Endline Evaluation: Young Urban Women's Project

Report prepared for ActionAid International in August 2016 by consultants
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Acronym List

FGD	Focus group discussion
HRBA	Human rights based approach
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NORSAAC	Northern Sector on Action Awareness Centre
NR	Not reported in national evaluation report
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
YUW	Young Urban Women

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Young Urban Women (YUW) project was a multi-country project led by ActionAid and conducted in Ghana (two sites), India (three sites) and South Africa (two sites) between 2013 and 2016, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development and the Human Dignity Foundation The project countries were selected due to their large urban youth populations, high levels of poverty and inequity, and their influence at the regional and international level.

Based on scoping studies, the project focused on improving young women's access to decent work, ability to make choices related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and leadership capabilities, and deliberately interlinked the themes of decent work and SRHR given their intersection in the lives of young women. The objectives of the project were:

Objective 1: Young women have safe and decent work and livelihoods, and can exercise greater control over their income

Objective 2: Young women's informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health are increasingly realised

Objective 3: Young women in the areas we programme in are empowered and supported by allies and responsible stakeholders to effect change in their own lives, their families, their communities and different levels of government.

The main programming model was bringing young urban women together in formal groups, through which the majority of project activities were delivered. Different implementing organisations were responsible for designing and delivering project activities at each of the seven project sites; each site utilised different strategies to achieve the overall project objectives. Commonly this included supporting formal group meetings and discussions, awareness and training sessions, exposure visits to different organisations and advocacy training and support. There were also several cross-country and international level activities conducted, including a research study into the interlinkages of project themes, participation at international meetings and cross-country learning and sharing meetings.

This document summarises the result of an endline evaluation across the three project countries. The evaluation aimed to:

1. Measure what was achieved during the YUW project, including achievements against original indicators
2. Understand what strategies were most effective (how the change happened)
3. Provide basic information about cost i.e. if resources were used effectively
4. Highlight any unexpected outcomes arising from the project activities
5. Consider the integrated approach of SRHR, decent work and unpaid care work – what does it look like, what effect does it have and what has been learnt about doing it
6. Examine how ActionAid's human rights based approach been embedded – looking at aspects of a) power b) women and young people at centre of project

Methods

Data for the evaluation was gathered through a survey and focus group discussions with a random sample of YUW, interviews with national and international project staff and external stakeholders, and a review of project documentation. The questionnaire consisted of predominantly closed questions covering socio-demographics, participation in the YUW project, participation in groups and networks, sexual and economic exploitation, control over income and resources, unpaid care work and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The focus group discussions included three participatory exercises to identify the main changes experienced young women's lives through the project (most significant change stories), shifts in power occurring during the project (3Ps circles) and changes in myths, misconceptions and oppressive norms related to SRHR (body mapping). Only YUW who were considered 'substantially engaged' in the project were included in the endline evaluation sample to ensure that the evaluation could measure the impact of the project as it was intended to engage with YUW over a period of time, not just in 'one off' activities or training.

Standardised data collection tools and supporting analysis guidance were developed by international consultants (the authors of this report), with data collected and analysed at a national level by national consultants. Findings were discussed at national evaluation workshops before being compiled into national evaluation reports by the national consultants; these findings were then collated and discussed at a global evaluation workshop. This report collates the results of the national evaluation reports together with the discussions at the workshops, document review and the international interviews conducted.

Results

Overall the project reached a total of 6,465 young women, aged between 15 and 25, of which 743 were included in the endline survey sample. In all countries roughly half of the women were aged under 18, most were unmarried and in South Africa and India, almost all had completed at least some secondary school. Apart from India, few young women were in paid work Through the YUW project, the majority of the YUW participated in multiple training workshops each year, and many had also participated in community activities and informal gatherings.

Objective One of the project focused on safe and decent work and livelihoods. All countries came very close to or exceeded the target on reporting economic exploitation, while only Ghana exceeded the target on reporting sexual exploitation. The YUW reported exploitation almost entirely to friends, family or the YUW project, with very little use of formal channels of reporting. In terms of membership of groups to take action on policies, process and cases of sexual and economic exploitation, evidence of achievement was mixed between the countries. Both Ghana and South Africa exceeded the target of 65% of YUW being members of organised groups, with 100% of those surveyed in Ghana and 94% of those surveyed in South Africa being a member of a formal YUW group. In India, where YUW groups were less of a project focus 58% of those surveyed were members of a YUW group, a little below the target of 65%.

The project also tackled decent work by helping YUW acknowledge and redistribute unpaid care work All countries exceeded the target of 40% of YUW reporting a reduction in unpaid care work, which was almost entirely due to additional support from family members, mostly female family members. Some increase in access to public services to reduce unpaid care work was seen in Ghana and India. The YUW project also aimed to increase young women's control over their own income and resources. While Ghana exceeded the (high) target of 80% of YUW reporting more control over spending of their own income, the target was not met by India or South Africa – although in both countries more than half reported increased control over the resources.

As well as changes at the individual and community level related to decent work and unpaid care work, the YUW project also intended to initiate change at the policy level, with the creation of state policies on decent work. The target of three policies developed or reformulated was not met during the YUW project. While YUW in all countries were involved in advocacy related to design or changes to policies, the only example of a changed policy was from Ghana where two employers' associations amended their constitutions to include protective clauses on sexual harassment, economic exploitation, and gender issues. The lack of achievements in this work is likely due to the time required to effect policy change, which commonly requires a sustained level of advocacy over multiple years.

Objective Two of the project focussed on improving young women's knowledge of their sexual and reproductive health rights and their ability to recognise, negotiate and challenge oppressive norms. Through the endline focus group discussions, the YUW identified various myths and misconceptions they had held regard SRHR, most of which the YUW project had addressed. Furthermore, there was substantial progress in the ability of the young women engaged in the project to have control over decisions about their own SRHR, such as when to have sex, and whether to use family planning. A high proportion of YUW in South Africa accessed SRHR services though the quality of those services was low. Access of services was lower in Ghana and South Africa, which was mostly because women reported not needing the services. Those women who did attend were overall satisfied with the services in these two countries. Almost all young women reported an increase in knowledge and understanding about SRH, gender and sexuality. While most women in Ghana and India were able to correctly identify a woman's fertile period, only a quarter in South Africa could. For the majority of young women in all three countries, the YUW project was the most valuable source of information on SRHR.

Objective Three of the project was to provide support, training and resources so that young women in the project areas are empowered and supported by allies and responsible stakeholders to effect change in their own lives, their families, their communities and different levels of government. Almost all women in Ghana and South Africa were part of formal YUW groups, and half were in India. Most of the YUW participated in at least one community even since the beginning of the YUW project and between one and two thirds of the YUW had been involved in at least one regional/national/global event since the YUW project began. There were multiple examples from the YUW project of young women campaigning for their needs at a range of levels and with a range of stakeholders and allies. This include in Ghana, where YUW have established an advocacy platform to engage with stakeholders and submit petitions and have also successfully campaigned for better waste collection and water and sanitation facilities. In India, there have been successful petitioning to police department to increase policing in certain areas, and to increase

number and quality of health services, as well as successful advocacy for separate toilets for women in one workplace However, the nature of advocacy work is that it often takes a long time to bring about results; from the examples gathered, it appears that were the young women were most successful was where they had directly liaised with the decision-makers and/or taken a sustained, and multi-pronged approach to campaigning.

 In terms of the **interlinking of themes** of decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR, in practice the YUW project first introduced the themes separately to the young women, before then talking about themes together at meetings and trainings. Understanding each theme was new to the YUW, and it took time for them to understand these individually, before being able to understand the interlinkages between them. The project was successful in helping the YUW themselves to recognise how these themes were interlinked within their own lives, as well as in attracting young women to the project through the provision of vocational training, and then being able to discuss more 'taboo' topics such as SRHR. There were also examples of project outcomes related to both decent work and SRHR such as policy change by employers' associations to develop polices related to SRHR and successful advocacy with an employer to install separate toilets for women. Challenges in implementing an interlinked approach included varying levels of knowledge and capacity of implementing organisations with the different areas of work, the relatively short time frame of the project, differences in expectations in what an interlinked approach would involve, and how to appropriately monitor and evaluate the approach.

The evaluation also considered how the ActionAid **Human Rights Based Approach** was incorporated into the project, focusing on the involvement of young women in the project; and by bringing about shifts in power. In all countries the YUW were involved to some extent in planning project activities, deciding how the program would be implemented, and reviewing project progress. However, in some sites the degree to which young women could influence project implementation was felt to be limited due to the predetermined nature of many of the project activities, limiting the scope for what changes proposed by the young women were possible to implement within the project timeframe.

Looking at shifts in power, there were substantial successes in shifts of power within women's private lives. These included shifts in terms of women's knowledge and control over their SRHR and sexual activity; their ability to negotiate with family members a more equal distribution of unpaid care work; their ability to continue education; and the control they gained over their resources to achieve some degree of financial independence. These shifts in power were largely due to changes to the women's self-confidence gained through increased knowledge, skills and support groups. Although shifts in power at the public level were less common, there were cases of young women interacting with officials, campaigning for improved services, and taking leadership roles in all countries. The finding that most shifts in power were at the private level the focus of the project on the empowerment of the young women within the three year timeframe of the project.

In terms of **project management**, the evaluation considered relationships between organisations involved in the project, the added value and challenges of multi-country programming and the value for money of the project. The ActionAid teams in all three countries had good relationships with their implementing partners and in turn the partners reported the ActionAid teams to be supportive. In two of the three countries, the project was implemented with new partner organisations which created some initial

challenges; project establishment was easier in India where the project was delivered through existing partner organisations. All countries found benefit in sharing and learning across the countries involved in the project, and some of the young women involved in the project were able to connect through the cross-country and international meeting opportunities. However, the single standardised design of the project was felt to not always match individual country contexts and it was perceived there was limited flexibility to adapt project activities and scope based on needs.

Considering **value for money** of the YUW project, in general there appeared to be a good match between budget spend and outcome. The largest direct spend on activities was on empowerment, which matched the area in which the project was most successful (high group membership; reduction in unpaid care work across all countries; challenging exploitation and sexual and gender norms). Much less was spent on campaigning and solidarity activities and similarly, this is where the project had fewer achievements. There were differences between countries in spending on the three project areas of decent work, SRHR and leadership, which reflect the different areas each country focused on, and generally (but not always) greater spends reflected where each country had greater achievement. Taken together, these findings indicate that the project provided reasonable value for money. Greater flexibility in how activities were designed and implemented, as well as greater inclusion of young women in this process, would have likely further increased value for money by ensuring activities were more likely to lead to outcomes that matched the young women's needs

Conclusion

Overall the evaluation findings indicate that the YUW project was able to reach a large number of YUW across the seven project sites in the three countries, and there was substantial evidence of improved knowledge, confidence and ability to advocate for their own interests among the YUW who were substantially engaged with the project. A key outcome of this was the reduction in unpaid care work for many of the YUW, primarily through negotiating increased support from female family members. The project had less success in creating change at a community and policy level, which likely reflects the relatively short time period of the project (three years), as well as the primary focus of the project on the empowerment of the YUW rather than engagement with external stakeholders.

The way in which the YUW project was implemented varied greatly between countries, and sites within countries. Different strategies were used in each location to engage the YUW and external stakeholders, the emphasis on the project themes of decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR varied greatly, as did the extent to which YUW were actively involved in project planning, implementation and review of progress. Nonetheless, there were some common findings in terms of the YUW from all countries recognising how the different themes were interlinked within their own life and shift of power within their private lives. There was a good match between project spending and project achievements, suggesting reasonable value for money of the project.

The main strength of the project was the ability to educate and empower young urban women in the different settings to take action to effect change in their own lives. This was exemplified in the young women's increase in self-confidence that allowed them to participate in events to address their needs and challenge inequities in their lives. The project was also successful in providing young women with practical skills and knowledge, such as knowledge of their rights to decent work and knowledge of SRHR. In areas

where the project was less successful, this was largely due to attempting to implement a large project within a relatively short project time frame, across multiple areas of work with varying capacity at each project site. In retrospect, it was unrealistic to achieve all the project intended results within the timeframe allocated, as some of the changes intended require a longer time frame (e.g. policy change), and the project also included some new partner organisations for ActionAid, and new themes of work for all the organisations involved. The size and complexity of the project, along with the evolution of program activities, also created substantial challenges in monitoring project progress, meaning the project wasn't always able to capture its achievements appropriately.

Implementation of the report recommendations for programme content, implementation and monitoring and evaluation will help ensure a future project of this nature will be able to have even greater impact on the lives of young urban women.

Introduction

The Young Urban Women (YUW) project was a multi-country project carried out in Ghana (two sites), India (three sites) and South Africa (two sites) by ActionAid between 2013 and 2016. Global factors influencing the choice to focus on young urban women included increasing urbanisation and growing population of young people and rising levels of poverty and inequity among young populations in urban centres. The project countries were selected due to their large urban youth populations, high levels of poverty and inequity, and their influence at the regional and international level as revealed by a scoping study conducted that highlighted challenges for YUW in obtaining decent paid work, the burden of unpaid care work and gaps in sexual and reproductive health knowledge and access to services. The project was funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD) and the Human Dignity Foundation.

The YUW project focused on improving young women's access to decent work, ability to make choices related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and leadership capabilities. The distinctive design of the project involved the interlinking of SRHR and decent work, based on the rationale that these issues intersect in women's lives and so should be treated together in a project aimed at protecting and promoting rights. The project was designed around the four programme themes of ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA): empowerment, solidarity, campaigning and advancing alternatives. It involved bringing young urban women together in formal groups, through which the majority of project activities were delivered.

The objectives of the project were as follows:

Objective 1:   Young women have safe and decent work and livelihoods, and can exercise greater control over their income

Objective 2:   Young women's informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health are increasingly realised

Objective 3:   Young women in the areas we programme in are empowered and supported by allies and responsible stakeholders to effect change in their own lives, their families, their communities and different levels of government.

Different partner organisations implemented the YUW project at each site; the projects in each country are described in brief below, for more detail refer to the national evaluation reports.

The project in **Ghana** was run in ten communities in Ga West, in Greater Accra, and nine communities in Tamale Metropolis, in Northern Region, with implementing partners NORSAAC and Ark Foundation. Forty YUW groups were established in each site, reaching a total of 2000 women. Each site had a project officer who reported to the National ActionAid Projects Manager and the Head of Programmes and Policy. The project targeted school dropouts, young brides, members of girls' clubs, young female parliamentarians, and school children, with the YUW aged between 15 and 25.

The activities in the Ghana YUW project included:

- Formal and informal groups who met regularly to discuss issues around decent work, SRHR, and unpaid care work

- Debates
- Community work
- Exposure visits
- Capacity building, awareness raising and skills training through training workshops and radio shows hosted by YUW

The young women themselves led the groups and ran the meetings, appointing a leadership team for each group. The project also supported the YUW to conduct petitioning, and advocacy and campaigning activities with strategic stakeholders such as government departments, local institutions, and civil society organisations agencies such as employers and employers' associations, non-government organisations and the media.

The project **in South Africa** was run in Cape Town and Johannesburg with Wellness Foundation and Afrika Tikkun as the implementing partners.[1] Women were recruited through existing networks, schools, and directly from the communities. Overall 1,270 women were reached by the project, of whom 636 remained as participants throughout the project (303 Cape Town and 333 in Johannesburg). 634 women dropped out because they completed schooling, moved to a different area, or because the project did not provide them with employment as they had expected while joining the project.

In South Africa activities included:

- Training on SRHR, decent work and unpaid care work run by implementing partners, with external organisations brought in for specific issue based expertise as needed.
- Establishment of formal and informal groups, facilitated by YUW project facilitators. In Cape Town, young women's groups were mainly facilitated by the Project Coordinator and Project Assistant- who were hired for the project; whereas in Johannesburg project facilitators were organisation staff who were brought into the project to ensure it succeeds. This was in addition to the Project Coordinator who also facilitated some of the groups. These people supported young women leaders who were the primary facilitators of the groups. Each group was developed to address a particular issue affecting the young women's lives and involved sharing of experiences, discussions, and activities within small groups.
- Advocacy activities, led by an advocacy support group, Shukumisa, who trained the YUW in advocacy skills and supported the development of advocacy plans with the YUW group. The implementing partners supported the implementation of the plans and provided logistical support for advocacy and campaign events.
- Meetings with decision-makers and networking events

The YUW project in **India** was implemented in three cities: Chennai (implementing partner Thozhamai), Hyderabad (implementing partner Shaheen Trust), and Mumbai (implementing partner Ashana Trust), working with 3,195 women, aged 15-25. The target women in Mumbai and Hyderabad were young, Muslim women (considered a minority, marginalised group) living in poverty, while in Chennai the target

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[1] Initially there were different partner organisations in South Africa; these partner organisations commenced in early 2014 as implementing partners on the project

women were young women who had been evicted from their homes and living at the relocation site of Semencherry.

