# Break Free!

## Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report

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Break Free!

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

SAT SRHR AFRICA TRUST YOUTH-LED HEALTH

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ROZARIA MEMORIAL TRUST
Creating Opportunities: Unleashing Potential

KIT Royal Tropical Institute

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## List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **AU** | African Union |
| **CSE** | Comprehensive Sexuality Education |
| **CSO(s)** | Civil Society Organisation(s) |
| **ECOWAS** | Economic Community of West African States |
| **ESA** | Eastern and Southern Africa |
| **FAWE** | Forum for African Women Educationalists |
| **FGD** | Focus Group Discussion |
| **FGM/C** | Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting |
| **KII(s)** | Key Informant Interview(s) |
| L&A | Lobby and Advocacy |
| **LGBTIQ+** | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and other minority gender identities and sexualities |
| **MIYP** | Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation |
| **MTR** | Mid-Term Review |
| **NGO(s)** | Non-Governmental Organisation(s) |
| **PMEL** | Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Learning |
| **RECs** | Regional Economic Communities |
| **SADC** | South African Development Community |
| **SAT** | SRHR Africa Trust |
| **SRHR** | Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights |
| **ToC** | Theory of Change |
| **UN** | United Nations |

## In Memoriam

We would like to take this opportunity to commemorate our dear MEL colleague, Able Hang'andu, who passed away on 31 August 2023 in Sinda District, Zambia.

Able was MEL officer in the Plan International Zambia office and contributed to the MTR process with creativity and great professionalism. He also joined the global MTR Workshop and contributed with his wealth of experience and knowledge.

It is with a heavy heart we had to say goodbye to him.

**The Break Free! Consortium**

# Executive summary

This report synthesises the results of the mid-term evaluation of the Break Free! programme to inform the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Break Free! partners on its progress and lessons learnt.
The Break Free! programme, which runs from 2021 to 2025 with support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims for adolescents to exercise their right to live free from teenage pregnancy and child marriage. Plan International, together with SRHR Africa Trust (SAT) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) as consortium partners and the Rosaria Memorial Trust and KIT Royal Tropical Institute as technical partners, implements the programme in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Zambia, and Sudan. Break Free! also includes lobby and advocacy (L&A) at the regional level, by providing inputs into strategies of and advocating toward the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The consortium's **main goal** is to **improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health and well-being, gender equality, and women's and girls' empowerment**. To achieve this, Break Free! strengthens civil society organisations (CSOs), youth-led groups, and networks to advocate for better legislation and policy implementation to prevent child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and in some countries female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C). This is done through three pathways:

Outcome 1: Adolescent girls at risk of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy access quality and safe education;
Outcome 2: Duty bearers and decision-makers develop, resource and implement laws and policies that respond to adolescents' needs and
Outcome 3: Adolescents access quality SRHR information, education and services.

At the programme's midpoint, the Break Free! consortium conducted a comprehensive mid-term review (MTR) and reflection process to assess the degree and quality of progress made against intended outcomes. These results serve to learn and formulate recommendations to enhance implementation and improve the ability of Break Free! to realise its intended outcomes. The review looked at **contextual changes and implications** of these for adaptations of the ToC and programme activities; **progress made at country and regional level** against intended outcomes per pathway and the reasons behind this; the **meaningful participation of youth** and enabling factors to strengthen L&A by youth; the **development, functioning and added value of the partnership** and the formulation of **recommendations** to strengthen the ability of the programme to realise its intended outcomes.

