

# I TRUST YOUTHWYZE!

## Lessons from the implementation of YouthWYZe in Malawi and Zambia

### WHAT IS YOUTHWYZE?



**Online component** runs via a Facebook page in [Malawi](#) and [Zambia](#), through which SRHR-related information is provided.

#### Offline component

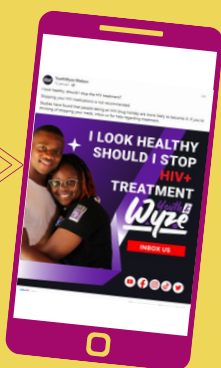
includes provision of SRHR information via youth clubs and provision of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services at the community-level.



### WHY THIS STUDY?

Young people in Malawi and Zambia face various challenges in accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)-related information and services. To address this, SRHR Africa Trust (SAT) is implementing the YouthWYZe intervention since 2019 in Zambia and since 2021 in Malawi which is now being scaled under the Break Free! programme (2021-2025). This study sought to explore:

- ▲ How do young people between 15-24 years access SRHR information and services, with a primary focus on YouthWYZe?
- ▲ What challenges and opportunities do young people encounter while using YouthWYZe?
- ▲ What is the type and quality of the information shared via the intervention?
- ▲ Does digital engagement lead to behaviour change?
- ▲ What are the lessons learned to scale the intervention in other contexts?



### HOW DID WE DO IT?



- ▲ Desk review
- ▲ Facebook Analytics
- ▲ Online survey with 107 young people
- ▲ In-depth interviews with 6 young people
- ▲ In-depth interviews with 8 service providers
- ▲ 8 focus group discussions with young people
- ▲ 4 key informant interviews
- ▲ 2 workshops with young people using foresight methods to validate findings and co-develop recommendations



#### Study sites:

- ▲ Malawi: Traditional Authority (TA) Njerwa in Lilongwe district (including Lilongwe city) and TA Chiwalo in Machinga district
- ▲ Zambia: Lusaka City, Kasenegwa and Chipata districts

### WHAT DID WE FIND?

#### Youth access to SRHR information & services

- ▲ Young people used various sources to access SRHR information and services including youth clubs, friends, books, Facebook (Youthwyzé included), WhatsApp and the radio.
- ▲ While online sources were quick to access and anonymous, lack of mobile data and limited access to the internet remained challenging.
- ▲ SRH service providers were often judgmental, offered too much 'unnecessary' information.
- ▲ The lack of anonymity was an issue encountered by young people both at health facilities and within youth clubs.
- ▲ Young people below the legal age of consent (16 years) in Zambia were often denied access to certain SRH services.



## WHAT DID WE FIND?

### Zooming into YouthWyze

- ▲ Young people found the YouthWyze online content relevant, attractive, age-appropriate and complete.
- ▲ In urban areas, YouthWyze was often associated with its online page, while in rural areas, youth often referred to offline activities. But they were not sure if these were offered by YouthWyze or not.

"Aah the news that's written there [on the YouthWyze page] is amazing, it's useful, either sexually active or not."-FGD with young women (15-24 years), Chipata

### Challenges and opportunities

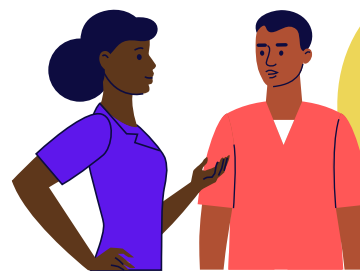
- ▲ There is limited access to mobile phones and internet, especially in rural areas.
- ▲ Some parents in Malawi have misconceptions that youth attending YouthWyze activities such as youth clubs are being negatively influenced due to exposure to SRHR information.

- ▲ The use of English on the online page is exclusionary for some young people.
- ▲ There is a lack of routine monitoring data by the intervention on behaviour change.

- ▲ The YouthWyze page is quick to access and anonymous.
- ▲ Governmental and non-governmental health providers working with YouthWyze provide confidentiality and ensure no stock-outs.
- ▲ The online content could be improved by making it more diverse, context-specific and in local languages.

## What changed?

- ▲ 28 out of 31 respondents improved their knowledge on SRHR.
- ▲ Several young people shared this new knowledge with their family, friends and online, and raised awareness in their community.
- ▲ Young people encouraged each other to make use of the services during outreach activities.
- ▲ Young people seemed to source more information on their own since the arrival of YouthWyze in the community.
- ▲ Several young people use services more frequently, including contraceptives.
- ▲ A few young people who had been involved in YouthWyze, now sat in strategic positions at other NGOs or government working groups in Zambia.



"I would [recommend the page]. Some young people ask things based on what they have seen."-Service provider, Lilongwe

## CONCLUSIONS

- ▲ Sources of information for young people need to be complementary and diverse.
- ▲ To ensure that the information and services are used to the fullest, information provided needs to be relatable and easy to understand.
- ▲ The linkages between the online and offline components need strengthening – both in terms of linking offline users to online information and vice versa.
- ▲ While working with government providers offered hope for sustainability, there is a need for YouthWyze to invest in setting up mechanisms to promote the same.
- ▲ A sound monitoring system is needed to assess the resulting behaviour change and service uptake by young people.