The activities implemented by the India project included:

- Organising young women into formal and informal groups;
- Meetings and training sessions to build awareness and capacity on decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR;
- Mapping activities to assess the availability, quality and take-up of services, entitlements, policies and laws that affect young women;
- Advocacy

Furthermore, the project built alliances and dialogues with stakeholders, networks and communities; and conducted advocacy actions aimed at decision makers to influence women's access to decent work and SRHR. Due to challenges in the YUW attending formal group meetings,[2] a greater emphasis was placed during the project on informal meetings and engaging women through other project activities rather than the formal YUW groups.

Cross-country and international level activities conducted during the YUW project included in-depth research conducted into interlinkages of the project themes of decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR, a global advocacy scoping study, and participation and organising of side-events at international meetings.[3] Several cross-country meetings were also organised during the project, to share experiences and findings from the interlinkages research, the mid-term review process and the endline evaluation, as well as a project inception workshop held near the beginning of the project.

This report summarises the results of an endline evaluation across the three project countries. The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

1. Measure what was achieved during the YUW project, including achievements against original indicators
2. Understand what strategies were most effective (how the change happened)
3. Provide basic information about cost i.e. if resources were used effectively
4. Highlight any unexpected outcomes arising from the project activities
5. Consider the integrated approach of SRHR, decent work and unpaid care work – what does it look like, what effect does it have and what has been learnt about doing it
6. Examine how ActionAid's human rights based approach been embedded – looking at aspects of a) power b) women and young people at centre of project

This evaluation report first describes the methods used in the evaluation, including the various data collection tools, the approach to data analysis, and the rationale and limitations of the methods selected. Findings from each country were discussed at a national evaluation workshop, compiled into national evaluation reports, and further discussed at a global evaluation workshop.

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[2] *The challenges of formal YUW groups in India included no appropriate physical space to meet in and limited mobility and lack of parental consent for YUW to attend meetings*

[3] *These included the Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Population and Development, UN Habitat 'prep comm' meeting, UNESCO youth meeting, and the Global Conference on Gender Responsible Services hosted by ActionAid.*

This report compiles the results and presents them against the YUW project objectives. We then look specifically at the successes and challenges in a number of areas: the strategies used by each country; the interlinking themes of the YUW project; the incorporation of the HRBA approach; project management; and value for money. Finally, the report offers actionable recommendations for sustaining, up-scaling and replicating project approaches and results in the project countries and across the ActionAid Federation.

Methods

The endline evaluators were commissioned in March 2016. International evaluation consultants (the authors of this report) were hired by Action Aid international to design the overall protocol for the evaluation including standardised data collection tools, provide technical support to national consultants and compile this global evaluation report. National consultants were hired in each project country by the national Action Aid team and were responsible for conducting the data collection, data analysis and compilation of a national evaluation report. Below is a summary of the overall methods of the evaluation; for country-specific detail please refer to the individual national evaluation reports.

Data Collection

The primary sources of data collection for the evaluation were questionnaires and focus group discussions with a sample of YUW participating in the project and interviews with implementing staff and external stakeholders at a national and international level. Standardised data collection tools and associated informed consent procedures were developed by the international consultants with input from ActionAid staff and the national consultants. Additional information for the evaluation was obtained from review of existing project documentation (proposals, progress reports, baseline survey evaluation reports) and workshops at a national and international level.

Only YUW who were considered 'substantially engaged'[4] in the project were included in the endline evaluation sample to ensure that the evaluation could measure the impact of the project as it was intended i.e. to engage with YUW over a period of time,[5] not just in 'one off' activities or training.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of predominantly closed questions covering socio-demographics, participation in the YUW project, participation in groups and networks, sexual and economic exploitation, control over income and resources, unpaid care work and sexual and reproductive health and rights and was translated into appropriate local languages. The reason for selecting close-ended questions was to collect a large amount of information, on a range of topics, in a standardised way across three countries. While open-ended questions are able to collect more detailed and nuanced information, they require a longer time to administer and so fewer questions overall can be asked. Comparability is also limited.

Random sampling was used to select YUW to be invited to complete the questionnaire. Each country was assigned an overall quota to complete a minimum of n=240 surveys, divided proportionally among the number of YUW at each project site and by key demographic (either age or in/out of schools). The names of the YUW falling in each strata (site and age/education status) were listed, with every nth women invited

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[4] 'Substantially engaged' was defined separately by each project country; in Ghana it was YUW who had attended all monthly meetings since the beginning of the project, in India it included those considered 'core' and 'regular' members (as opposed to 'floating' members who were YUW who had not attended all meetings or trainings but were in contact with project staff), in South Africa it included in-school YUW who had attended a minimum of 3 formal group meetings, 2 training sessions and one community activity in the past 12 months and out-of-school YUW who had participated in at least 2 training sessions and 2 community activities in the past 12 months

[5] The project was designed that YUW would participate in organised YUW groups over a period of time. During the project implementation in India it was found that there were substantial challenges in applying this model, so the approach was adapted so that YUW could be regularly involved in activities but not necessarily formal groups. Thus the evaluation focused on YUW considered 'substantially engaged', which may or may not have included ongoing involvement in formal YUW groups

to participate until the quota for each strata was reached. This type of quota sampling was selected due to time and resource constraints, and because it ensures that an accurate proportion of the key target groups of interest will be included (for example, in and out of school young women) and that there will be enough of each of these groups in the evaluation. A statistically representative sample was considered, but was deemed not appropriate mainly because information on the estimated change over time on the primary outcome of interest (required to design a sample of this type) was not available. The YUW project, like many complex programme interventions, includes multiple outcome variables of interest in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework; there is no single variable that is defined as the primary outcome, from which the proportion can be drawn.

Each country recruited and trained survey interviewers[6] who administered the survey to the selected YUW, either at their house or a community location. The responses were entered into a Microsoft Excel tool developed by the international consultants

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs are used to draw out opinions from participants on sensitive topics. Managed correctly, FGDs enable participants to feel comfortable and secure in sharing their personal experiences, encouraged by hearing from other participants. FGDs were used during the evaluation to draw out more nuance and detail of some of the more sensitive topics, such as SRHR. The FGD schedule included three exercises to be conducted with the YUW:

- **Most Significant Change (MSC) stories** - participants were asked to describe and document the most significant change that they experienced in their life due to their involvement in the YUW project, how this change happened and why this change was significant to them.
- **3Ps circles** - a group mapping exercise to discuss and document how the YUW had claimed power since becoming part of the project at a personal/intimate, private (family/partner/friends) and public level
- **Body mapping** - a group exercise to identify changes in myths, misconceptions and oppressive norms related to SRHR that had changed due to involvement in the YUW project

In India, the FGD schedule was adapted to include a 'project briefing' at the beginning of the FGD,[7] and also merged the MSC and 3Ps circles exercises. The body mapping exercise was not conducted in South Africa and some FGDs in India due to lack of time.

Four FGDs were conducted at each of the seven project sites, with each FGD consisting of YUW of particular demographics identified as important by the national project teams to cover the range of YUW targeted by the program (e.g. different FGDs were held with working and non-working women; see

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[6] *In Ghana some of the YUW were trained as interviewers; in South Africa interviewers were recruited from the same communities as the YUW and all had post-school qualifications; In India interviewers were college students (Hyderabad and Chennai) or women with data collection experience who had been engaged in community work (Mumbai)*

[7] *The India national project team decided it was necessary to introduce the project briefing to ensure the YUW were clear on what the project consisted of, as often the YUW often had a relationship with the individual project staff member but didn't always see this as being part of an overall 'project'.*

national reports for details of group composition at each site). Participants for the FGDs were randomly selected from the list of all YUW matching the specified demographic at each location.

The FGDs were facilitated in local languages by a member of the national consultant team or an individual recruited by the national team. A dedicated note taker recorded the results of the exercises and any general discussions during the FGD using a standard template developed by the international consultants.

<u>Interviews with Staff and Stakeholders</u>

Interviews were conducted by the national consultant with national ActionAid staff in each country, staff from each implementing partner organisation and external stakeholders from each project site. Each country decided which external stakeholders to interview, with the aim to represent a range of involvement with the program i.e. include targets of advocacy activities (whether successful or not) (such as civil society and government leaders), individuals the program attempted to influence (e.g. employers, family members) and gatekeepers and 'champions' of the program (e.g. teachers, principals) (see country reports for details of stakeholders interviewed). In addition, the international consultants interviewed representatives of both donors to the YUW project and two staff from the international ActionAid secretariat (Women's Rights Senior Project Manager and the International Director of Programme Development, Quality and Impact).

The questions asked during interviews varied by stakeholder type. Interviews with staff focused on changes observed in YUW due to the project, value for money, interlinking of themes of work, applying the human rights based approach and experience working with Action Aid (if staff of partner organisation). The same areas were covered in interviews with donors although at a less detailed level. Questions for other external stakeholders varied by stakeholder type, and related to the area of project relevance (e.g. role of YUW in advocating for policy change for government representatives, changes in attitudes and practices for employers and family members since being in contact with YUW involved in the project).

Data Analysis and Validation

The international consultants produced a detailed data analysis guide to guide the national data analysis, which was performed by the national consultants. This included guidance for checking and cleaning the questionnaire data entered into the Excel tool, performing descriptive analyses of survey results and thematic analyses of the interviews and FGDs.

Following data collection and initial data analyses, each country held a national validation workshop in early July 2016 to discuss and refine the emerging findings. The workshops included the national consultants, national staff from ActionAid and implementing organisations, YUW and external stakeholders.

Report Compilation

The international consultants and Action Aid international staff produced a detailed national report outline to guide the compilation of the national report by the national consultants, including standardised tables to report progress against project indicators. Where possible, endline questionnaire results were

compared to responses collected at the baseline.[8] Reports for each country were produced by the national consultants by early August 2016, which incorporated input and feedback received on draft sections from ActionAid national and international staff and the international consultants.

In early August 2016 a global evaluation workshop was held including representatives from implementing organisations, participating YUW and national and international ActionAid staff.[9] At the workshop the findings from the national evaluations were discussed, and additional discussions held to gather more information about that had not been adequately captured in the national reports.[10] Following the global workshop, the international consultants compiled this global evaluation report, based on the national evaluation reports, available background documentation, the notes from the global evaluation workshop[11] and the interviews conducted with international stakeholders.

Limitations

As with all evaluations, there are several limitations that should be considered when reviewing the evaluation results. Inclusion of a comparison group was not possible, nor desirable, due to the complex nature of the project and the that the goal of the evaluation was to understand which elements of the project worked well and what the outcomes were, rather than to be able to strictly attribute change in the women's lives to the project activities. The evaluation was also unable to measure all project indicators directly as baseline measures were not always collected or available, for example information on SRHR indicators was not collected at baseline as it was felt at this initial stage of the project it would be too sensitive ask the young women about. Where baseline measures were available, these may not be directly comparable to the endline measures due to differences in the groups included at each time point.

Ideally the evaluation design would have been such that the data collection would have been conducted sequentially, allowing us to learn from the surveys what the key issues were for the young women and probing these issues further in the FGDs. However the time and budget available did not allow for this. A fully feminist, participatory approach was not possible for the same reasons. Although young women were invited to comment on the study and the tools, to ensure that they addressed their needs, with more time young women could have been more meaningfully involved in designing the methods and the questions. This approach would have allowed the evaluation to benefit from both the involvement of the young women themselves, and the objective external input of the evaluators.

There were some cases of women being unwilling to respond to questions about sensitive topics, such as sexuality, in the survey. While this is a limitation of all data collection, by also including FGDs this evaluation was able to obtain additional information on these more sensitive topics. Using data collectors that were known to the young women may have meant that some felt more comfortable in talking about

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[8] At project commencement an 'intake form' was designed to capture information from all YUW joining the project in relation to their socio-demographics, participation in women's groups, employment, working conditions, unpaid care work, access to SRHR information and services and community support. Intake forms completed from December 2013 to April 2014 in each country served as the baseline evaluation, and were completed by n=1428 YUW (n=751 in India, n=356 in Ghana and n=321 in South Africa)

[9] As the international consultants were not able to attend the rescheduled global evaluation workshop, they prepared and presented remotely a global overview of findings to workshop attendees.

[10] Particularly strategies used, interlinking of themes and value for money

[11] Any findings sourced only from the global evaluation workshop are noted as such, as these have not been reviewed or verified by the national evaluation consultants.

these sensitive topics, but equally women might be even less likely to share intimate information with someone known to them due to fear of a lack of confidentiality. Well-trained, high quality data collectors can build a trusting relationship with respondents, ensuring that most are willing to answer openly and honestly.

Within the FGDs, the Most Significant Change tool was used to explore what changes the young women experienced in their lives during the YUW project. Since this tool only captures information about the most significant change, it missed out on any other changes that might have been experienced. The mixed mode approach to this evaluation meant that other data collections tools, such as the survey, could be used to collect some information about how women's lives changed during the project.

The multi-country nature of the project also created some challenges for the evaluation. The need for standardised tools to allow comparability across countries meant that there was limited potential to provide data collection tools to suit the individual needs of each country, although countries were able to add questions to the survey, and conduct FGDs with different groups of women of relevance to that country. Similarly, the data collection tools for the endline evaluation were not always implemented in the same way in each project site due to country adaptations to suit the country context and time available for the FGDs, which may have affected what information was collected in each place and thus the comparability of findings across sites and countries.

Country specific challenges with data collection included recruiting individuals with sufficient skills and availability to administer the survey and facilitate the FGDs (India, South Africa), reluctance of the YUW share information on some topics (SRHR in India and South Africa, exploitation in India), difficulty in finding private venues to conduct data collection (India and Cape Town in South Africa), difficulty in translating key terms in survey questions such as 'exploitation' into local languages and lack of availability of the YUW and external stakeholders to participate in data collection due to conflicting events (exams, holiday periods) during the data collection period (all countries).

In order to measure the project's intention to engage with YUW over a minimum sustained period of time, sampling for the endline survey and FGDs was restricted to only YUW who were considered 'substantially engaged' in the project and thus these findings cannot be generalised to all YUW who were reached by the project. The decision to only include women who were 'substantially engaged' was made to ensure that the results reflect the impact of the project activities on women who have taken part in the project to a meaningful degree, as envisaged by the project design. Furthermore, it is not always possible to make contact with women who are no longer part of the project.

Finally, the YUW project was a complex, multi-themed, multi-country project with a large number of indicators spread across different topics, making it difficult to capture all the necessary information in one evaluation. As such, not all topics were addressed in as much depth as would be desirable, for example the evaluation scope was limited to only considering defined aspects of value for money and the integration of the HRBA approach rather than a full assessment of these areas. Similarly, in order to capture the large amount of information needed to address the project indicators, the most effective data collection approach was a quantitative survey. However, surveys of this nature are unable to capture detailed, nuanced information and are better suited to answering the 'what' questions rather than the 'why' questions.

Results

The results section first compares the socio-demographic profile of the young women in each country project, in order to assess who was being reached by the project. The progress against each project objective is then be considered, identifying areas of success and areas that faced challenges, and suggesting possible reasons for this. Finally, we examine the success of the strategies used in each country, the inter-linking themes of the YUW project, incorporation of HRBA and project management.

Profile of the YUW

The YUW project aimed to reach young, urban women who are marginalised and vulnerable, as specified in the ActionAid HRBA. Who is considered vulnerable and marginalised differs across the three countries, as shown in the profiles below. Over the three years of implementation, the YUW project reached the following:

- **Ghana**: 2000 YUW organised into 80 formal YUW groups
- **South Africa**: 1270 YUW organised in 43 formal YUW groups
- **India**: 3195 YUW, of which 2730 were members of 117 formal YUW groups.