The MTR used a **mixed methods approach**. It brought together routine monitoring data as well as externally substantiated outcome harvesting data reporting on achievements in all geographical and thematic areas covered by the Break Free! programme. Qualitative mid-term data was collected through 77 interviews with key stakeholders and 38 focus group discussions with adolescent boys and girls (15 – 19), youth (15 – 24), parents, and caregivers. Three hundred ninety-six (396) youth provided their perspectives through an online survey on their meaningful involvement in Break Free!. Eighty (80) women and men involved in the Break Free! partnership shared their perspectives on the functioning of the partnership. Eight country MTR workshops and a global MTR workshop helped to document additional tacit knowledge besides reflecting on all mixed methods data brought together. Due to the war in Sudan, Break Free! was not able to collect data for the MTR in that country. Consequently, this report does not provide MTR results for Sudan other than a description of contextual changes in Sudan. The KIT Research ethics committee provided ethical clearance for the qualitative midline and the meaningful youth participation survey; and Plan International Global Hub for the partnership survey respectively. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also reviewed and provided input into the Terms of Reference of the MTR.

**Conflicts in six of the nine countries and an increasingly vocal anti-human-rights movement in the region influenced the Break Free! programme, but the Theory of Change and its assumptions are still holding strong.**

Six of the nine countries experienced a high level of conflict and insecurity, which undermined the delivery of SRHR information and services for young people, caused school drop-out, migration and displacement, and has adversely affected L&A activities of the programme. Several governments in conflict or disaster situations no longer recognised SRHR as priority, thus making L&A more difficult or even impossible. The conflict in Sudan resulted in the suspension of the Break Free! programme and implementation areas were changed. Droughts in Kenya and cyclones in Malawi and Mozambique, often linked to climate change, also resulted in closure of schools and destroyed infrastructure. Despite all the above, the Theory of Change (ToC) in all these different settings and contexts remains valid to provide strategic guidance to the L&A activities.

Another worrisome development is the growing anti-human-rights movement in the region contributing to more hostile and complex L&A contexts. This made it harder to achieve changes in legislation, laws, policies, and implementation of policy and required different L&A approaches. The growing anti-human-rights movement, in combination with a shrinking civic and democratic space in several countries, contributed to increased objection towards Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Kenya, Malawi and Ethiopia declined to sign the renewed Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) commitments for CSE. Nevertheless, the MTR findings suggest that in several countries (Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Niger) political will and commitment towards SRHR programming more generally has increased in the last 2.5 years. In Zambia the political environment for SRHR-related L&A improved following elections. In addition, the political decentralisation process in Zambia also resulted in more local empowerment to address SRHR issues[1]. Some countries launched, renewed or amended acts and policies supportive towards the Break Free! objectives, such as the Free Education Policy in Zambia and the Penal Code in Malawi. Challenges in the implementation of these acts, policies or codes, were, however, also observed in many countries. At the regional level, various accountability frameworks were established. For instance, the African Union (AU) created an accountability framework to end harmful practices, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) developed the SRHR Scorecard to oversee the implementation of regional SRHR initiatives. These are powerful tools for Break Free! to capitalise on in its (regional) L&A activities.

The MTR process identified the need to describe the ToC in more detail so that it can provide further strategic direction for effective implementation. This includes a more explicit focus on targeting the local level with L&A activities to make subnational and community-based actors more aware about national laws and policies. This, in turn, can strengthen the actors' abilities to push for their implementation as well as to counteract the shrinking space for SRHR. Other opportunities are to operationalise what quality and safe education entail to design localised and context specific direction to L&A activities towards decision-makers. Within the L&A activities, there is a need to pay attention towards economic empowerment of girls, next to meaningful and inclusive youth participation (MIYP). These present important avenues to strengthen and amplify the voices of girls and young people in all three pathways of change.

1 Recent developments in Zambia since the MTR was conducted, show that there seems to be external threat from opposition actors on SRHR: the Ministry of Health informed officials within the ministry and cooperating partners to refrain from the use of the 'S' for sexuality in SRHR in official documents - based on international consensus that took place in 2021. However, CSOs have officially written back to MOH reminding them how this decision is incongruent with recent progressing policies and situation seem to be calm.

