' and youth's sexual and reproductive rights and entitlements. Then, they create spaces for young people to lead discussions with their peers, health workers, and duty bearers to understand the unmet needs and barriers of youth, an important step in their community scorecard approach. Finally, they co-create action plans with health systems to address these needs. Through its partnership with MOMENTUM, YARO has improved its ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders—ranging from hard-to-reach sub-groups of adolescents and youth to religious and opinion leaders. To date, YARO has engaged nearly 3,300 adolescents and youth and nearly 2,600 health staff and community members with community scorecard activities. Additionally, YARO shared nearly 100 radio messages, reaching more than 45,000 people in northern Ghana.



Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities

MOMENTUM PARTNER

MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership

LOCATION

Four districts in northern Ghana

AREAS OF FOCUS

Family Planning | Reproductive Health | Youth Rights and Advocacy

WEBSITE

yarogh.org

MOMENTUM has not only partnered with YARO to implement these activities but has also supported its organizational development. For example, MOMENTUM facilitated a process of self-reflection and assessment for YARO using the [Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment](#) (ITOCA) tool, which resulted in an action plan to address key areas of organizational management and sustainability. YARO has since developed its first strategic plan and resource mobili-

zation strategy, and team members have been trained on USAID financial management requirements and monitoring and evaluation. YARO has also enhanced its capacity in areas such as: project management; financial accountability; collaboration, learning, and adaptation; implementation research; and using data for action. Additionally, through the partnership, it has strengthened its monitoring and evaluation functions and increased its media visibility.

THROUGH YARO, YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLEMENT AND LEAD CREATIVE ACTIVITIES TO INFLUENCE THEIR HEALTH SERVICES

As an important first step in its work, YARO builds the technical capacity, confidence, and public speaking skills of its youth volunteers, empowering them to confidently educate parents, community members, and other young people on the role—and importance—of young people in social accountability for health. These young leaders not only lead discussions about barriers impeding their access and use of reproductive health services, but also lead action planning and coordination meetings to address these issues. YARO develops creative activities, including debates, drama club meetings, radio cam-

paigns, conferences, networking events, and other innovative methods to raise awareness and understanding of young people’s sexual and reproductive health rights and entitlements among both young people and community members.

In addition to community awareness-raising, YARO also teaches young people how to directly implement the community scorecard approach to jointly assess facility responsiveness to the needs and rights of adolescents and youth. Youth volunteers work with facilities to create indicators of quality, as well as action plans to improve that quality. Through these processes, which are driven by youth themselves, YARO can assess the true needs of adolescents and young people in Ghanaian communities and use this information to create impactful and responsive social accountability approaches.



“

YARO’s project with MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership is a game changer that has increased family planning and reproductive health services for stigmatized young people in northern Ghana.

– Douri Bennin Hajei,
YARO Executive Director

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