Table 1 presents key demographics of the YUW included in the endline survey sample from each country. Although the age profile between the countries is similar, with around half of those surveyed aged 15-18 years, there are substantial differences in marital status, proportion of the YUW currently studying and proportion currently in paid work. In South Africa over 80% of the YUW are currently studying, while in India 40% are in paid work. At endline in Ghana just 18% of the YUW are currently in paid work, compared to 36% of those surveyed at baseline.[12]

Table 2 summarises the involvement of the YUW included in the endline sample in the project. Those surveyed from Ghana participated in more formal YUW group meetings each year, and had been involved in the project for longer than those surveyed in South Africa because the South African partners came on board later in the project. Overall, the majority of the YUW had participated in multiple training workshops each year they had been involved in the YUW project, and many had also participated in community activities and informal gatherings

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[12] *Potential explanations for this change in employment status at endline compared to baseline are reduced job opportunities for young people in Ghana, YUW choosing to concentrate on schooling as a result of knowledge gained through the project and/or unavailability of working YUW to participate in the endline evaluation (source: national consultants)*

Table 1: Key demographics of YUW from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Total sample size	240	240	243
Percentage who:			
Are aged 15-18 years	45%	54%	42%
Are aged 19-25	47.5%	35%	48%
Are aged over 25	7.5%	11%	10%
Have completed some or all of secondary school	30%	92%	95%
Are unmarried and not living with partner	66%	94%	55%
Are married	20%	NR	43%
Are currently studying	54%	83%	34%
Are currently in paid work	18%	4%	41%
Are currently looking for paid work	35%	26%	18%
Are not in paid work and are not looking	47%	68%	40%

NR Not reported in national evaluation report

Table 2: Participation of the YUW in the YUW project from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Year joined YUW project			
2013	25%	-	NR
2014	61%	23%	NR
2015	14%	58%	NR
2016	-	20%	NR
Participation in YUW project activities each year			
Number of formal YUW meetings	Mean 22.9 Median 20 (range 0-60)	Mean 10.0 Median NR (range 0-31)	Mean 15 Median 13 (range NR-40)
Participate in five or more formal YUW meetings	91%	61%	63%
Number of training workshops	Mean 2.9 Median 2 (range 0-15)	Mean 7.5 Median NR (range 0-31)	Mean 14 Median 12 (range NR-50)
Number of community activities	Mean 2 Median 1 (range 0-12)	Mean 7.5 Median NR (range 0-30)	Mean 8 Median 7 (range NR-25)
Number of informal gatherings	Mean 2 Median 1 (range 0-12)	Mean 4.5 Median NR (range 0-70)	Mean 14 Median 10 (range NR -30)

NR Not reported in national evaluation report

Achievements Against Project Objectives

The table below provides a summary of the progress against project objectives for each country; these findings are further described in the following sections of the report, including greater detail on qualitative results for each indicator.

Table 3: Summary of progress against project objectives and indicators

Project Indicators	Endline Measure	Ghana	South Africa	India
Objective 1 Young women have safe and decent work and livelihoods, and can exercise greater control over their income				
Intended Result 1.1 Young women recognise and challenge sexual and economic exploitation in their work				
40% of young women involved in the programme report cases of sexual and economic exploitation **within their groups, trade unions and associations**. This is from a baseline of zero.	Proportion of YUW surveyed who are currently working, that reported economic exploitation they had personally experienced and/or witnessed	44%	Not applicable*	48%
	Who most commonly reported economic exploitation to	Friend/colleague/ family member	Not applicable*	Friend/colleague/ family member
	Proportion of YUW surveyed that reported sexual exploitation they had personally experienced and/or witnessed	43%	23%	30%
	Who most commonly reported sexual exploitation to	Friend/colleague/ family member	Staff at YUW / resource centre	Friend/colleague/ family member
65% (3480) of young women in the programme across the three countries become **members of organised groups** to take action on policies, processes and individual cases of sexual and economic exploitation	Proportion of YUW surveyed who are members of formal YUW groups at time of endline survey	100%^	94%	58%

Project Indicators	Endline Measure	Ghana	South Africa	India
Intended Result 1.2 Young women's responsibility for unpaid care work is recognised and starting to be alleviated by families, communities and the state				
40% of women in the programme report a reduction and redistribution of their unpaid care work through support from f**amilies, communities and public services.**	Proportion of YUW surveyed who reported their burden of unpaid care work had decreased since they joined the YUW project	**78%**	**45%**	**48%**
	Most common reason for reduction in unpaid care work	More support from family members	More support from family members	More support from family members
15-30% increase from the baseline in the **access to public goods and services** (such as crèches, potable water, and household energy etc.) that reduce the time spent on unpaid care work	Examples of public services introduced or improved due to actions taken during the YUW project	Water and sanitation facilities; waste disposal	Not reported	Preschool, child development and health services; water services
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who reported creche/childcare close to home that wasn't available two years ago	**19%**	**8%**	**32%**
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who reported improved sanitation compared to two years ago	**48%**	**3%**	**30%**
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who reported public waste disposal/waste collection that wasn't available two years ago	**45%**	**3%**	**52%**
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who reported access to drinking water in or close to home that wasn't available two years ago	**31%**	**3%**	**46%**
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who believed additional services were introduced due to actions of the YUW project	**19%**	**19%**	**44%**

Project Indicators	Endline Measure	Ghana	South Africa	India
Intended Result 1.3: State policies for the creation of decent work by the private and public sector, including through state employment schemes, which specifically target young women for employment and produce goods and services that are of benefit to them are initiated				
Across the project countries **three policies** are developed or (re)formulated to include young women's interest, demands and participation in relation to employment opportunities	Policy changes related to employment	**Two** employers' associations amending their constitutions	None reported	None reported
Intended Result 1.4: Women have a greater sense of entitlement to their income and increased capacity to negotiate how it is spent				
80% (4640) of young women in the programme report a greater control over their own income and resources	Proportion of YUW surveyed who report gaining more control of spending own income and resources since joining YUW project	**83%**	Not applicable*	**53%**
Objective 2 Young women's informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health are increasingly realised				
Intended Result 2.1: More young women understand and recognise oppressive norms, values and practices that impact their control over their bodies and ability to earn income and begin to challenge them				
80% increase from the baseline in the number of young women able to articulate their demands and reflect on how to challenge oppressive norms, values and practices.	*Proportion of YUW surveyed reporting that since they joined the YUW project they were better able to decide:*			
	Who to have sex with	93%	97%	84%
	When to have sex	77%	97%	78%
	Whether to use a family planning method	88%	87%	82%
	Which family planning method to use	88%	82%	78%
	When to have children	91%	91%	80%
	How many children to have	90%	84%	80%

Project Indicators	Endline Measure	Ghana	South Africa	India
	Examples from focus group discussions on articulating demands and challenging norms, values and practices	Yes	Not reported#	Yes
Intended Result 2.2: More young women are accessing appropriate, non-discriminatory, young-women friendly SRHR information and services				
60% increase from the baseline of young women accessing appropriate, non-discriminatory, young-women friendly, SRHR information and services in programme areas	Proportion of YUW surveyed who had accessed SRHR services since joining the YUW project**	56%	88%	53%
	Of those accessing services, proportion satisfied with services received	84%	34%	74%
	Of those accessing services, proportion believed were treated same or better as others due to their age	83%	45%	75%
	Of those not accessing services, main reason for not accessing services	No need	Not reported***	No need
Intended Result 2.3: More young women have accurate and scientific information about sex, sexuality, gender and reproductive health which they have obtained in safe, young women-friendly environments				
5,800 young women report that they have **greater knowledge** about sex, sexuality, gender and reproductive health which they have obtained in safe young women-friendly environments and are better able to assert their choices	Proportion of YUW surveyed who report improved knowledge on sexual and reproductive health since joining YUW project	95%	91%	88%
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who report improved understanding of gender since joining YUW project	93%	94%	87%
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who report improved understanding of sexuality since joining YUW project	95%	89%	86%

Project Indicators	Endline Measure	Ghana	South Africa	India
Objective 3 Young women in the areas we programme in are empowered and supported by allies and responsible stakeholders to effect change in their own lives, their families, their communities and different levels of government				
Intended Result 3.1: Young women are organised in groups, networks, alliances and movements				
Number of young women led groups or networks and quality of young women's participation in them	Proportion of YUW surveyed who had been involved in at least one community awareness meeting/event since YUW project began	76%	97%	84%
	Proportion who held a specific role at a community awareness meeting/event	57%	77%	58%
	Proportion of YUW surveyed who had been involved in at least one regional/national/global event since YUW project began	38%	52%	67%
Intended Result 3.2: Young women participating in and representing their interests to and in decision-making fora at all level				
Evidence of 200 young women leaders in each country representing the interests of young women are taking lead in campaigning for progressive policies and mobilising 80% of the overall target group along with like-minded youth and others in communities	Proportion of YUW surveyed involved in at least one local government meeting/event since YUW project began	47%	69%	62%
	Proportion who held a specific role at the local government meeting/event	60%	43%	45%
	Proportion organising or leading at least one local government meeting/event	10%	29%	16%
	Examples from focus group discussions of women being involved in advocacy and campaigning	Yes	Yes	Yes

Project Indicators	Endline Measure	Ghana	South Africa	India
Intended Results 3.3: Allies and stakeholders recognise young women's experiences related to work, livelihoods and SRHR and support their demands for change				
40% increase from the baseline of targeted civil society and government leaders of influence voicing their support for young women's experiences related to work, livelihoods, SRHR and GBV, soliciting and/or incorporating their input and supporting their demands for change	Not able to be measured directly as no baseline available. See relevant report section for details of support from allies in each country	Examples of support from allies-	- Examples of support from allies-	- Examples of support from allies-

* Proportion reporting economic exploitation not applicable to South Africa due to small number of YUW surveyed currently working

^ Membership of YUW groups was a requirement of being included in the survey sampling frame for Ghana. However, given the strong focus in Ghana on YUW groups, this likely reflects a true finding (100% of YUW in Ghana involved in formal YUW groups) rather than an issue related to constructing the survey sample

The body mapping exercise was not conducted during focus groups in South Africa, thus information was not available from this source of examples of articulating demands and challenging SRHR norms, values and practices

** Use of SRHR services was not asked at baseline, as it was felt too sensitive to ask the young women this at the beginning of the project

*** Reason for not accessing SRHR services was asked different in South Africa, thus results are not reported as they are not comparable to Ghana and India

Objective One: Decent Work

Through this objective, the YUW project aim was for the young women taking part in the project to have safe and decent work and livelihoods, and be able to exercise greater control over their income.

Exploitation

One way in which the YUW project aimed to address the issue of safe and decent work was to give young women the information and resources needed to enable them to recognise and challenge sexual and economic exploitation in their work. The relevant project indicators were that by the end of the project 40% of young women would have reported cases of sexual and economic exploitation, and 65% of young women would become members of groups to take action on policies, processes and individual cases of exploitation.

Exploitation was certainly relevant to the YUW, with high rates of having experienced or personally witnessed exploitation. Ghana and India both exceeded the indicator target for reporting economic exploitation (42% of those in Ghana and 48% of those in India who personally experienced or witnessed economic exploitation reported it, against the target of 40%), and the target was virtually met in India where 39% reported economic exploitation experienced or witnessed (Table 4). For reporting of sexual exploitation, Ghana exceeded the reporting target of 40%, with 43% of those experiencing and/or witnessing sexual exploitation reporting it, while both India and South Africa fell somewhat short of the target (Table 5).

Women in all three countries were far more likely to report exploitation through informal channels, such as to friends, family, or the YUW groups. Very few women reported either sexual or economic exploitation to someone at work or school, suggesting that the 'reporting' was more likely to be the women informally telling someone, rather than making a formal report or complaint.

At endline the vast majority of those surveyed in Ghana and South Africa could recognise three or more forms of economic exploitation and all respondents in Ghana could recognise three forms of sexual exploitation. Half of all those surveyed in India could recognise three forms of sexual exploitation and three forms of economic exploitation.

Note that figures related to reporting economic exploitation should be interpreted with caution, given the small numbers currently working and reporting economic exploitation.

Table 4: Economic exploitation results from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Able to recognise three or more forms of economic exploitation	100%	88%	55%
Number currently working	43	9	100
Of those currently working			
Personally experienced economic exploitation	42%	67% (n=6)	41%
Personally witnessed economic exploitation	67%	73%*	56%
Reporting economic exploitation experienced and/or witnessed	**44% (n=19)**	**NR****	**48% (n=48)**
Exploitation reported to:			
Friend/colleague/family member	79% (n=15)	NR	88% (n=42)
Community leader/teacher	21% (n=4)	NR	-
Staff at YUW centre/ resource centre	21% (n=4)	NR	8% (n=4)
YUW group	11% (n=2)	NR	12% (n=6)
Someone senior at work	5% (n=1)	NR	2% (n=1)
Workers association or union	-	NR	2% (n=1)
Other	-	NR	4% (n=2)

Highlighting indicates results directly corresponding to the indicator. Cells with small numbers should be interpreted with caution.

*Note that in South Africa this question was asked of all women instead of only those who were working and is therefore not directly comparable with the results from Ghana and India.

** Information about who exploitation was reported to is not included for South Africa because of the small number of women working and because the question was asked differently and so the results are not comparable with India and Ghana.

Table 5: Sexual exploitation results from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Able to recognise three or more forms of sexual exploitation	100%	NR	51%
Personally experienced sexual exploitation	20%	46%	26%
Personally witnessed sexual exploitation	26%	24%	39%
Reporting sexual exploitation experienced and/or witnessed	**43% (n=48)**	**23% (n=38)**	**30% (n=73)**
Exploitation reported to:			
Friend/colleague/family member	85% (n-41)	21% (n=8)	99% (n=72)
Someone senior at work/school	-	-	18% (n=13)
Police	8% (n=4)	-	1% (1%)
Community leader	2% (n=1)	-	-
Staff at YUW centre/ resource centre	2% (n=1)	42% (n=16)	14% (n=10)
YUW group	4% (n=2)	18% (n=7)	8% (n=6)
Someone senior at work	-	-	5% (n=4)
Other	-	21% (n=8)	

Highlighting indicates results directly corresponding to the indicator; NR Not reported in national evaluation report

There were some examples of reporting exploitation shared during the FGDs and interviews, including a case in Ghana where a YUW was supported by the partners to obtain a lawyer to obtain payments owed to her and a police officer in India reporting increased reporting of street harassment. This shows that, although uncommon, there were some case of women using the formal channels to report exploitation against them.

In terms of membership of groups to take action on policies, process and cases of sexual and economic exploitation, evidence of achievement was mixed between the countries. Both Ghana and South Africa exceeded the target of 65% of YUW being members of organised groups, with 100% of those surveyed in Ghana[13] and 94% of those surveyed in South Africa being a member of a formal YUW group. In India, where YUW groups were less of a project focus (see introduction), 58% of those surveyed were members of a YUW group, a little below the target of 65%. Note that in addition to formal YUW groups, a small

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[13] *Note that regular attendance at a YUW group was a criteria of inclusion in the survey sample for Ghana. Nonetheless, the YUW project in Ghana was the most focused on regular engagement through the YUW groups, so it likely this reflects a true finding (100% membership of YUW groups in Ghana)) rather than an issues of how the survey sample was constructed.*

number of those surveyed (n=3 in India and n=5 in Ghana) reported being a part of worker's unions and associations that may also take action on economic exploitation.

Although not well-reflected in the endline survey, it was reported by project staff that the YUW did become increasingly organised into **formal labour groupings** in India**.** Eighty YUW in Chennai received their labour cards through their involvement in formal unions and enrolling in the Unorganised Workers Welfare Board which provides recognition and benefits (insurance, child educational support). In Hyderabad, around 200 YUW who are home-based workers have organised themselves into a group to advocate and address their issues. In Ghana, the YUW project held training and sensitisation workshops for employers and employer's associations in both the formal and informal sector, focusing on decent work, sexual harassment and the labour laws in Ghana. In turn, the young women were invited to meetings of these associations to sensitise members on decent work, leading to some amending their policy guidelines to address exploitation (see section on policy change).

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Although experiencing and/or witnessing economic and sexual exploitation were common among young urban women, they were not always report and when reported, were mainly reported informally rather than through formal channels. This may reflect the informal nature of work for many of these women, for example working for their family or at the home, where there is no formal mechanism for reporting exploitation. Equally, women may have felt comfortable to tell friends and family, but were not sufficiently confident to make a formal complaint that may have negative consequences for them, or that they did not trust that they would be treated fairly through the formal channels. The lack of formal channels for reporting, and the lack of trust in any formal channels that do exist are likely to be exacerbated for cases of sexual exploitation which internationally are commonly not treated seriously or fairly, potentially explaining why the young women in India and Ghana were less likely to report sexual exploitation compared to economic exploitation.

The limited availability of existing formal reporting mechanisms is further supported by the fact that most women's involvement in formal groups was through the YUW project. The YUW groups clearly played a role in supporting the women to take action on exploitation, both by reaching out to other associations and by encouraging women to report exploitation they experienced or witnessed: in Ghana and India, almost all women who reported exploitation said that the YUW project had influenced them to report it (in South Africa this information is not available).

Unpaid Care Work

Along with recognising and reporting exploitation, the YUW also aimed for young women's responsibility for unpaid care work to be recognised, and starting to be alleviated by families, communities and the state. The relevant project indicators were that by the end of the project, 40% of women in the programme would report a reduction and redistribution of their unpaid care work through support from families, communities and public services and there would be a 15-30% increase from the baseline in the access to public goods and services (such as crèches, potable water, and household energy etc.) that reduce the time spent on unpaid care work

All countries exceeded the target of 40% of YUW reporting a reduction in unpaid care work (Table 6), very substantially in the case of Ghana where 78% reported a reduction. The reduction in unpaid care work appeared to be primarily due to increase in support from family members rather than support from the community or increased provision of public goods and services.

