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The Benefit of Advocacy Technical Assistance to Adolescent- and Youth-Led Organizations

Introduction

In Kenya, there has traditionally been government buy-in for adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and access to contraceptive commodities. While policies and laws that support adolescents and youth have been passed, Women Promotion Centre (WPC), a young woman-led organization based in Kibera, Kenya, recognized that existing policies were not always implemented. WPC created an advocacy strategy that aimed to improve the implementation of the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy, specifically by increasing funding for adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights and opening new youth-friendly health centers.

Program Description

Through the YOUAccess Fund, WPC received funding and advocacy technical assistance to improve the implementation of the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy. WPC had a deep understanding of the complex issues facing young people, and it knew better implementation of the policy would help address some of those issues. The partnership with PAI enabled the organization to hone its advocacy messages and create a strategic work plan that guided its work.

WPC attended two strategy development workshops led by PAI that provided staff an opportunity to strengthen their advocacy capacity and build a strategy to improve the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy implementation. At the workshops, PAI helped WPC determine who its advocacy should target and activities relevant to achieving its objective. To support implementation following the workshops, PAI provided ongoing advocacy technical assistance to WPC, helping think through challenges, connect staff with other advocates and adjust work plans as the political landscape changed. The collaboration and technical assistance helped WPC strengthen its advocacy skills, ultimately leading to two additional youth-friendly health centers opening in Kibera.

“WPC staff have really learned a lot working with PAI. They’re teaching us how to do smart objectives, how to do our advocacy ... Through YOUAccess, we are able to speak on better platforms. We are now doing engagement at national levels! So as an organization, we’ve grown from just being a small youth-led organization to now pushing and advocating for major bills and issues at the national level.”

— CHRISTINE SUDI, WPC

Results

WPC successfully advocated for the opening of two youth-friendly centers in Kibera.

WPC staff strengthened their understanding of different advocacy approaches and created a locally driven strategy that allowed them to achieve their objective.

Young people in Kibera now have better access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies.

Lessons Learned

When youth-led organizations can ask for and receive the technical assistance they want, it strengthens their advocacy capacity and creates space to address challenges and celebrate success.

Young people have the understanding and skills to engage in advocacy activities, especially when receiving financial and technical support.

Fostering supportive environments where young people can drive their work leads to improved access to sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies for young people.



Women Promotion Centre is a young women-led organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. It is dedicated to advancing the sexual, legal, social and cultural rights of marginalized and vulnerable young women in urban poor neighborhoods.

PAI works with policymakers in Washington, D.C., and our network of global partners to advocate for accessible, quality health care and advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, youth and at-risk communities. More information can be found at www.pai.org.

YOUAccess provides financial and technical support to youth-led organizations to advocate for increased funding and improved policies on adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights in low- and middle-income countries. More information can be found at www.pai.org/projects/youaccess.