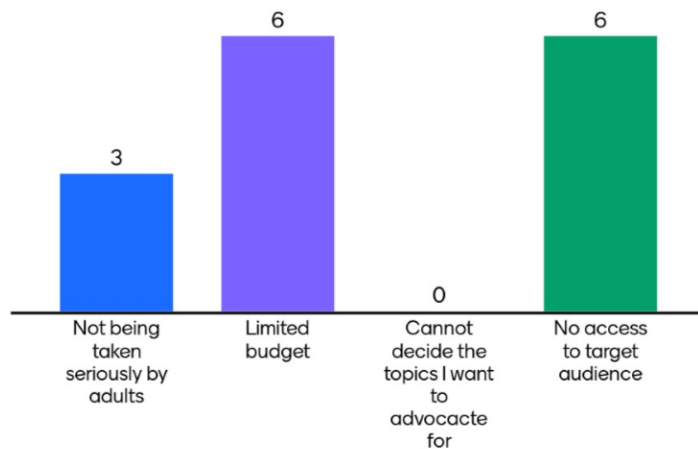


But challenges are also there. What are your main frustrations?

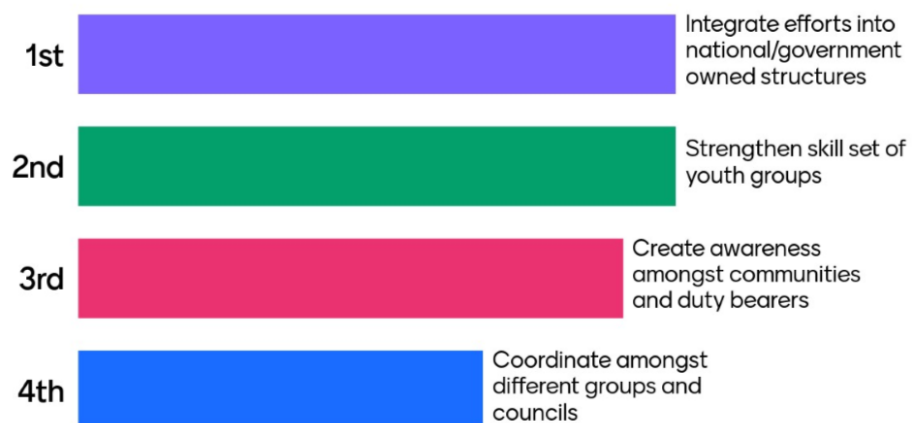
Young people experience challenges in advocating for SRHR in their communities and towards duty bearers. These challenges can be related to social norms, budgets, or limited access to duty bearers, as found in our research. Youth participants recognised these challenges, and listed especially limited budgets and limited access to target audience as their main frustrations (see figure below).



In many countries, including in Mali and Ethiopia where our study was conducted, youth SRHR advocacy efforts are largely supported (and created) by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Young people were at times critical about the level of power sharing within and sustainability of these structures. They are not always able to freely set the agenda, and are worried that when funding runs out, all efforts will be stopped.

Recommendations to amplify and sustain youth-led SRHR advocacy

In line with the mentioned challenges, young people in the research and also in the side event, recommended that it is especially important to create space for youth movements in existing structures (see below the ranking of the side event participants). This way, if a project phases out, the structure can continue to exist. Young people also voiced that, for this to happen, young people need to be able to develop their skills to create and sustain initiatives, and an enabling environment needs to exist.



Key takeaways for youth led advocacy

- Multiple target audiences need to be reached to address issues holistically (e.g., community, health workers, teachers, policy makers, religious leaders). Plan activities and develop messages specifically for each type of audience, as the messages can differ per group;
- Use social media platforms and 'traditional' media channels (radio, tv, etc) to amplify the advocacy message;
- Mobilize youth advocates to engage policymakers and advocate for supportive policies at the regional level;
- Collaborate with local health providers to ensure access to youth friendly SRHR;
- Organise training sessions for teachers and educators to equip them with knowledge of young people's needs;
- When it comes to sustainability of youth-led advocacy initiatives:
 - Identify champions at community and national level to carry forward the work and key power holders so they will support the initiatives once funding is over;
 - Offer capacity strengthening opportunities for young people, not only on public speaking but also project management, budgeting, and monitoring;
 - Involve local and national government in the advocacy efforts and show the impact of youth-led advocacy so they become more inclined to support youth-led organisations.

About Break Free!

The Break Free! Alliance is a partnership between Plan International, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and SRHR Africa Trust (SAT), with the aim for adolescents to exercise their rights to live free from teenage pregnancy and child marriage, supported by civil society. KIT is a technical partner in this alliance and supports the alliance with research a/o.

Special thank you to the moderator of the event Dagmawit Workagegnehu and to the group facilitators: Lyndah Ngelecha, Malika J, Elsie Masava, Kadijatu Sensay.
Written by Marielle le Mat and Maria Codina Lopez