**Outcome area 1**

**Access to girl's education (enrolment and retainment) has improved in eight countries and L&A efforts at the regional level have been successful, but there is a need to sustain and expand these efforts and support girls to demand safe and gender responsive education**

The Break Free! programme, in the majority of the countries, is making good progress towards getting girls to school and keeping them in school, including through successful lobbying around re-entry policies of pregnant girls or teenage mothers. Interview data show that sensitisation and awareness-raising activities have resulted in stakeholders seeing increased value of girls' education and of keeping them in school. This is evidenced by data from school registers, which showed that currently fewer girls under 18 drop out of school (1500 at MTR against 5707 girls at the onset of Break Free!). Girls who are pregnant or who have delivered are now increasingly allowed back to continue studying, although stigma limits their participation in some cases. The targeting of a broad variety of actors and the tailoring of activities for the different groups targeted contributed to this progress. The ambition of the Break Free! programme is to further reduce this number to 1104 girls under 18 dropping out by the end of the programme. This should be achievable provided no new conflict, natural disasters and/or anti-human-rights interactions obstruct the programming.

The number of schools with minimum child protection standards in place is also increasing, namely from 12 schools at baseline to currently 178 schools. Contributing factors for success thereby were that schools recognise child protection policies as feasible avenues for making schools safer, while Break Free! made deliberate efforts to engage policy makers and assign the responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of these policies. The ambition is to increase this number to 266 schools in 2025, which should be achievable under normal circumstances.

Less progress is reported in relation to girls having support to continue their education and towards enabling girls to demand safe and gender responsive education. This limited progress on receiving support to continue education may be influenced by differences in interpretations. Some countries reportedly understood the indicator as formal support by governments, while others focused on support by parents and or communities. The quantitative data on such support can therefore not be reported. Break Free! has set an ambitious target of over 49,608 girls having received such support by 2025, which would be likely achievable in case such support is being clarified as coming from parents and/or communities. Qualitative information shows that there is still a lack of platforms and safe spaces for girls to demand gender responsive education. However, there are promising signs locally, such awareness raising in schools for the importance of code of conduct; improved communication between teachers and students and establishing segregated latrines in schools. There is also a need to specify what is meant with safe and gender responsive education, to support outcomes in pathway 1. Moreover, giving young women the opportunity to participate in decision-making bodies would improve their ability to voice their concerns. While the increased political will in most of the countries supported the achievements towards outcome 1, the volatile situation in a few countries hindered the progress made. School closures and humanitarian crisis diverted governments' attention.

**Outcome area 2**

**Several countries and the regional programme have made good progress in relation to the development of new and or improved commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws and in relation to the implementation of SRHR and education commitments towards adolescents, with scope to further scale up these achievements and strengthen complementarity between regional, national and local level**

The MTR findings highlighted the progress towards new and or improved (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs, particularly in Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia and at the regional level. These amounted to 36 changes realised in total. Other Break Free! Countries have not achieved such official documented policy changes, despite Break Free! partners actively participating in working groups and progress made in mobilising support from government officials and other

stakeholders at national and or local level in these countries. The target set for 2025 is to increase the number of new and or improved commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws, with a focus on sub-national level, to 62 by 2025, requiring a stepping up of efforts in all countries, especially because of the earlier described challenging context in the region. MTR reflections also suggested that, given the current contexts, it can be especially meaningful to focus on the implementation of policies and laws, while continuing to advocate for improvements. Most countries indeed reported progress on ensuring the implementation of SRHR and education-related commitments, laws, and policies towards adolescents. A total of 52 changes were reported, with varying numbers across countries. These ranged from three implementation changes in Kenya to 12 implementation changes in Zambia. Mozambique has not made progress on this indicator, while in Burkina Faso, there was missing data. The ambition of the programme for 2025 is to achieve 55 of such implementation related changes by 2025, making it highly likely that this target will be achieved, and possibly more can be realised. In addition, CSOs spearheaded 101 self-driven advocacy initiatives , with many of those being youth-led.