In all countries, most of the YUW experiencing a reduction in unpaid care work through family support reported receiving more support from female relatives. However, there was evidence of increased support from male relatives, particularly from Ghana where 35% of those experiencing a reduction in unpaid care work through family support reported receiving more support from male relatives (see later section for details of strategies used to engage family members).

Table 6: Change in unpaid care work from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Change in unpaid care work since joining the YUW project			
Increase	8%	10%	7%
Decrease	78%	45%	48%
Stayed the same	14%	46%	37%
If said/did anything herself to get more support for unpaid care work	84%	44%	75%
Reason for reduction in unpaid care work			
More support from family members	95%	89%	99%
More support from community members	6%	6%	-
More public services available in the community	8%	-	26%
Availability of home appliances	11%	-	26%
Other	-	7%	1%

Highlighting indicates results directly corresponding to the indicator;

There were many examples shared in the FGDs related to the reduction of burden in unpaid care work, and the opportunities this now offered in terms of increased time for economic and educational opportunities. This included several examples where unpaid care work responsibilities had been taken on by male family members.

> *"….since joining the YUW project I learnt that I should not be discriminated against because of my gender….I realised that it is not a must for me to do all the chores but rather to share them, and if I don't want to do it I shouldn't let anyone bully me to do it (YUW in South Africa)*

"I never had that support initially at home but now having been sensitized by the YUW Project, I have also educated my husband and son, and now they help me and I have more time to do my beads making business" (YUW in Ghana)

Although the biggest reason for the reduction in unpaid care work was more support from family members, the YUW surveyed at endline reported that there were now some public service available in their communities that there weren't two years ago, although only the minority of those surveyed felt these were due to the activities of the YUW project (Table 7)   Some specific examples of additional public services introduced due to the YUW project include:

- In Accra, Ghana the YUW became involved in explaining the need to community members to pay their property rates, and the reported increase in revenue due to the YUW actions were invested in provision of additional water and sanitation facilities in several communities.
- In Tamale, Ghana, the YUW successfully advocated for the increased provision of rubbish bins by local government, and report to the local government when they are full and need to be emptied.
- In India, additional 'balwadi' (pre-school) centres, ICDS[14] and health centres have been established in Hyderabad and Chennai through requests and follow up advocacy to the relevant government authorities.

Also in India, in one community water was only available two hours a day, which meant women could not consider working as it was the only time they could fetch water. After successful advocacy by the YUW (designing and delivering a 'right to information' application to the relevant minister and attending a local government meeting), water was made available 24 hours a day, which enabled men to collect water and facilitated additional time for women to work and for recreational activities.[15]

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[14] *ICDS are integrated child development services, a government welfare programme providing food, pre-school education and primary healthcare to children aged under six*
[15] *As reported by country participants at the global evaluation workshop*

Table 8: Changes in public services availability reported by YUW at endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Public services available that weren't available two years ago			
Creche/childcare close to home	19%	8%	32%
Improved sanitation facilities	48%	3%	30%
Public waste disposal/waste collection	45%	3%	52%
Access to drinking water in or close to home	31%	3%	46%
Other services	-	7%	4%
No additional services	15%	22%	-
Don't know what was available two years ago	10%	13%	9%
Believe services introduced due to YUW project			
Yes	rel	19%	44%
No	48%	7%	25%
Not sure	33%	30%	23%

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

It is clear that the YUW project resulted in a decrease of the unpaid care work of young women in all countries. Although there were some good examples of increased provision of additional public services due to the project, the primary reason for the reduction in unpaid care work was additional support from family members. This likely relates to the time required to instigate changes to public infrastructure; given the time needed to establish the YUW project, educate and empower the YUW, and then the YUW to begin advocating for change, it was unrealistic to expect major changes in public infrastructure during the three year project time frame.

Most of the reduction in the burden of unpaid care work was due to increased support from female family members, which may reflect the increased ability of the young women to reduce burden for themselves, rather than a wider appreciation of the value of unpaid care wok within the family (as the burden is simply shifted to other female family members). The findings of increased support from male relatives was promising, which appeared to be due to both increased recognition within families of the 'unfairness' of not sharing the burden evenly between family members of different genders, and the increased status and influence of the young women in the household due to their increased income from paid work. Together, this suggests that there were substantial achievements in reducing burned of unpaid care work with young women, but further time and concerted effort is required to further reduce the burden though increased support from male family members, the wider community and improved public services and infrastructure.

Policy Change

As well as changes at the individual and community level related to decent work and unpaid care work, the YUW project also intended to initiate change at the policy level, with the creation of state policies for the creation of decent work for the private and public sector, including through state employment schemes to specifically target young women for employment and produce goods and services that are of benefit to them. The relevant project indicator was that by the end of the project, across the countries, three policies are developed or (re)formulated to include young women's interest, demands and participation in relation to employment opportunities

The target of three policies developed or reformulated was not met during the YUW project . While YUW in all countries were involved in advocacy related to design or changes to policies, the only example of a changed policy was from Ghana where trainings and meetings with managers and owners of businesses and associations involving project staff and YUW eventually led to The Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association, and Ghana Progressive Hairdressers Association in Tamale amending their constitutions to include protective clauses on sexual harassment, economic exploitation, and gender issues.

In India, advocacy by YUW and partners have led to the establishment of Committees Against Sexual Harassment in smaller enterprises and factories in Chennai, and labour cards from state social security departments have been issued to YUW who are domestic or unorganised workers in Chennai and Mumbai. The YUW and partners have also attempted to revive the defunct Domestic Workers' Welfare Board in Mumbai.

In South Africa, the young women participated in a variety of advocacy trainings and dialogues, including a seminar organised by Action Aid and partner organisation Black Sash regarding the National Social Security Policy, where they identified the need to continue government child support grants beyond the age of 18. The young women in Johannesburg also participated in a discussion workshop with various trade unions on decent work and SRHR. However, as the majority of the YUW were not in or looking for paid work, the project focused more strongly on SRHR, and there were no employment related policy changes that occurred due to the project activities,

Summary of Findings and Interpretation
There was less evidence of achievement in policy change during the YUW project compared to the other areas of decent work focused on by the YUW project. This is likely due to the time required to effect policy change, which commonly requires a sustained level of advocacy over multiple years. As the YUW project was only three years in length, and time was required to establish the project, the YUW groups and educate and empower the YUW to be able to advocate for change, it was unrealistic to expect policies to be fully developed or reformulated during the project time frame. Understandably, the implementing partner organisations appeared to have focused primarily on the empowerment of the YUW themselves, which likely resulted in less time and capacity to focus on the wider, policy level changes. In addition, as the area of decent work was a new area of focus for some of the implementing organisations, they needed time to identify and build relationships with relevant policy makers before they could begin advocating (or supporting the YUW to advocate) for policy change.

Control over Income

The YUW project aimed to increase young women's' sense of entitlement to their income and increase their capacity to negotiate how it is spent. The specific project indicator for this was that by the end of the project 80% (4640) of young women in the programme report a greater control over their own income and resources

Achievement in this indicator was mixed, with Ghana exceeding the (high) target of 80% of YUW reporting more control over spending of their own income in the endline survey, while the target was not reached in India where 53% reported increased control over spending of their own income (

Table 9).[16] However in all countries, around half of the young women surveyed reported they had gained more control over spending of household income and resources since joining the project.

Table 9: Control over income and resources from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
YUW own income			
If gained more control of spending own income and resources since joining YUW project	83%	NA	53%
If did/said anything to gain more control	61%	NA	61%
Household income			
If gained more control of spending household income and resources since joining YUW project	52%	41%	47%
If did/said anything to gain more control	62%	10%	71%
Who decides how income earned by YUW is spent			
YUW alone	62%	NA	47%
YUW with partner*	3%	NA	10%
Partner or parents	20%	NA	29%
Shared family decision	12%	NA-	3%
Other	-	NA	1%
Don't want to say/don't earn own income	5%	NA	10%

Includes 'deciding with partner', and 'YUW deciding some and partner decides rest'; NA Not applicable - findings from South Africa related to YUW own incomes are not reported due to the small number currently in paid work (n=9)

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[16] *As most of the YUW in South Arica reached by the program were currently in school and not in paid employment, reporting control over spending of own income is not applicable in this setting*

In Ghana, control over income was one of the common themes in the most significant change stories gathered, with several examples shared of increased ability of the YUW to make decisions once they had their own income. Similar findings were found in India, where women reported greater courage and confidence to make their own decisions, as well as greater financial independence.

"Before joining the Project I depended wholly on family members and some friends for financial support. ...My involvement in the project changed the circumstances when I acquired skills in beads making and started selling my products. Today, I take my own decision and I also have a say on how money is spent"
(YUW in Ghana)

Compared to the data gathered at baseline, in India it appeared that there had been an increase in the proportion of YUW deciding **alone** how income was spent (33% at baseline compared to 47% at endline) whereas in Ghana the proportions remained similar (58% at baseline compared to 62% at endline).

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

In the two project countries where substantial numbers of YUW were in paid employment (Ghana and India), there were substantial gains in the control of young women over how their own income was spent during the project, even where the high target of 80% reporting increased control was not met. Together with the finding that around half of those surveyed also reported more control over household spending, this indicates the success of the project in empowering YUW to have a greater influence over spending decisions within the household.

In terms of how decisions were made about spending income earnt by young women, almost half of those in India and almost two thirds in Ghana reported that they alone made the decision on spending. Although this indicates that for a substantial minority of women spending decisions are made in conjunction with others (partners, parents, other family members), this is not unexpected given that most women are living in extended family households where income of all family members is likely pooled. It is nonetheless promising that between 60-70% of the young women surveyed in Ghana and India reported they had done or said something themselves to gain more control over spending decisions, indicating their increased levels of empowerment.

Other Achievements, Challenges & Unintended Outcomes

There were additional achievements of the YUW project in the area of decent work that were beyond those anticipated at the start of the project when the project indicators were developed. This includes acquisition of **practical skills** through training in soap making, pastry making and bead making (Ghana) beauty treatment, tailoring and fashion design in India, and business management in South Africa. Skills training was added to the project as a means to encourage young women to join the YUW project, and was highly valued by the YUW (see strategies section for more detail)

In Tamale, Ghana some YUW were able to **establish businesses** through a loan scheme providing a small amount of start-up capital at minimum interest. Some of the YUW in Ghana came together to work as co-operatives rather than sell products individually in competition.[17]

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17 As reported at the global evaluation workshop

In Ghana there were reported tension and envy from families when women become breadwinners, which likely reflects prevailing patriarchal attitudes within the community. However, the fact that men in one area requested a 'Young Urban Men Project' to improve their financial status likely indicates the success of the YUW project in increasing the income of young women.

Another challenge during the project was there was some resentment from the in-school YUW as the skills training was focused at YUW not currently in school. This was particularly in South Africa where it was reported that many YUW expected to get employment through the project, an expectation which could not be met.[18]

Objective Two: SRHR

Through this objective, the YUW project aimed that young women taking part in the project would be increasingly able to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health.

Challenging Norms, Values and Practices

One way the YUW project aimed to address the objective of SRHR was to ensure that more young women were able to understand and recognise oppressive norms, values and practices that impact their control over their bodies and ability to earn income, and begin to challenge these. The relevant project indicator was that there would be an 80% increase from baseline in the number of young women able to articulate their demands and reflect on how to challenge oppressive norms, values and practices.

During the endline evaluation planning it was agreed that this project indicator would be best assessed primarily through a participatory exercise (body mapping) in order to allow the YUW to express the norms, values and challenges and how these have changed in their own words, rather than within the confines of a predominately quantitative survey Thus the results for this indicator are reported qualitatively rather than against the quantitative target of 80% change described in the original project indicator.

There was substantial evidence of achievement of this indicator in recognising and challenging oppressive norms, values and practices. In Ghana and India, participants in the FGDs described various myths and misconceptions that they held about sexual and reproductive health before they became part of the YUW project, many (but not all) of which had been changed through SRHR training during the project. They also were able to articulate community norms related to sexual and reproductive health.

"Now I know that getting her first periods doesn't mean a girl is ready for marriage. Marriage requires physical and emotional maturity. A woman also needs to be financially independent so that she can stand on her own feet." (YUW in India)

Aside from improved knowledge (described in more detail in separate indicator), there were some changes described related to ability to discuss and confront issues related to SRHR.[19] Some of the participants in the FGDs in Ghana reflected prior to the project they were unwilling discuss SRHR openly

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[18] *As reported at the global evaluation workshop*
[19] *As the body mapping exercise was unable to be conducted in all FGDs due to time limitation, less information than expected was collected during the evaluation on recognising and confronting oppressive norms, values and practices*

with family members and within the community, but since joining the project they felt encouraged to discuss this. There were also several examples in India of confronting domestic abuse situations.

"Through this project, I have become aware of the rights I have over my body, and that I must not silently bear inappropriate touching by anyone; instead I need to speak up against it to the right authorities. This change happened with the SRHR sessions especially on body parts and body rights. Nobody has the right to touch us inappropriately or beat us up. In the case of my sister who was a victim of domestic violence, we filed a case with the police". (YUW in India)

In Chennai, India, a substantial number of child marriages were able to be prevented due to project awareness activities and leadership skills of the YUW developed through the project. At least 66 YUW who were arranged to be married managed to successfully negotiate with their parents for their marriage to be delayed.[20]. In South Africa, YUW in both project sites were involved in dialogues with police and community members to raise awareness of **gender based violence**.

Results from the endline survey support these findings of increased abilities of the YUW, with most of the YUW surveyed reporting that since joining the YUW project they were better able to decide over specific aspects related to their SRHR (Table 10).

Table 10: Ability to make decisions related to SRHR from endline survey

Since joining the YUW project, better able to decide:	Ghana	South Africa	India
Who to have sex with	93%	97%	84%
When to have sex	77%	97%	78%
Whether to use a family planning method	88%	87%	82%
Which family planning method to use	88%	82%	78%
When to have children	91%	91%	80%
How many children to have	90%	84%	80%

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

It appears there was substantial progress in the ability of the young women engaged in the project to articulate, and begin to challenge, oppressive norms, values and practices related to control over their bodies. This likely reflects the overall project success in increasing young women's overall confidence, empowerment and self-worth, their awareness of oppressive societal structures and beliefs as well as improving their specific knowledge of SRHR (see later section on knowledge for more details)

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[20] *As reported by staff from the implementing organisation*

Access to Services

The YUW project intended that by the end of the project period, more young women would be accessing appropriate, non-discriminatory, young-women friendly SRHR information and services. The specific project indicator to measures this was to have a 60% increase from the baseline of young women accessing these services in programme areas. However, it was not possible to measure this indicator directly at endline, as use of SRHR services was not measured at baseline as it was felt too sensitive to gather than information from YUW at the beginning of the project.

Findings from the endline survey reveal that over half of YUW had accessed SRHR services since joining the YUW project and the main reason for not accessing services being no need, rather than barriers to access (Table 11).

Table 11: Access and satisfaction with SRHR services from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Accessed SRHR services since joining YUW project	56%	88%	53%
Main reason for not accessing services			
No need	51% (n=53)	NR	72% (n=75)
Cost too high	17% (n=18)	NR	6% (n=6)
Clinic too far	11% (n=12)	NR	1% (n=1)
Got information through YUW trainings	11% (n=11)	NR	3% (n=3)
Family/religious institution/society do not approve	-	NR	5% (n-5)
Can't go during clinic hours offered	-	NR	4% (n=4)
Of those accessing services, proportion who:			
Were satisfied with services received	84%	34%	74%
Felt were treated the same or better due to their age	83%	45%	75%

NR South Africa results are not reported because they were not collected in a comparable way to Ghana and India.

Supporting the endline survey results, In Ghana, the government authorities interviewed fo the evaluation reported that they had observed an increase in young people accessing services and which they believed was due to the activities of the YUW project.

In terms of **service quality**, most of the YUW accessing services in Ghana and India reported satisfaction with the services received, and that they were treated the same or better due to their age (Table 11). In South Africa, the situation was quite different, with only one third of those accessing services satisfied

with the services received. Furthermore, although a high proportion of the YUW in South Africa accessed SRHR services, they would tend to avoid visiting local clinics out of fear of being seen by a parent or community member, and instead go to clinics outside of their immediate community.[21] Highlighting the unfriendliness of services to young people YUW in Johannesburg even organised a march in early 2016 at an inner-city clinic to challenge health professionals to improve their services.