Major factors for success towards achievements under outcome area two included capitalising on the networks of the different Break Free! partners; leveraging on existing relationships with networks such as GIMAC working towards gender equality in Africa; working around AU themes; and engaging the Regional Economic Committees (RECs) at SADC and the Council of Traditional Leaders on Africa on matters of child, early and forced marriage and teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, the use of evidence in the continuous lobbying activities by different community-based organisations (including youth led-organisations); and building capacity of and leveraging existing structures (such as technical working groups and youth groups) for effective youth-led advocacy towards decision-makers, contributed to success.

The programme's progress in this area was also accompanied by challenges. These included, for instance, the complex and time-consuming efforts to engage regional decision makers within the AU. Other disabling factors were the difficulty in connecting the regional and country-level L&A; limited complementarity between L&A activities of the different Break Free! partners; and the lack of capacity-building of a diverse range of youth advocates to promote MIYP.

**Outcome area 3**

**Break Free! has increased access to SRHR information and services for young people. There are opportunities to scale up, especially through digital means, in the next phase of the programme and there is a need to strategically counter act opposition to comprehensive sexuality education**

The MTR findings indicate that young people have increased access to SRHR information, education and services in all Break Free! countries. The monitoring data show that at mid-line close to 174,000 young people aged 10 – 24 received SRHR information/education against 25,000 at baseline. The target for 2025 is set at 187,026, which is likely to be achieved. Also, at mid-line 105,000 youth utilised SRH services, including modern contraceptives, against around 34,000 young people at baseline. This means that the target set for 2025 by the programme of 80,000 has already been achieved in 2023. The fact that the targets for 2025 are (close to) being realised, allows space for the programme to focus more on improving the quality of the information, education, and services provided. Several factors contributed to these achievements being realised, such as targeted demand creation through community mobilisation towards young women and young men with effective involvement of existing youth-organisations; the establishment of linkages between local health facilities and youth groups; collaboration with education institutes; and the establishment of the YouthWyze social media digital platform. The MTR assessed this digital platform, which uses Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (now X), and radio to be especially effective in providing information to young people. It mobilized their access to services and generates data to support advocacy efforts for improved SRHR information and SRH service uptake. The strategic use of digital technology has emphasised its potential to expand the reach of high-quality SRHR information to a wider range of young individuals while also enhancing access to SRH services. For instance, at regional level, a successful initiative took place to facilitate online interaction (in addition to face-to-face interaction) between young people and traditional leaders (called Nhanga's) regarding SRHR and child

marriage challenges young people encounter. Thereby, participants reiterated the need to provide access to SRHR information and services for this group.

Challenges encountered in relation to this outcome area are the need to better define what is meant with "quality" SRH service provision; the negative attitudes of health care providers; the lack of youth-friendly health services; regulations around the minimum age of accessing SRH services; stock-out of commodities; or young people mobilised to access services being turned away due to high patient loads. Another key challenge is the increasing resistance towards CSE, particularly regarding the claim that this would trigger young people to become sexually active even though evidence strongly suggests differently.

**A relevant monitoring and evaluation framework exists, but it is not always contextualised. Applied research supports the programme's learning, but in-country and cross-country learning needs improvement.**

A relevant monitoring and evaluation framework exists that should guide the consortium at different levels in capturing progress and learnings. However, the framework is not always understood by all country consortia partners and language barriers have limited PMEL activities in Francophone countries. More guidance is needed on how to operationalise certain indicators (specifically: O1-5, O1-6, O3-3).[2] Contextualisation and input form country teams in the development of the framework has been lower than expected. Also, the learning component of the programme needs improvement. While partners appreciate that various applied research studies informed and strengthened the programme, they saw the complex coordination to facilitate in-country and cross-country learning as a major gap of the programme.