"We are shouted at and made to feel embarrassed for even being there. Some of them [clinic sisters] speak to us with disrespect and threaten to tell our parents that we are having sex."
(YUW in South Africa)

Improving health services was a major area of focus for the YUW in South Africa, with YUW groups developing advocacy plans to map and improve the youth-friendliness of services. Achievements of this include some YUW volunteering at local health clinics in Johannesburg to support young women attending the clinic, a YUW in Cape Town joining a committee overseeing clinic functioning and identifying of 'champion' providers who link young women attending the clinics to organisations supporting young women.[22]

In Ghana there was some initial resistance reported from family members, community members and spouses on YUW accessing SRHR services, but awareness activities with support from health professionals were reported helped to overcome some of this resistance.

In India there was some success in advocacy related to improving health facilities, with reported improvements made to nine public and private facilities as a result of 'right for information' requests and petitions. In Hyderabad, the project collaborated with doctors and hospitals to provide health information and services to YUW through 28 'health camps'. YUW and partners in Mumbai and Hyderabad have also been involved in ongoing advocacy to get more information about the proposed Urban Health Posts (how many there will be and where and when these will be established).

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

The YUW project appeared to have increased access to SRHR services, with over half of YUW having attended a SRHR service since joining the project, and the main reason for not accessing services being no need, rather than a lack of service availability or cost and other barriers. A particular issue in South Africa was how unfriendly the services were to young people, which became a key focus of project activities. Along with the increasing SRHR knowledge and awareness of the YUW (see other indicators in this section), the findings indicate how successful the project was in engaging YUW in discussions and actions related to SRHR.

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[21] *As reported by YUW and project staff at the national evaluation workshop*
[22] *As reported in the 2015 donor progress report*

SRHR Knowledge

As well as addressing the need for access to youth-friendly services (see above), the YUW project also addressed the lack of knowledge among YUW regarding SRHR, and involved activities designed to ensure that more young women have accurate and scientific information about sex, sexuality, gender and reproductive health which they have obtained in safe young women-friendly environments.

The specific project indicator to measure progress against these indicators was that 5,800 young women report that they have greater knowledge about sex, sexuality, gender and reproductive health which they have obtained in safe young women-friendly environments and are better able to assert their choices. Activities to address this objective included exposure visits to health facilities; information workshops; and sensitisation.

The YUW project in all three countries had a high level of success in improving young women's SRHR knowledge, with the majority of YUW included in the endline survey reporting greater knowledge of SRHR, gender and sexuality since joining the project (Table 12) and YUW describing in the FGDs myths and misconceptions about SRHR they held prior to the project that they no longer held (see earlier indicator on challenging norms). There were some examples of this knowledge influencing behaviour, such as in India where some women delayed getting married and increased the length of time between having children due to the knowledge they gained through the project of how frequent pregnancies affect health.[23] One local government official in Accra interviewed for the evaluation reported that there has been a reduction in unplanned pregnancies in the local area, as young women now 'know their rights' and are keen to start a trade or find a job.

The majority of YUW surveyed indicated that the YUW groups, or the staff of the YUW project, were their most valuable source of SRHR information. However, some gaps in knowledge remained, with substantial proportions in South Africa and India not knowing the most fertile days in a woman's cycle and half or fewer in all countries able to correctly identify return of fertility after childbirth (Table 12). Due to the belief that young women would not be willing to answer questions about their sexual and reproductive health and behaviour, these types of knowledge questions were not included in the baseline evaluation.

As well as an increase in knowledge, the young women also reported an increase in confidence and willingness to talk about SRHR issues. In India, for example, some of the FGDs participants reported they had shared the information they had gained through the SRHR training with their peers. Similarly, in Ghana, one FGD participant reflected on how her improved SRHR knowledge had led to her being more confident to access health services and discuss SRHR with peers.

"I am now confident to visit the health centre when I have issues bothering me on SRHR and I can also say that I am more enlightened to educate others and direct them accordingly to adolescent reproductive health centres nearby to access SRHR information as well. This wasn't the case initially, because we do not know much about SRHR, hence we resort to information from peers" (YUW in Ghana)

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[23] *As reported at the global evaluation workshop*

In Mumbai and Hyderabad, YUW and partners have been involved in meetings with the school authorities and education departments to introduce teaching of SRHR in government high schools, with some schools now allowing SRHR education sessions to now be conducted.[24]

Table 12: SRHR knowledge and sources of information from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Change since joining YUW project			
Improved knowledge on sexual and reproductive health	95%	91%	88%
Improved understanding of gender	93%	94%	87%
Improved understanding of sexuality	95%	89%	86%
Correctly able to identify			
The most fertile days in a women's cycle	81%	23%	63%
If a women can become pregnant after childbirth before her period has returned	50%	23%	50%
At least three methods of modern contraception	100%	NR	51%
Most valuable source of information about SRHR			
YUW group	77%	77%	70%
Organisation implementing YUW project	1%	3%	5%
Health clinic/doctor/pharmacy	11%	3%	1%
Husband or boyfriend	3%	-	9%
Family	<1%	6%	5%
Friends	3%	3%	2%
School	3%	-	4%
Other (NGO, books/magazines, internet, traditional healer, TV, other)	2%	8%	4%

NR Not reported in national report

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[24] *As reported by ActionAid project staff*

In South Africa, in the FGD with LGBTI YUW[25], while the participants felt that project had created a 'safe space' to discuss sexuality, they also felt the project did not sufficiently address issues of SRHR in relation to LGBTI needs.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

All country programmes reported SRHR as being an important focus for the young women, perhaps because of their age and circumstances (i.e. many were not working so found activities around decent work less relevant). The young women in South Africa directly requested that more focus be put on SRHR, highlighting their interest in this area.

Although the vast majority of women reported an increase in SRHR knowledge, questions specifically addressing knowledge of fertility showed there were still gaps in knowledge. This may be because the women were young and majority unmarried, and unlikely to be having children – as such the projects may have focussed on decision making around sexual relations and family planning methods, rather than fertility. However, a large minority (43%) of young women in India were married and may have benefitted from information around their fertility.

It was felt that the YUW project could have achieved more in addressing issues for non-heterosexual young women, and in sensitising men around SRHR. In both India and Ghana, young women reported not being able to take the decision about contraceptive use with their partner.[26] These are issues that require more than just knowledge of SRHR among women. For example, young women need support and resources to be able to negotiate with men using contraceptives; young men need information; and everyone (men and women) need to be aware of gender roles and their impact before addressing sexuality. Increasing knowledge and giving women the tools to discuss SRHR may be just the first step but it is an essential step. In Ghana, the YUW found it difficult to even discuss SRHR issues at the beginning of the project but by the end, thanks to the exposure visits and information sessions, some were so confident they were educating others in their community on SRHR (see below).

Other Achievements, Challenges & Unintended Outcomes

Thanks in part to the women's increased knowledge and confidence (see above), some of the young women were able to take their knowledge and have an impact at the community level – showing how the project had an impact beyond the women involved. In Ghana, some YUW are now acting as representatives for Marie Stopes in the community to provide products and refer people to their adolescent friendly health facilities.

During the project there were challenges with empowering women to discuss SRHR within traditional communities where such topics are considered taboo, especially among unmarried women. In Ghana, one family member had been insulted by her neighbour, saying her daughter was not dressing well due to the reproductive health work she was involved with ActionAid.[27]Similarly, in South Africa a YUW from Johannesburg reported having been disowned by her family and community since being motivated

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[25] *LGBTI – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (one of the sub-groups of YUW targeted by the project in South Africa)*
[26] *As reported at the global evaluation workshop.*
[27] *As reported in the in-depth interview*

through the trainings to come out as a lesbian and in India, a YUW from Hyderabad has been thrown out of her family for asserting her right to decide who she marries.[28] These reactions are likely due to young women acting outside of existing community norms around SRHR, and highlight the need for projects to engage men and the wider community more widely on gender roles, SRHR and the benefits of family planning, so that the young women are not singled out.

Objective Three: Empowerment and Allies

The third overall objective of the YUW project was to provide the necessary support, training and resources so that young women in the project areas are empowered and supported by allies and responsible stakeholders to effect change in their own lives, their families, their communities and different levels of government. The rationale behind this objective is that it will be easier for young women to achieve their goals and bring about the desired changes in their lives if they are supported by those around them. This is especially important in communities of unequal power where young women are often not empowered to make decisions themselves

Organisation into Groups

In order to achieve this objective, the YUW project created formal groups and encouraged membership in other groups, networks, alliances and movements, by introducing the YUW to organisations and conducting exposure visits. This activity was assessed based on to the number of young women who led groups or networks and the quality of the young women's participation in them.

All, or almost all, women were members of formal YUW groups in Ghana and South Africa. In India the project focused less on formal groups, with only 58% being members of YUW groups.[29] Most of the YUW had participated in at least one community awareness meeting or event since the YUW project began, with over half of these having some kind of specific role at this event (i.e. beyond simply attending) (

). In South Africa, just over half had in fact organised or led at least one of these events. Between one to two thirds of the YUW in each country had been involved in at least one regional/national/global event since the YUW project began.

The majority of those surveyed reported the activities of the YUW project had been useful for them in becoming involved in events overall and much of this seems to be due to an increase in self-confidence. For example, project staff in Ghana reported that the YUW were now able to initiate discussions and lead meetings, which previously they had not. Similarly, in South Africa, multiple project staff reported an increase in confidence and self-esteem of the YUW, from initially being shy and introverted to being confident and able to articulate and present their needs. The YUW who participated in the global evaluation workshop reported through the project they had learnt how to represent themselves at public forums.

The confidence gained through group membership meant that the young women to feel able to join and even lead groups outside of the YUW project. Indeed, in Ghana, some of the YUW are now in the process

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[28] As reported at the global evaluation workshop
[29] Note membership of formal YUW groups is also reported under the exploitation indicator under objective one

of establishing their own group; the National Young Urban Movement in Ghana to 'express, propagate and defend women's rights'. The young women are developing a constitution, objectives, membership criteria, annual meetings and a national secretariat. Currently the membership is for women in the YUW project, but they plan to link up with other youth in the future.

Table 13: Involvement and leadership of YUW in organised groups from endline survey

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Hold a leadership role in any organised groups belong to	46%	16%	24%
Community awareness meetings/events			
Involved in at least one community awareness meeting/event since YUW project began	76%	97%	84%
Had a specific role at community awareness meeting/ event*	57%	77%	58%
Organised or led at least one community awareness meeting/event	17%	55%	28%
Local government advocacy meetings/protests/ filing petitions/follow-up meetings/public hearings			
Involved in at least one local government meeting/event since YUW project began	47%	69%	62%
Had a specific role at local government meeting/ event*	60%	43%	45%
Organised or led at least one local government meeting/event	10%	29%	16%
Involved in at least one regional/national/global event since YUW project began	38%	52%	67%
YUW project activities useful in becoming involved in events overall	84%	93%	93%

Specific role includes speaking/presenting/performing at the event, putting up a stall or other

Note: data in this table also relates to the 'campaigning and leadership' indicator below.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Most of the young women joined groups through the YUW project, and over half played an active role in these groups beyond simply participating. The YUW project clearly had an important impact on the young women's self-confidence that allowed them to feel empowered to join groups outside of the YUW project. Joining these groups and having their voices heard at different levels of society demonstrates the

empowerment of the young women and is a critical step in them being able to effect change within their communities.

Campaigning and Leadership

As part of the objective on empowerment and gaining allies, the project aimed to support young women to participate in and represent their interests to and in decision-making fora at all levels. The measure for this particular activity was to show evidence of 200 young women leaders in each country representing the interests of young women are taking lead in campaigning for progressive policies and mobilising 80% of the overall target group along with likeminded youth and others in communities.

As shown in Table 13 above, a high proportion of young women not only and represented YUW interests to decision makers at a range of meetings and events, but many took on leadership roles in these events.

In **Ghana**, examples of young women representing their interests to decision-makers include 320 YUW who have formed an advocacy platform which is involved in engaging with stakeholders and presenting various petitions with key issues identified to the Northern Regional Minister for the 2015 International Youth Day.[30] In addition, as described earlier, YUW have also been involved in successfully campaigning for increased provision of rubbish bins and improved collection of property rates to increase investment in water and sanitation facilities, as well as regular meetings with municipal authorities in Accra on issues with access to water in communities including reporting of infrastructure breakdowns.

In **South Africa**, some of the YUW in Cape Town were involved in sharing their employment experiences and impact of unpaid care work in meetings with the Department of Labour and the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa. In Johannesburg, the YUW were given ownership of designing and implementing some of the advocacy work that would previously have been done by the implementing partner themselves, such as engaging with government on behalf of the implementing partner's beneficiaries. As described earlier, some of the YUW in Johannesburg organised a march to advocate for improved services for women.

In **India**, examples of YUW representing their interests to decision-makers includes YUW in Hyderabad lobbying and petitioning the police department which has resulted in increased policing in areas of the Old City[31], while 'right to information' applications resulted in the opening of the first 'Open School' in one of the project areas. In Chennai, India, some of the YUW have successfully advocated with their employers to provide **separate toilets for women** at their workplace. Other examples already described on YUW leadership and campaigning in India include the self-organisation of 200 YUW who are home-based workers in Hyderabad into a group and the successful advocacy to increase the number of 'balwadi' (pre-school), ICDS and health centres.

In terms of representing YUW interests at an **international level**, several YUW from South Africa attended and participated in the 2015 Commission on Population and Development in New York.[32] This was considered a key success, as the YUW included in this project are more marginalized than other young

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[30] As reported by project staff
[31] As reported by the project partner in Hyderabad
[32] Sourced from the 2015 donor progress report. Two YUW from Ghana were also planned to attend CPD but did not receive visas to travel.

people than normally present at these types of international events[33]. As part of the feminist, participatory approach of ActionAid's HRBA, ensuring that the project gained from the knowledge and insight of the YUW themselves, YUW also attended the YUW project midterm review workshop (n=7), and the ActionAid organised Gender Responsive Public Services conference (n=2).[34]

As well as women taking part in campaigning and advocacy activities, there were other ways in which women represented their needs in decision-making fora, for example by taking part in meetings and events at the community level and higher. Many women had taken part in at least one local government meeting or event, such as advocacy meeting, protests, filing petitions or public hearings (47% in Ghana, 69% in South Africa and 62% in India; Table 13). A smaller but still important number had been involved in at least one regional, national, or global event (38% in Ghana, 52% in South Africa and 67% in India).

In terms of creating women leaders, some women in all countries reported having led events at a local government level (10% in Ghana, 29% in South Africa and 16% in India). Two of the young women from the Ghana project have stood for local government elected positions and five more have indicated interested in standing for elections.

In all countries, leaders were established for the YUW groups. Even in India, where formal YUW groups were less of a project focus, 264 YUW were identified as 'leaders', and played an active role in mobilising or working with other YUW. Generally, each YUW group has two leaders; most of these leaders have undergone specialist leadership training, some have been trained as peer facilitators and many have led advocacy actions by their YUW group. Project staff and the YUW highlighted the 'YUVA Sangam', a cross-regional meeting held in Mumbai, as a good example of YUW taking leadership in designing and running an event.[35]

In South Africa the creation of 'leaders' within the YUW who had more opportunities for training, travel and learning created an unintended hierarchy that became a source of conflict and resistance for some YUW. Similar sentiments were expressed by the YUW attending the global evaluation workshop, who reported that some YUW were jealous of those participating in leadership activities. Another unintended consequence of the leadership training in South Africa was leaders reporting to sometimes dominating group ideas, particularly when planning advocacy events.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

There were multiple examples from the YUW project of young women campaigning and advocating for their needs at a range of levels. However, the nature of advocacy work is that it takes a long time to bring about results; from the examples gathered, it appears that were the young women were most successful was where they had directly liaised with the decision-makers and/or taken a sustained, and multi-pronged approach to campaigning.

Although the endline evaluation did not directly measure the number of young women leaders in each country (as per the indicator), it appears that this indicator was achieved in terms of the number of young

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[33] As reported in an interview with one international staff member
[34] Sourced from the 2015 donor progress report.
[35] As reported at the national evaluation workshop

leaders in each country, given the number of young women involved in the various advocacy actions described above.

Although the project successfully established leaders who were able to represent young women's needs and interests and advocate for change, this did create tensions at time between the young women. Additionally, it is not appropriate nor feasible for all women to take positions of leadership. These factors should be taken into account in future projects when considering if and how to empower young women as leaders, including how to best avoid and mitigate potential negative consequences of having some women designated as leaders.

Support from Allies

Along with empowerment of young urban women, the YUW project aimed to ensure that allies and stakeholders recognise young women's experiences related to work, livelihoods and SRHR and support their demands for change. The relevant project indicator to measure this was a 40% increase from the baseline of targeted civil society and government leaders of influence voicing their support for young women's experiences related to work, livelihoods, SRHR and GBV, soliciting and/or incorporating their input and supporting their demands for change

There was limited direct evidence of achievement of this indicator relating to civil society and government leaders voicing support for YUW from the data gathered for the evaluation, and it was not possible to measure the indicator as stated as there was no available baseline for comparison. The success of some advocacy initiatives with municipal authorities to improve public service infrastructure suggests that there may have been some increased support from leaders within these organisations for the demands of YUW, but this was not directly reported in the evaluation findings from each country (and the changes to services may have been due to other factors e.g. support from staff rather than leaders of the relevant organisation). Rather than support from leaders, the greatest evidence of increased support for YUW in the evaluation was the **increase in support from family**, particularly to reduce the burden of unpaid care work.

In Ghana, **additional examples of support** for YUW from external stakeholders included the Ministry of Gender inviting YUW to exhibit photos of the project at a 'Gender Dialogue', a social worker in Accra including an allocation in her organisations annual budget to collaborate with the YUW project and a radio producer willing to give free airtime to the YUW if the project continued. Other examples included support from municipal authorities in identifying schools for the placement of YUW who were interested in returning to school, officers from the Trade Union Congress assisting with drafting the constitution for the Young Urban Women's Movement being formed by the YUW, and partner organisations being involved as facilitators, resource people and coordinators in some of the YUW project activities. Overall, project staff reported the number of project partner organisation has increased from 13 in 2013 to 42 in 2015.

In South Africa, the implementing organisations **held meetings and events with allies**, including other NGOs, the South African Police Service, the University of Witwatersrand and a side event at the African Union head of state meeting. In India, relationships were created with the **private sector**, with one

company providing tailoring machines to the project under their 'corporate social responsibility' program,[36] as well as with the State Women's Commissions in two project areas.[37]

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Although the YUW project successfully engaged with various allies in all countries, this engagement appeared more focused on achieving practical outcomes, such as improved infrastructure, rather than focused on encouraging civil society and government leaders to speak out publicly in support of young urban women needs, the stated project indicator. While an admirable aim, and potentially useful in inspiring changes in community norms and practices, engaging leaders to speak out publicly requires a specific set of skills and activities that was quite different to the other aspects of the project, and was possibly not realistic within the project time frame given the breadth of work being undertaken. Understandably, the implementing organisations focused on the education and empowerment of the young women, including through the building of alliances with other organisations.

Thus while there was limited evidence of achievement of the indicator as stated, the project was successful in engaging allies and stakeholders to support young women and their issues. It appeared that depth of relationships with allies varied between sites (from 'once off' engagement to more ongoing relationships), as did the type of organisations engaged with. Stronger relationships with allies, along with a longer time frame to effect change, may have also assisted in progress in other project indicators reliant on the involvement of others, such as policy change.

Other Achievements, Challenges & Unintended Outcomes

In all countries, both YUW and stakeholders interviewed reported the project led to **increased confidence and ability of the YUW to advocate** for their interests. Several also referred to the abilities of the YUW being 'recognised' by others (family, community) for the first time.

Other achievements included in Ghana, although the resources centres were initially conceived as a venue for group meetings and to plan activities, they evolved into a 'learning and research facilities' for the YUW, including having computers and internet. In Johannesburg. South Africa due to requests from young boys and men to join the project, two of the two of the five centres created a young urban men's group, and there is a monthly dialogue between the women's and men's group.[38]

One of the reported challenges in working with allies from the government in Ghana was staff turnover within government departments; the project attempted to sign 'Memorandums of Understanding' with departments so that they would be held to what had previously been agreed, but this wasn't always possible.

There were also challenges experienced related to the increased empowerment of young women. In South Africa it was reported that gender based violence still occurs when men feel young women are 'too empowered'. Similarly, in Ghana, project officers from both project sites reported there was some isolated

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[36] As reported at the global evaluation workshop
[37] Reported in the 2015 donor progress report
[38] As reported at the global evaluation workshop

resistance from family members and community members, where young women expressing themselves was seen as 'against tradition'; this resistance prevented some YUW from attending meetings.

Strategies Used

In all three countries the vast majority of YUW reported finding involvement in the project to have brought about a positive change in their lives (Table 14). Of these, a majority expected that change to continue beyond the end of the project.

Table 14: Impact of YUW project from endline survey

	Ghana	**South Africa**	**India**
Involvement in the YUW project had an effect on their lives	99%	95%	85%
Of those, the impact was positive	90%	91%	81%
Impact expected to be sustained beyond the project	98%	92%	79%

Given the diversity of strategies used by the countries, the following section is reported by each country separately.

Note that only a subset of YUW participated in some strategies such as leadership training, and thus these are less likely to be referred to in the survey and FGDs.

<u>Ghana</u>

According to the endline survey in Ghana, the YUW overall found reported the activities across the different project areas to be useful, with the highest being activities on decent work (90% said very useful) and the lowest being activities on leadership (80% said very useful). The YUW rated formal groups (37%) and awareness and training sessions (30%) as the most useful project activities. Similarly, the Most Significant Change stories that came out of the FGDs, showed change happening through training programmes on leadership, decent work and empowerment. The group meetings were considered effective as they gave the YUW an opportunity to express their opinions and improve communication skills, which could be utilised during the exposure visits, which provided platforms to interact with allies. The fact that the young women are now establishing a National Young Urban Women's Movement (see earlier) indicates the value the women placed in being part of an organised group of women.

The YUW gained knowledge through both the training sessions and the exposure visits. 'Peer to peer' learning, where YUW were trained and encouraged to share information with other young women, was highlighted in the national evaluation report as a particularly effective strategy.

In terms of **decent work**, the implementing partners in Ghana used a number of inventive strategies to assist the young women in recognising unpaid care work, including: shared cleaning of the resources centres; time diaries; monitoring visits to the households of young urban women observe how boys and

girls engage in unpaid care work; and formalised discussions between the YUW and young men. Similarly, a range of strategies was used to engage young women in the project and support them in decent work, such as a loan scheme to start businesses (Tamale only) and skills development, such as beading and fashion, which were designed to attract young women to the project. Although the skills activities created a sense of belonging among the young women, these were difficult to be sustained due to the lack or capital to support all the YUW, a lack of immediate benefits (i.e. finding a job), and that the project was not initially designed to focus on these types of activities.

The most effective strategy for increasing women's access to and knowledge of **SRHR** was considered by project officers to be the exposure visits to health facilities. Sensitizing school teachers on SRHR also worked well. Meanwhile for building allies, the radio was considered the best approach for reaching stakeholders, including men.

Overall, there were a number of areas in which the project officers in Ghana felt the strategies used could have been improved. It was felt that more effort should have been made in community sensitisation and engagement and increasing involvement with allies, in particular men, to gain understanding of and support for the project. Similarly, more support could have been given to women to engage with local government who provide social and economic opportunities for YUW.

South Africa

A similar percentage found decent work, leadership activities, unpaid care work and SRHR very useful (79%; 79%; 71%; 76% respectively). The young women found the training and awareness sessions the most useful (66%), followed by the formal group meetings (29%), meeting with decision- makers (3%) and linking young women to existing networks and associations (2%). According to the FGDs, the main value of the project to the YUW were: improvements in confidence, self-esteem and self-worth (a quarter mentioned this); new friendships (a fifth); and leadership skills (a third).

The implementing partners considered the most successful strategies to be those in which the YUW were given support and resources, but were able to carry out activities themselves, from beginning to end.

Practical support to provide employment and income was also considered valuable, for example it was observed that women who had completed grade 12 did not have the money to continue their education and so sought employment. The implementing partner then conducted trainings on sustainable skills such as CV building, interviews and other interpersonal skills. Business management skills were also provided and considered valuable.

Through the FGDs, the young women themselves raised areas for potential improvement. For example they explained that in order to increase women's control over their income, providing skills training in and of itself is not sufficient to inculcate a culture of financial independence in young women. Similarly, it was felt that awareness-raising alone is not enough to bring about change and that more collaboration with government departments and agencies responsible for public services is needed, for which ActionAid South Africa and the implementing partners need established relationships with those responsible for the services.

<u>India</u>

Two thirds (66%) of those surveyed reported the project activities on SRHR were very useful, higher than the proportion who reported the activities on decent work (57%) or leadership (47%) as very useful. Forty four percent reported that the awareness and training sessions were the most valuable project activity, 15% said the formal groups, and 14% said the resource centres.

Similar to the findings from South Africa, feedback from the YUW at the national endline workshop suggested that the most valued activities were those in which the women were central to and led the activity (for example the creative activities), rather than passive participants. These activities included the making of the film on unpaid care work, a comics workshop, and the participatory research, all of which involved the women in participatory ways rather than passive involvement.

Through the FGDs, YUW provided examples of where they had negotiated better conditions both at home (UCW) and at work, thanks to the training and awareness sessions on decent work and the 'dumb box' activity that helps participants identify the time and possible monetary value of time spent on unpaid care work.[39] As in Ghana, inventive strategies to engage men, families and the community were used, such as the 'dumb box activity' and recognition and rewards for couples who had redistributed unpaid care work responsibilities.[40] Practical support to increase chances of employment and gaining income were found to be particularly useful, evidenced by the fact that vocational training (fashion design and tailoring) were the most sought after trainings.

The SRHR activities were successful in improving knowledge and removing misconceptions, especially related to restrictions around women's menstruation, through training, discussion and peer education. 70% of women in the endline survey cited the YUW group as their most valuable source of information about family planning and SRHR. Women in the FGDs also reported delaying pregnancies thanks to their knowledge of family planning. Sensitizing school teachers on the need for specific washrooms for girls was reported to work well to reduce dropouts. Interlinking SRHR with vocational training helped to overcome the initial cultural barriers to talking about SRHR. However, the strategies used were not thought to be effective in increasing access to SRHR services.

As part of their leadership capacity building training, young women met with officials to advocate for better access to basic services; as described earlier under the unpaid care work and campaigning sections. Infrastructure improvements, such as street lighting, were introduced thanks to safety walks and safety audits, which also increased women's confidence and awareness.

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[39] In the dumb box activity women record the unpaid care work they do during a month and assign a monetary value to it. At the global evaluation workshop it was reported that many men and women were surprised that the value of the unpaid care work performed in a month was equivalent or more to what their husbands were earning.
[40] As reported at the global evaluation workshop; this included going door-to-door in Chennai to provide recognition and reward to couples, and public oaths in from the community

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Overall the young women appeared very satisfied with the strategies used by the project; the majority of young women reported the project activities on the different areas (decent work, unpaid care work, SRHR and leadership) were very useful, and that the project had a positive impact on their lives that they expected to be sustained beyond the end of the project.

Awareness and training sessions were popular in all countries, with most of those in South Africa and India reporting these as the most useful project activity, compared to Ghana where a greater proportion reported the formal YUW groups were the most useful project activity. Practical skills training, although not initially intended as a main area of project focus, were very popular in all settings, and acted as a drawcard to the project. Few young women reported activities such as meeting with decision makers and linking to existing networks as the most useful project activity, likely reflecting the lesser project emphasis on these as well as possibly the lesser interest of the young women in these. Women also particularly valued the activities in which they had active involvement in planning or implementing, rather than as a passive participant. These findings highlight the need to ensure project activities meet women's needs, and are done in a way that is appealing to them, such as being participatory and/or practical. This may also help maintain the interest and engagement of the young women, which in turn will also enhance overall project outcomes.

Interlinking of Themes

A key approach of the YUW project was to interlink the themes of women's economic participation and SRHR; the scoping studies that informed the project found young women's ability to access SRHR services and their control over their own bodies directly impacted on their ability to engage in livelihood opportunities including paid employment.

One of the donor representatives interviewed reported the cross-sectorial work was one of the two main motivations to fund the project, and both donor representatives interviewed thought that interlinking themes would results in more sustained change.

In all three countries, the themes were first introduced separately, and the notion of interlinking themes, both in the project and in the young women's lives, was then introduced by talking about all the themes together at meetings and trainings[41],[42]. For the YUW, recognising each of the themes was new, and it **took time** for the women to learn and understand these concepts individually, let alone the interlinkages between them. Activities were then undertaken that included multiple themes (e.g. in Ghana and South Africa the YUW produced dramas that included multiple themes within them). Research to examine how the themes relate to each other was conducted in 2015, in which some of the young women were closely involved (as interviewers or interviewees).

It was **not defined** at the project outset what was 'meant' by interlinking in practical terms, in terms of how an 'interlinked' project might be implemented (e.g. expected activities and partnerships). Furthermore, it was not explicitly defined what an interlinked project might be trying to achieve (e.g. a theory of change to describe the expected change process, assumptions made about why and how it would work through interlinking, and/or indicators to measure the process and expected outcomes of interlinking).

Different themes were **focused on to greater and lesser extent in each country**, both due to implementing organisations capacity as well as the needs and interests of the YUW. For example, South Africa reported they focused more on SRHR than decent work, as most of the YUW were in-school and not seeking paid employment, while unpaid care work was a reported to be a greater focus in Chennai, India where many of the YUW were married with young children and there was a lack of public services and infrastructure.

The project was successful in helping the **YUW themselves to recognise** how these themes were interlinked within their own lives, which was reported from all countries. It was not only the young women who better understood that the themes were not isolate; in Ghana the project officer reported that stakeholders also increased their understanding of how these three areas affect the development of young women. There were also practical ways in which using this multi-themed approach was successful; in India, the national coordinator reported that having vocational trainings at the project resource centre made it easier for the YUW to attend, and once they were there, the more 'taboo' topics such as SRHR could be discussed.

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[41] *The three themes that were focused on were decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR*
[42] *As reported at the global evaluation workshop*

In terms of the impact of the multiple themes on project outcomes, there were some examples of **project outcomes related to both decent work and SRHR**, including the earlier reported incorporation of SRHR related policies within the constitutions of two employer associations in Ghana and the successful advocacy in Chennai, India for an employer to install separate toilets for women. It was also reported in India that new grouping of home-based workers in Hyderabad is focusing on domestic violence and SRHR awareness in addition to labour rights, and that some YUW with additional income were able to purchase home appliances which reduced the time they spent on unpaid care work, although not necessarily the responsibility for the unpaid care work.[43]

Despite these successes, in all countries implementing an 'interlinked' project proved challenging. Project staff reported that there were **varying levels of knowledge and experience** across Action Aid and the implementing organisations in the different themes, and thus capacity to implement an interlinked project. Because the practical understanding of how to interlink themes was not agreed from the outset, there were some **differences in expectations** among project staff and implementing partners; for instance, one of the international staff members interviewed reported that her understanding of the interlinking approach would have involved facilitating dialogues between ministries of health and education so they can jointly assess if they are responding to women's needs, and bring resources together. Two of the international interviewees (one staff member and one donor) also referred to the difficulty experienced during the project in how to monitor and evaluate an 'interlinked' project.

Finally, several of those interviewed at a national and international level reported that a **longer time period** was required for the implementation of an interlinked approach. This was particularly to give more time at the outset to understanding what it means to interlink (both theoretically and in practice), and to ensure adequate capacity to implement, rather than relying on this to develop along the way, as occurred during the current project.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Several benefits of the interlinking approach emerge from these results. Firstly, combining the themes within the project helped to give women a fuller understanding of their own lives and how one part of their life influences and is influenced by another. Ultimately this knowledge could help the young women to better understand the origins and complexities of the challenges they face, and be better equipped to make changes in their lives. The approach was also helpful in bringing young women in to the YUW project by offering them vocational training, which there was a high demand for among the young women. This is an approach that could be explored further to overcome challenges in attracting women to projects aiming to address sensitive topics such as SRHR, which there may be barriers to young women joining.

There were however challenges in implementing an interlinked approach, which mostly came down to the difficulties in finding implementing partners with expertise in all three themes, and the fact that a project with multiple themes may require a longer timeframe. A theory of change for the interlinking approach would help ensure that the objectives of the approach are clear, that everyone involved in the

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[43] *As reported by participants from India at the global evaluation workshop*

project shares the same understanding from the outset, and that the success of the interlinking approach could be directly evaluated.

Incorporation of Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

The ActionAid HRBA includes three key strategies which are used in all ActionAid projects. These are:

- Empowerment. In this project empowerment relates to working with YUW to recognise exploitation and empowering them to negotiate unequal power relationships

- Campaigning: Here campaigning refers to advocacy work, and working with stakeholders, for example to gain better access to public services.

- Solidarity: In the YUW project, solidarity relates to whether the programme has influenced others who are not directly linked to the programme and who are now showing support, for example working with other civil society organisations

The evaluation addresses these three strategies throughout but in this section focusses specifically on two ways in which the YUW project aimed to incorporate the HRBA: by involving the YUW in the project; and by bringing about shifts in power.