**Youth express wide acknowledgement of successful MIYP within the Break Free! programme, but there is room to strengthen youth's involvement in actual decision-making both within the consortium and within external decision making bodies**

The majority (64%) of young people across countries involved in the programme surveyed for this MTR indicated to find their participation meaningful and inclusive in terms of being able to voice their opinions within Break Free! and related advocacy efforts. Half of the Break Free! advocacy activities are led by youths (15 – 24 years old), while one in three activities are undertaken by youths and adults together. The MIYP survey findings further showed that the majority of advocacy initiatives focus on SRHR (74%), child marriage (69%) and teenage pregnancy (68%). Some examples of success through MIYP are: young people having been able to nominate young people for the Senate and Country Assembly (Kenya); youth advocates having contributed to the development of new policies such as the National Youth Policy and the adjustment of the guidelines on Community Victim Support Units (Malawi); youth having been involved in priority setting processes in neighbourhood health committees, having facilitated the integration of adolescent health and social needs in the traditional governance system in Vubwi district, and having initiated the development of a .dormitory in school (Zambia); youth having successfully influenced parliament members to pledge their commitment to promote the importance of girls' education (Niger); and girls having spoken for the first time at the pre-summit to members of the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa (regional level).

2 O1-5 relates to number/percentages of adolescent girls in the programme implementation areas who report having support to continue their education; O1-6 relates to the extent to which girls demand safe & gender responsive education; 03.3 relates to quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information)

Contributing factors to the success of the above-mentioned examples are the fact that Break Free! works with a variety of existing youth networks and groups enabled the consortium to have wider reach; the positive attitudes of Break Free! staff giving young people opportunities and proper mentoring (especially in Mali and Malawi); and the use of a cascade model allowing youth representatives to collect input from young people at the community level so that issues and solutions from these youths can be brought to the attention of national-level decision making bodies and national advocacy spaces (Malawi). Furthermore, in Zambia and Kenya Break Free! partners successfully use sport as a way to effectively engage with young people.

Challenges encountered in achieving MIYP were: the persistence of the socio-cultural norm valuing seniority and therewith young people not being listened to at policy development events or in decision-making bodies such as District Councils; difficulties in actively engaging rural youth, young people living with a disability, LGBTIQ+ youth and out-of-school youth in L&A efforts; young people not being consistently involved in annual planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation activities within the consortium itself and lack of allocated budget to have young people participate in L&A at national and regional level within Break Free!.

**Mostly well-established partnerships within the Break Free! consortium but need to strengthen the partnerships in Sahel countries; considerable effort made to involve national and sub-national level government bodies towards policy change; and room for the partnership with the ministry and embassies to improve through capitalising more on each other's strengths and networks.**

All partners across countries appreciate the efficiency and effectiveness, the approach taken, the attitudes and competencies of the various partners as well as the results and productivity of the Break Free! partnership. The high staff turn-over in many organisations poses challenges in terms of frequent knowledge, experience and networks lost and investment required to counteract this. Across countries, all partners were somewhat less appreciative of the resource and funds dimension of the partnership. Programme staff perceived budgets for their organisation as insufficient or programme activities as putting a strain on their human resource capacity. The MTR process found that a lack of clarity on the flexibility in budgeting at country level and lack of transparency on the budget as a whole, contributed to these notions. Also, partners see opportunities for further cooperation through improved collaborative planning. The MTR found that there is room to improve collaboration in the Sahel countries, where the partnerships were newly established at the onset of Break Free!. Security concerns hampered face to face meetings of staff in these countries with the staff from the global consortium-level organisations. Language barriers have further impeded collaboration, for instance, affecting the common understanding of the indicators to be reported on, related PMEL framework and ToC. These language barriers have also prevented cross-fertilisation between different countries.

In relation to the partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies, the partnership assessment conducted among Break Free! partners showed that those who had been in contact (59% of respondents) mostly shared accountability-related or other information, although over half of these also had had strategic discussions on the progress and direction of the programme with the Ministry or the Embassy. There is scope to strengthen the relationships with the Ministry and embassies, to capitalize more on each other's strengths and networks in particular.