Involvement of YUW in Project

According to the ActionAid HRBA, projects should put the rights holders first and ensure participation of rights holders.[44] Participation of the YUW in this project was measured through the survey and through interviews with project staff.

The survey results show that, to a varying degree, the YUW were involved in the project itself (Table 15). The project in South Africa was particularly successful in ensuring their participation, with the majority of those surveyed reporting they were actively involved in the planning, implementation and review of project progress.

Table 15: Involvement of YUW in the project

	Ghana	South Africa	India
Involvement of YUW in the project			
YUW were actively involved in planning the program activities	41%	91%	51%
YUW were actively involved in deciding how the program would be implemented	33%	77%	41%
YUW had the opportunity to review the progress of the program	51%	90%	32%

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[44] ActionAid HRBA Resource book – page 48.

There are a number of specific examples to show how the young women participated in the project[45]. In Ghana and South Africa, young women attended regular review meetings to share their feedback on the project. For example, at the end-of-year experience sharing meeting in Ghana in 2014, the young women asked for more community awareness meetings to be held. However, it is unclear to what extent input from the YUW were incorporated into the project. In all countries the young women were involved in mid-term evaluation and the interlinkages research, either in the design stage, as data collectors or peer researchers.

The Ghana and South Africa national evaluation reports raised concerns about the degree to which meaningful participation was possible. In Ghana, most project activities were predetermined so it was difficult for the young women to make substantial changes, other than at the sub-activity level. A similar situation occurred in South Africa, where the activities were seen as being pre-designed and not self-driven and the timeframe too short to allow the young women to really generate change to the project. While some room for flexibility was possible, for example in South Africa where the project focussed more on SRHR than on decent work, the objectives still had to be met. It was felt that had the project been driven by the young women, the focus would have been different (less on decent work and more on SRHR and unpaid care work).

A further challenge was in finding implementing partners who had the skills and experience in implementing HRBA-based projects. While in India all partners had previously worked on projects that were based on a HRBA, in South Africa, the partners needed training in ActionAid's HRBA, and this training only occurred in 2016, towards the end of the YUW project.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

While donor-funded projects are often limited in terms of flexibility of content once the project has been approved, for ActionAid to run truly feminist, participatory projects, time and resources must be built in to allow the rights holders to meaningfully impact the content and implementation of the project. In practice this means conducting participatory research at project outset to find out what the needs and challenges of the target community are (if not already known), and together with rights holders from each project site design a project to meet these needs. Time should be built in to the project timeframe to allow for reflection on the project progress, and to make any changes to the activities as well as the proposed outcomes to ensure rights holders needs are being met.

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[45] *As reported by project staff*

Shifts in Power

The ActionAid HRBA aims to "shift power away from the powerful towards the poor and excluded."[46] In the YUW project these shifts in power were expected to be experienced at: the personal level (e.g. ability to access SRHR services and challenge gender norms); private level (e.g. redistribution of unpaid care work and control over income); and at the public level, for example at work (e.g. recognising and challenging exploitation) and in the community (e.g. young women becoming leaders and negotiating with duty bearers). Specific project indicators (described in the first section of the results) consider the progress achieved in each of these anticipated shifts in power, while the below section considers how the project performed overall.

According to the FGDs and the survey, in all three countries, most examples of shift in power occurred within the young women's private lives. In particular, shifts in power were observed in women's knowledge and control over their sexual and reproductive health rights and their ability to gain control over the decisions on whether and with whom to have sex and whether to use family planning; their ability to negotiate with family members a more equal distribution of unpaid care work; their ability to continue education; and the control they gained over their resources to achieve some degree of financial independence. A participant of a FGD in South Africa explained: *"I was financially unstable and dependent on others but after joining the YUW I am now financially independent. I develop a budget and I'm able to follow it."*

These shifts in power at the private level were largely due to changes to the women's self-confidence. Project staff, partners and stakeholders in all three countries commented on the increased self-confidence of the young women, gained through increased knowledge, skills and support groups, which in turn made them better able to negotiate shifts in power in their private lives. Young women were also able to share information and knowledge with friends and family which lead to an increase in trust and a greater ability to talk openly about sensitive topics. In Ghana, it was also reported that where young women had increased their financial contribution to households through generation of income, they were able to better negotiate with family members and participate in household decision making. This may imply that increased economic power can lead to other powers.

Although shifts in power at the public level were rare, there were cases of young women interacting with officials, campaigning for improved services, and taking leadership roles in all countries. In India, the national coordinator reported that increased self-confidence of the women has led to increase trust and support within family relationships, in some case leading to increased mobility of some YUW to leave the home or travel to other cities and countries. This then increased the women's presence in the public domain, allowing the women to participate at the community level. Again this shows how increase in power in one area, can lead to increased power in other areas. One member of a FGD in India stated: *"Following the severe harassment by my husband, today I have learnt that I can live my life alone and challenge others as a role model. I do not need a man in my life"* suggesting that the power she gained in her personal life also helped her realise a position of power, as a role model, in the public domain. In Ghana there were some examples of women questioning their employers when they felt unjustly treated.

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[46] *ActionAid HRBA Resource Book p.62*

As one FGD participant in Ghana explained*: "Due to my exposure and training on some of these basic requirements of every employer and employee, I spoke with one of the project partners and I got a lawyer who compelled them to pay my contribution and after a while, I quit the job and received the needed benefits due me."* At this stage, most examples of shifts in power at the public level required support from the project partners, suggesting the young women were not yet in a position to make these changes on their own. In South Africa, one of the implementing organisations increased staff pay in line with inflation and fixed a minimum wage for their employees after advocacy from the young women.[47]

One area in which the project did not achieve its full potential in terms of shifts in power at a personal level was regarding domestic violence. In South Africa and India, the young women were not given sufficient resources to challenge domestic violence, which was reported to be a common issues experienced by the YUW.[48] It was believed that it was not sufficient to only empower the women themselves to face this particular situation.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

While there was clear progress made at the personal level in terms of the young women gaining power, shifts beyond the personal level were rare. This is likely to be because any kind of change in power structures at higher levels would require more resources and a longer timeframe than were available in this project. Where change was achieved at the public level, it commonly required support from the implementing partner, rather than being achieved by the young women alone – which is to be expected for a project of this timeframe.

In terms of the challenges in addressing domestic violence, the lack of progress is likely because domestic violence was not a central focus in the project objectives, and partners struggled to fit it into their scope of work.

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[47] *As reported at the global evaluation workshop*
[48] *As reported by project staff*

Project Management

The main areas of project management focused on for the evaluation were the relationships between implementing organisations, ActionAid national and international offices and donors; the value and challenges on using a multi-country approach and the value for money of the project.

Relationships

Overall, the ActionAid teams in all three countries had good relationships with their implementing partners and in turn the partners reported the ActionAid teams to be supportive.

There were different experiences in terms of the experience in **establishing the project**. In Ghana and South Africa, substantial time was needed to select partners and set up the project, and. in Ghana it was a challenge to find partners with the range of skills needed across all three themes as well as experience working with YUW. In South Africa, the implementing organisations at both sites changed from what was originally proposed, which delayed project commencement. In contrast, in India ActionAid was able to work with partners with whom they had a longstanding relationship including extensive experience working with young women in the project communities. This was reported to make project implementation easier, and also meant that the partners were invested in the long-term impact of the YUW project.

All countries agreed that more time and effort was needed at the beginning of the project to ensure that partners were **aligned** on the project objectives, on the feminist approach and on ActionAid's HRBA, and building capacity around the specific themes of the study. All partners reported they enjoyed the project and learned a lot. In India, all three partners planned to continue with some aspects of the YUW project, even once the project had finished.

In terms of **donor relationships**, there was suggestion from two of the countries of the need to ensure that there was a common understanding between the implementing organisations, ActionAid and donors of the goals of the project, and donor needs and expectations.[49] From a donor perspective, a representative from one donor reported very good relationship with ActionAid, appreciating the open dialogue and willingness of ActionAid to report challenges and provide more information when required. The representative from the other donor reported a more mixed experience, stating that communication was sometimes difficult, particularly as the main contact person in ActionAid was not directly involved in the project, and that there were sometimes issues with reporting.[50] She also suggested ActionAid could have been more proactive in providing key updates between routine reports.[51] Together, these findings suggest the need to identify with donors who they would like to communicate with, and how, at project outset, and engaging in regular communication between all organisations involved around expectations, as well as to address any challenges as they emerge.

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[49] As reported by participants from South Africa at the global evaluation workshop and interview with project staff in India
[50] This included inconsistencies between the financial and narrative reports, and missing details from reports, particularly financial reports).
[51] As compared to items of interest to the donor emerging during donor questioning or field visist

Multi-Country Programming

The YUW project adopted a multi-country approach, with the intended goal of connecting women across the three countries, sharing ideas and lessons learned and enabling international advocacy.[52] The evaluation examined both the added value and the challenges of a multi-country approach. All countries found **benefit in sharing and learning** across the countries, and thought the exposure visits were helpful. However, they also felt that these opportunities for cross-national learning were not fully capitalised. More time and resources were needed to connect with other countries in a meaningful way and compare progress and lessons learned. As described earlier, the YUW project enabled some young women to participate in international events and cross-country meetings, where they could represent their interests and connect with other young women.

All three countries had similar suggestions for how future multi-country projects could be run more effectively.[53] Overall it was felt that designing a **single, standardised project** to be implemented across three different countries, meant that the project was not designed to fit the specific country contexts, culture, needs, populations, opportunities, and capacities. This in turn was felt to reduce the potential impact of the activities. Countries suggested that a country-specific project design, within an overall multi-country framework, would better allow countries to implement activities that would address their particular context, needs and challenges. In Ghana and South Africa, it was felt that the implementation of the project did not reflect the outcomes of the scoping study, and that the project had been based on experiences from other countries.

Furthermore, the countries felt that there was a **lack of flexibility** of the project content and the project was too rigid, based on the Results Framework. Similarly, there was no scope to change activities to adapt to new or changing circumstances, there was also no time built in to reflect on progress since the project was so focussed on activities. For example, many of the young women involved in the project were facing gender-based violence (see earlier section on Shifts in Power), a problem in all three countries, yet it was difficult for countries to address it fully because it was not built specifically into the project scope of work.

A further challenge mentioned by the partners and project staff in all the national reports was the lack of implementation of the **monitoring and reporting tools**, which meant that some activities couldn't be documented. Some partners felt that they did not have time or capacity to do sufficient monitoring. In South Africa training on the M&E framework was only done in the final year.

Finally, it is perhaps inevitable in a multi-country project comparisons will be made between countries, despite such different contexts. The project in South Africa, where implementation started later than in India and Ghana due to changes in implementing organisations, felt that there was an element of competition, rather than collaboration, between the countries.[54]

Taken together, these findings indicate that although there were benefits of the multi-country design of the project in terms of sharing and learning, there were also challenges in applying a standardised project

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[52] As descibed in the original project proposal
[53] As reported at the global evaluation workshop
[54] As reported at the global evaluation workshop

design to different settings, and being able to adapt activities to suit emerging needs within the one result framework.

Value for Money

This evaluation considered the value for money of the different activities carried out as part of the project. Value for money for this evaluation was considered to be the amount of impact, relative to the amount of resources spent. As shown in the table below, the budget line items were organised by the three HRBA pillars: empowerment, campaigning and solidarity. The activities included in each of these was not standardised across countries. Examples of empowerment activities include training sessions (such as on recognising exploitation) and creation of groups to challenge unequal power. Campaigning activities included awareness raising, advocacy events and working with stakeholders. Solidarity activities covered exposure meetings, solidarity meetings and forums.

Table 16 shows that in Ghana the vast majority of expenditure (76%) was on direct activities, while this proportion was much lower in both South Africa (28%) and India (24%). In Ghana and South Africa, budget lines were also provided for three objective areas of decent work, leadership, and SRHR.

Table 16: YUW Project Expenditure by country

Activity	Proportion of overall expenditure		
	South Africa	**Ghana**	**India**
Indirect costs/overhead			
Personnel/consulting	50%	15%	56%
Office/ running costs /equipment /other	21%	9%	20%
Direct activities			
Empowerment	15%	46%	12%
Campaigning	7%	28%	7%
Solidarity	6%	2%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Objective Area	**Proportion of direct costs** *(personnel and office costs excluded)*		
Decent work	21%	38%	NA
Leadership	31%	32%	NA
SRHR	48%	30%	NA

NA information not available from India at time of global report compilation

In all countries, the largest budget share (for direct activities) was spent on empowerment and overall this was the pillar in which the projects were most successful: high group membership; reduction in unpaid care work across all countries; challenging exploitation and sexual and gender norms. Much less was spent on campaigning and solidarity activities and similarly, this is where the projects had the least impact: policy change was only achieved in Ghana; and only few examples of campaigning and advocacy activities leading to change.

Ghana

In Ghana, the expenditure was split relatively evenly between decent work (38%), leadership (32%) and SRHR (30%). SRHR activities (articulating demands, challenging norms, and knowledge) were some of the areas in which the Ghana programme achieved the most highly (with all targets being met), despite the least resources being spent on that. Project officers also felt that the most progress had been made in SRHR. The most resources were spent on decent work, and the Ghana project also saw good achievements in this area, in particular in reduction of unpaid care work, changes to employment policy, and greater control over income. Although 30% of the budget in Ghana was spend on leadership activities, this was not matched in the project results, as few women taking leadership roles in meetings and events, at least as captured through the endline survey.

In terms of usefulness, over 75% of the YUW surveyed said decent work and leadership activities were the most useful. These accounted for 70% of the total budget. The young women in the Ghana programme found the formal groups to be the most useful activity (37% rated it the most useful), followed by the awareness and training sessions (30%).[55] These were also the activities on which the most resources were spent. These activities might have been declared the most useful because they had the greatest impact, or because they were the activities that were done the most frequently and reached the highest number of women. Only 10% of women said the resource centres were the most useful activity, despite its being the second most expensive activity overall.

An important consideration of the value for money of a project is the sustainability of the outcomes. Most stakeholders believed that the achievements will be sustained in a number of ways: the knowledge gained by the YUW; the skills developed leading to ongoing income; and increased awareness of SRHR in the community (i.e beyond the YUW themselves). The establishment of the National YUW movement will help continue this.

South Africa

Unlike in Ghana, expenditure in South Africa was not divided equally across the objective areas, with 21% spent on decent work; 31% on leadership and 48% on SRHR.

In line with the high expenditure, achievements in SRHR were high in terms of both increased ability to articulate demands and challenge norms and accessing services, although the quality of services was overall not good. Similarly, where expenditure was lower (decent work and leadership) the South Africa

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[55] As reported in the endline survey

project saw less impressive (though still positive) impact. For example, the increase in availability of public services was limited,

The YUW found all three objective areas (decent work; SRHR; livelihoods) equally useful (79%, 76%, 79% respectively found those areas to be very useful). According to the endline survey in South Africa, the YUW found the trainings and group meetings the most useful (66%). These were also the activities where the most time and resources were invested primarily related to empowerment.

No women reported meetings with decision makers, networks or unions to be the most useful, despite consultations and exposure visits making up almost 6% of the overall budget.

The implementing partners suggested that a more effective allocation of resources would have been to provide funds to YUW to take on further education or set up small businesses, accompanying the existing training and learning activities with practical support.

A lot of time and effort was spent building partnerships, identifying and recruiting the young women, and recruiting and training the implementing partners, for which no budget was assigned. Similarly, project staff felt that insufficient personnel time at the partner level was allocated for managing a complex multi-partner project. Due to challenges finding partners experienced in the three interlinking areas, significant funds were spent on external experts and consultants.

India

Budget information by objective areas is not available for India. The main areas of achievement in India were in acknowledging and challenging SRHR norms and increasing SRHR knowledge, participation in community and regional events, and increase in public services.

The most useful activities were the awareness and training sessions[56]. The leadership training and SRHR training were the two most expensive activities in the project and training and awareness meetings made up the entire empowerment expenditure. Campaigning activities accounted for 7% of overall expenditure but were not mentioned by YUW as one of the most useful activities.

Project staff found the training, review and learning events to be important but under-resourced. Similarly, it was felt that improved use of the monitoring tools (see section on Multi-Country Programming) (for example through the participatory monitoring exercises) would have been more cost-effective than relying on the baseline, mid-term review exercise and a detailed endline evaluation. According to project staff, the financial management systems were strengthened through the project, which will help to ensure that resources are monitored well and assigned appropriately. This will be a sustained impact beyond the duration of the project.

International Perspective

One international staff member reported that the consultancy to conduct the interlinkages research was quite expensive and savings could have potentially been made (and then used to bring more YUW to the dissemination workshop). Exchange rate losses resulted in some planned activities being removed from

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[56] As reported in the endline survey

the work plan. She also felt more money should have been allocated towards national and international advocacy, for instance with the African Union.