Break Free! undertook considerable efforts to collaborate with national government bodies to achieve policy changes and to - by doing so - work towards sustainability. The national government bodies include ministries of education, ministries of health, or ministries of gender, besides local level government structures. In addition, strong links are being built with schools, CSOs and others.

In order to successfully achieve all targets of the Break Free! programme, there is a need to jointly work together. This includes a need to address concerns and lack of transparency regarding the distribution of resources

and budgets; to plan jointly to optimally use each other's capacity and resources, including with meaningful involvement of youth; and to strengthen the partnership in Sahel countries. There is also room to intensify collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local embassies in the light of the shrinking civil space and anti-human-rights movement, and to step up partnerships with and across government bodies at regional, national and local level.

# Conclusion

The MTR showed that numerous and significant changes and challenges in the political, economic and social context, including major conflict situations and a vocal anti-human-rights movement in the region have affected the Break Free! programme. Nevertheless, good progress has been made in all three outcome areas aiming to get and keep girls in school, to develop new and/or improved commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws as well as to implement SRHR and education commitments and policies at country and regional level. Access to SRHR information, education, and services for young people has also substantially been improved, as has the application of MIYP. Progress is less clear on some indicators that may be harder to achieve, but might also require further operationalisation. Examples of this are "continued support for education of girls" (O1-5) and "enabling girls to demand safe and gender responsive education" (O3-4). Furthermore, the need to strengthen youth involvement in decision-making both within the consortium and within external decision making, was identified. Overall, the safeguarding indicators show that girls and young women who are involved in Break Free! do not feel at greater risk, and know and trust the reporting mechanisms would they feel at risk. However, this varies strongly per country and context-specific attention is needed in countries where girls and young women report less safety or access. This is particularly crucial in contexts where anti-human-rights movements are active and young people might not be initially aware of this.

The MTR furthermore showed that due to the fragile political and social context in some countries, national level advocacy is only possible at a very limited level. As such, L&A activities in fragile contexts have focused more on sub-national levels where oftentimes more flexibility exists and where there is more scope to make changes, such as improving implementation of existing policies. At the same time, a more challenging implementation environment also calls for safeguarding considerations when involving (youth) advocates. Critical reflection on risks and mitigation strategies related to (young) people's safety prior to and during their involvement in the programme is currently lacking. L&A activities can also be improved by reaching and involving more diverse youth through schools; community-mobilisation events, as well as through digital platforms.

The review indicated that the Break Free! ToC continues to be valid but could benefit from further detailing what quality and safe education entails and a stronger focus on CSE, SRHR service strengthening as well as L&A options towards economic empowerment, especially as social changes are hard to achieve in a context where basic economic necessities are lacking.

Partners furthermore agree that connecting regional, national and lower-level L&A is important to reinforce efforts and to strategically counter act opposition to issues such as CSE. They suggest that this could be realised through the joint development of comprehensive advocacy plans by all partners – including youth-led organisations - where activities reinforce each other. Thereby it has to be acknowledged that the Break Free! is a very comprehensive programme with a budget that is not too large. This requires priorities to be set at country level based on previous experiences, different needs and different viable entry points for contextualised advocacy.

In terms of the Break Free! consortium itself, the partnership is well established but there is room to strengthen the partnerships with and within the Sahel countries. There are considerable effort made to involve national and sub-national level government bodies towards policy change. However, in order to achieve sustainable policy change, further investments are required. There is also room to further strengthen the strategic element of the partnership with the ministry and embassies. Lastly, while a relevant monitoring and evaluation framework exists to guide capturing progress and learnings, partners have applied it inconsistently. The MTR found comparability issues across countries and between baseline and mid line and limited learning exchange other than research.

# Recommendations

The MTR identified the following recommendations to further strengthen the Break Free! programme in the coming two years.