In contrast, one of the donor representatives interviewed focused her comments on spending on how funds were distributed between ActionAid and the implementing organisations. She also thought that quite a lot of money was spent on national and international workshops, but questioned whether sufficient benefits had emerged from these to justify this spending.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

It was agreed by all countries that although what could be achieved was affected by the resources invested, the amount of money spent on an activity was not always directly correlated to the impact of that activity.[57] This may be in part because some effort was spent on areas and activities that were not relevant to the young women, but also be because some activities are by their nature more expensive. For example, SRHR education and exposure visits are relatively inexpensive and have quick impact. Whereas, advocacy and campaigning work requires a lot of training, effort, resources and the impact is not seen immediately.

The majority of the activities' budget was spent on empowerment in all countries. While the empowerment activities helped women to make changes at the personal and private level (at which the project was highly successful), the campaigning and solidarity activities (on which much less was spent) would have helped these changes shift to the public sphere – which was less evident. As mentioned elsewhere, these are also activities that may not be well-suited to a relatively short project and furthermore they likely require more dedicated resources and attention for impact to be achieved, rather than being part of a multi-faceted project. Greater flexibility in how activities were designed and implemented, as well as greater inclusion of young women in this process, would have likely increased value for money further by ensuring activities were more likely to lead to outcomes that matched the young women's needs

Overall, implementing partners in Ghana and South Africa suggested that one way the efficiency of the project could have been improved would be to have a more flexible budget, allowing for allocation of resources to be re-assigned depending on progress in certain areas and in certain activities (see also Multi-Country Programming).

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[57] *As reported at the global evaluation workshop*

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall the evaluation findings indicate that the YUW project was able to reach a large number of YUW across the seven project sites in the three countries, and there was substantial evidence of improved knowledge, confidence and ability to advocate for their own interests among the YUW who were substantially engaged with the project. A key outcome of this was the reduction in unpaid care work for many of the YUW, primarily through negotiating increased support from female family members. The project had less success in creating change at a community and policy level, which likely reflects the relatively short time period of the project (three years), as well as the greater focus during implementation on the empowerment of the YUW rather than engaging with external stakeholders.

The way in which the YUW project was implemented varied greatly between countries, and sites within countries. Different strategies were used in each location to engage the YUW and external stakeholders, the emphasis on the project themes of decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR varied greatly, as did the extent to which YUW were actively involved in project planning, implementation and review of progress. Nonetheless, there were some common findings in terms of the YUW from all countries recognising how the different themes were interlinked within their own life and the claiming of power at the personal and private levels. From the information collected during this evaluation, it appears reasonable value for money was achieved, with the largest direct cost of empowerment matching the main achievements of the project.

The main strength of the project was the ability to educate and empower young urban women in the different settings to take action to effect change in their own lives. This was exemplified in the young women's increase in self-confidence that allowed them to participate in events to address their needs and challenge inequities in their lives. The project was also successful in providing young women with practical skills and knowledge, for example knowledge of their rights to decent work and knowledge of SRHR. In areas where the project was less successful, this was largely due to attempting to implement a large project within a relatively short project time frame, across multiple areas of work with varying capacity at each project site. In retrospect, it was unrealistic to achieve all the project intended results within the timeframe allocated, as some of the changes intended require a longer time frame (e.g. policy change), and the project also included some new partner organisations for ActionAid, and new themes of work for all the organisations involved. The size and complexity of the project, along with the evolution of program activities, also created substantial challenges in monitoring project progress, meaning the project wasn't always able to capture its achievements appropriately.

The following recommendations attempt to synthesise the learning gathered during the evaluation of the YUW project in order to inform future design and implementation of similar projects of this type. For country-specific recommendations, please refer to the relevant national evaluation report.

Recommendations: Programme Content

Recommendation 1: Define and resource the interlinking of themes

The YUW project was successful in increasing young women's understanding of how decent work, unpaid care work and SRHR were intertwined within their own lives, which helps equip them to understand the challenges they face and thus to make changes in their lives. The approach also helped attract young women to join the project through the provision of vocational training, and then more sensitive issues such as SRHR could be discussed. Interlinking of themes was new to the organisations involved, and thus time was required to develop an understanding of what this meant and what this would involve in practice.

To build on the learnings form this project, in the future, it would be helpful to develop a clear statement about what is intended by interlinking of themes at project outset, for instance the types of activities and partnerships that might be expected in an interlinked approach, a theory of change to describe the expected changes achieved through interlinking, how these happen and inherent assumptions, and indicators to measure the process and expected and outcomes of interlinking. These could evolve over time, but together would provide a joint framework to guide project implementation. The capacity of implementing organisations and Action Aid staff to implement an interlinked approach should be assessed at the outset, and plans developed to address these gaps (e.g. recruitment of new staff with required skills, partnering with organisations with existing capacity and capacity building of existing staff). Even if a project is piloting an approach for the first time, having a clear statement at the project outset about intentions would make it easier to assess progress, and adjust accordingly, during project implementation, rather than relying predominantly on an understanding to develop over time.

Recommendation 2: Consider the best way to engage with rights holders

The YUW project planned to engage young women through formal groups that would meet regularly. While this approach was successful in reaching a large number of young women, it became much less of a focus in India than initially intended. In contrast, the provision of skills training, while not initially envisaged as a major project focus, was used to attract YUW to the project in all countries and was one of the most highly valued project activities by the young women. This experience highlights the need to ensure that the engagement strategies planned match rights holders needs and interest, as well as the need to be able to adapt strategies as required (as occurred during this project).

For future projects focusing on young urban women and decent work, the experience of this project suggests it would be useful to provide practical livelihood opportunities, both as a means of engagement but also to increase project impact and sustainability in terms of enabling more YUW to obtain decent work through employment or production of goods. This should be linked to existing market opportunities, such as if there is a market need for particular goods or workers with particular skills, and potentially capital to start businesses. Increased partnership with organisations providing vocational training, expertise in labour markets (e.g. recruitment agencies) and micro-credit institutions should be considered, particularly where access to decent work is one of several project foci, and the lead implementing organisation are not necessarily the best placed to deliver these

Recommendation 3: Make gender based violence a specific project focus

SHRH was a major focus of the YUW project, within which various topics were covered successfully by the implementing organisations. A particular success was the high proportion of young women who reported they were now better able to make decisions over their sexual activity and use of contraception.

During the project gender based violence was identified as a common issue for YUW during the project, and it could have been considered under the 'bodily control' element of the SRHR project objective. However the lack of a specific emphasis on gender based violence within the project plans and M&E framework appears to have resulted in fewer project activities and support for the YUW in this area. Future projects targeting YUW should consider how gender based violence programming can be incorporated, especially given the direct links with the project themes (e.g. ability to negotiate regarding access to paid work and education, reducing burden of unpaid care work and access to SRHR services and products).

Recommendation 4: Incorporate psycho-social support mechanisms

The topics addressed by the YUW project, particularly in relation to SRHR and power relationships, are often 'taboo' and/or controversial when discussed openly in communities. The project was successful in encouraging the YUW to speak openly, and disclose experiences of exploitation and violence in their lives. However, while this disclosure formed part of the empowerment process, with young women identifying and reporting these, there were some instances where these resulted in unintended negative consequences, such as exclusion from families. Future projects should consider embedding greater psycho-social support mechanisms for YUW so that there is support available if and when such consequences emerge. This could include establishing relationships with organisations offering counselling services, organisations providing practical support for victims of domestic violence and unstable family situations, and training for project staff in how to manage disclosures and the repercussions of this.

Recommendations: Programme Implementation

Recommendation 5: Adequately consider time and capacity required to implement a complex project at project outset

The YUW project was complex in terms of the focus on multiple themes of work, implementation across multiple sites by different implementing organisations, and the intention to effect change to both the YUW themselves (knowledge, skills etc) and at a community and policy level. Despite the project successes in many areas, the three-year project timeframe was too short to achieve all the objectives, particularly given that the project involved new areas of work for the organisations involved[58] and the time required to effect changes at a policy level. This was compounded in South Africa, where the changes in implementing organisations delayed project implementation initially.

The experience from this project highlights the need to ensure that the stated objectives of future projects can be realistically achieved within the project time frame, and that there is adequate capacity available

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[58] *ActionAid had not previously worked in urban areas, and the implementing organisations had varying degrees of experience working with young women and the different themes covered under the project.*

to implement a complex project (or incorporate the required capacity building within the project activities). Although the value of interlinking themes is clear, it may be advantageous to adopt a staggered approach, focusing on one or two themes of work and/or levels of change at a time, rather than trying to attempt to do everything at once.

Recommendation 6: Appropriately sequence project activities to maximise value

Several activities undertaken by the YUW project could have resulted in greater impact had they occurred earlier in the project. This includes the research undertaken into interlinkages in 2015 and the HRBA training conducted in South Africa in 2016, as the developed knowledge and capacity could then be applied as activities are being designed and implemented. As far as possible, future projects should 'front load' these types of activities, to ensure that there is adequate capacity from earlier in the project to implement project activities, as well as maximise the ability for research findings to be incorporated into programming.

Recommendation 7: Increase rights-holders' ownership of project

In all countries the YUW were involved to some extent in project design, implementation and review of progress, and different themes of the project were focused on more in some places to meet YUW needs. However, many of the project activities were pre-determined making it difficult for the YUW to make substantial changes to project implementation during the project. Furthermore, although the project design was based on scoping studies which involved YUW, there were some changes from what was recommended in the scoping studies to what was implemented in practice. There were also challenges experienced in explaining terms such as 'exploitation' to the young women, particularly where there were no equivalents in local languages, which may have acted as a barrier to the young women having more ownership over the project.

To fully implement an HRBA approach, rights holders must be able to influence in an ongoing manner how a project is designed, implemented and reviewed. One way to facilitate this within a donor-funded project (where some specificity is required at project outset about what will be done) is to have agreed project outcomes – determined with the rights holders – but recognise and allow for the differences in how these will be achieved in different settings.[59] The involvement of rights-holders should also be included within the project M&E framework (for instance, indicators related to the proportion of project activities designed by rights-holders) to ensure emphasis on rights-holder involvement remains throughout project implementation.

Recommendation 8: Earlier, and closer, engagement with external stakeholders (if external advocacy is a priority goal)

One of the key evaluation findings was that there was substantially more evidence of achievement in the indicators related to the YUW themselves, rather than those related to engagement with others. This was likely due to the time required to build the capacity of the YUW themselves, before the YUW were then able to engage in discussions and advocacy with stakeholders, as well as not all of the implementing organisations having existing relationships with relevant stakeholders. However, if change at a community

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[59] *And clearly document throughout the project what activities were undertaken and why*

and political level is a key intended outcome, it is necessary to engage closely with external stakeholders from the project outset, in order to build the relationships necessary to effect policy and societal change (which may require a longer time frame than three years). Furthermore, early engagement may help negate some of the negative reactions of some family and community members experienced during this project.

A process of stakeholder mapping at project outset (and regular review of this) would be useful to identify existing relationships with stakeholders and prioritise which relationships need to be strengthened, and new relationships developed, in order to achieve the intended project outcomes. This includes ensuring that all relevant stakeholders have been considered; for instance, there was a large variability in the project sites as to the degree of engagement with government authorities for health and employment, despite the relevance of both to the project aims. A key group to include in the mapping are men, as many of the YUW project objectives could not be achieved without the involvement, and support of, men.

Recommendation 9: Carefully consider the need and model for multi-country programming

Although the YUW project sites all involved working with young women in urban areas, the profile of the YUW involved, and their differing needs and contexts, resulted in quite different activities being implemented at each location. While this tailoring is encouraging in terms of meeting the needs of rights holders, this made it challenging to align project activities and outcomes at each site with the overarching project M&E framework, particularly as the formal YUW groups became less of a focus in some places than originally intended. The different programming models then also limited somewhat the extent to which learnings from one country could be applied in another where different programming was occurring, and thus the value of structuring the project as a multi-country project especially given the time and personnel costs involved in central coordination.

Different models for multi-country programming could be considered in the future, depending on the aim of multi-country programming. One option would be to restrict programming to applying one programming model in different contexts, in order to test where and how a particular model works. Another option would be to set over-arching project outcomes without specifying the activities to achieve these, in order to identify different ways the same outcome can be achieved in different contexts (which would also enable promising activities from one country to be used in another). Both of these options would require some degree of central coordination and support, particularly in terms of M&E. A third option would be to consider each country – or even sites within countries – as separate projects working on similar themes, and host cross-learning activities (e.g. peer visits, learning meetings) as needs or opportunities emerge. The third option would require substantially less central coordination and support, limited to organising cross-learning activities and synthesis of common learnings and challenges if sites/countries were unable to do this themselves.

Recommendations: Programme Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

Recommendation 10: Increase M&E capacity

The YUW project was complex in terms of the number and diversity of geographical sites and implementing organisations involved, the multiple themes of work and the different levels of change intended (YUW themselves, and community and policy level). A detailed guide of participatory exercises was developed, to enable implementing partner organisations to monitor and assess progress against the results framework. However, the implementing organisations had varying levels of personnel and skills for to implement project monitoring, and there was no ongoing dedicated central support for project M&E. The limited relevant monitoring information collected throughout the project resulted in a disproportionate reliance on the evaluations conducted by external consultants at baseline, mid-term and endline to assess the extent to which the project objectives had been achieved.

In the future, a project of this size and complexity requires a dedicated staff person for project M&E, in order to develop appropriate M&E frameworks and processes, ensure adequate capacity in the field to implement this, and work closely with any consultants engaged to undertake independent evaluations at a national and international level.

Recommendation 11: Ensure an appropriate M&E framework

The YUW project had a detailed project logframe and associated indicators, which articulated the various aims of the project and how these would be achieved. However, there were some limitations with the M&E framework, as it did not adequately capturing the intentions of the project (e.g. no indicators related to interlinking of themes or involvement of YUW), and some of the indicators were not feasible to measure or achieve during the project (e.g. multiple measures within one indicator, unrealistic targets). Although various data collection tools to measure progress towards indicators were developed during the project, these appear to have been inconsistently applied and reported. A stronger M&E framework with SMART[60] objectives, clear indicators and targets, feasible measurement tools and appropriate roles and responsibilities for monitoring (along with increased M&E capacity) would result in more focused and relevant data collection, which could then better be used to inform programme implementation.

Future project should also consider having the project M&E framework, project budget and activity plan aligned across the same structure, in order to more clearly express what the project is trying to achieve (objectives), how it plans to achieve this (activities and budget) and how this will be monitored. These documents could be structured around the existing ActionAid HRBA pillars of empowerment, campaigning and solidarity, or by key project themes.

Recommendation 12: Consider alternative monitoring and evaluation approaches

The YUW project included externally conducted baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations within the project plan, and provided detailed guidance on participatory exercises that could be used by implementing partners to monitor project progress. However, the monitoring tools were inconsistently applied and reported, and may not have all been appropriate or feasible for partner organisations to

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[60] *Specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and time-bound*

implement. Evaluation of the project relied largely on collecting information at the end of the project and comparing this with possible with data collected at baseline, which created measurement challenges as not all relevant information was collected at baseline (due to the changing nature of how the project was implemented at the different sites, and what information it was felt appropriate to collect at project outset), relied heavily on retrospective reporting of outcomes, and did not incorporate assessment of YUW moving into, and out of, the project over time

For project monitoring, it is necessary to design a monitoring framework that enables the critical project information to be collected in a feasible and timely manner, and that this monitoring data is able to directly inform programming. This requires ensuring that the implementing organisation and project rights holders have the necessary technical skills and time to collect monitoring data and see it as a core part of their activities. It is also necessary to ensure there is time built into the project timeframe to reflect and learn from monitoring results, and flexibility to adapt the project design accordingly. Having a smaller set of project indicators, that can be easily collected regularly (e.g. a key question to ask group participants each month), complemented by periodic more intensive exercises (e.g. a participatory exercise at the end of each stage of project implementation among a sample) may be a practical approach to gather both a breadth and depth of information across a relatively complex project.

For project evaluation, a 'developmental evaluation' approach may be useful to consider for similar complex projects involving innovative programming, whereby evaluation is seen as a core part of project implementation, with evaluation findings continually being fed back and used to inform programming. Another useful approach for evaluation would be to follow a subset of YUW joining the project (e.g. every 20th) to more intensively to document different 'journeys' and outcomes through the project.[61]

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[61] *As more intensive monitoring is likely to create its own effect (e.g. greater engagement with the project), other evaluation methods would still be necessary to judge the overall outcomes of the project. However, a prospective cohort approach would offer several advantages over a retrospective evaluation approach including the identification of outcomes (including unexpected outcomes) as they emerge a*