### Updating and clarifying nuances in the ToC

Based on the MTR findings, it is recommended to include a mentioning of MIYP as a strategy in the ToC. At mid-line, there is further opportunity to detail in the ToC what quality and safe education entails and to put stronger focus on L&A for economic empowerment, especially as social changes are hard to achieve in a context where basic economic necessities are lacking. There might also be a need to clarify within the consortium on how to navigate a potential inclusion of CSE (or contextually appropriate terms for school-based sexuality education) in the ToC.

### Fostering a stronger joint strategic approach to L&A within Break Free!

The MTR showed that while the current L&A activities are contributing to change in relation to the different pathways, there are also opportunities to strengthen the strategic approach to L&A. It is recommended that the Break Free! consortium per country programme collaboratively creates or strengthens comprehensive advocacy plans with clearly defined outcomes and results. Advocacy plans should specify contextually appropriate entry points; include a series of activities (including evidence generation) building upon and reinforcing each other; take MIYP principles on board; and set clear indicators for the monitoring and evaluation towards achieving outcomes and results. These plans should be designed on the basis of local level needs and ensure that they entail accountability mechanisms to inform communities about national level achievements. Further defining what is meant with quality and safe education (O3.3) would help to make the advocacy plans clearer in terms of what is expected to be achieved through L&A in this area or what process could potentially be put in place to work towards this.

### Enhancing a dedicated focus on risks and mitigation strategies related to L&A efforts in conflict-affected settings

The findings suggest it will be imperative to strengthen local-level L&A activities to ensure that they resonate with the unique country contexts in fragile environments. Additionally, responding to the learning needs of consortium partners, a new empirical study will be led by KIT on this topic to inform tailoring of strategies for maximum impact in the second half of the programme. To comprehensively address the complexities of conflict-affected settings, it will be further essential to augment the risk matrix, with particular attention to the potential risks and opportunities associated with youth involvement when they speak out about sensitive topics in a context of intensified anti-human rights sentiments (see also further below on safeguarding). By taking these steps, the programme and its monitoring system can be more effective, adaptable, and responsive to advancing SRHR and gender equality in conflict- affected countries.

### Enhancing meaningful and inclusive youth participation towards decision making

MIYP is a critical element of Break Free! and has been a successful approach towards achieving results. The programme should continue to advocate for permanent seats for youth in decision making spaces, ranging from local level (for instance village committees, district development committees etc, maybe also school boards) to national level (health advisory boards, technical WGs, national consultation mechanisms would need to continue. While youth leaders engaged in training and capacity building, there is room to increase and diversify the number of youth advocates. It would be recommended to make efforts to identify youth organisations active in rural areas, LGBITQ organisations (where possible), or mechanisms to reach out of school youths (for instance, through sports activities), and to accommodate young people living with a disability. It is recommended that capacity building efforts of these new youth leaders are followed with mentoring and coaching activities. This could provide further strategic direction for youth advocates towards how to function strategically and effectively in more formal decision-making bodies. Prior to supporting such mentoring and coaching activities by Break Free! actors, it may be useful to first conduct value clarification exercises on MIYP by these actors. That could result in a Break Free! specific guidance document on what is meant by MIYP and when and how young people could be best involved within and through the programme. The programme could potentially sub-contract the newly identified youth-led organisations or memoranda of understanding developed with them to formalise their involvement. Another recommendation is to include MIYP as an explicit strategy in the Break Free! ToC, instead of having MIYP only featured in pathway 3 as is currently the case. This would create more consistent attention for MIYP.

### Reflect on safeguarding implications beyond safeguarding indicators; identify risks for youth advocates and specify mitigation strategies

While the overall safeguarding indicators in this MTR report show a positive trend, the consortium is encouraged to reflect explicitly on what else is needed beyond reporting mechanisms for youth. This is particularly important in countries were anti-rights movements are active, as young people might not be initially informed, aware, or oversee the potential risks of advocating for SHR in such spaces. Youth involvement as SRHR advocates might pose risks to them in these contexts, and that should be reflected upon and mitigation strategies should be included in a risk matrix.

### Strengthening the operations of the Break Free! partnership towards reaching its objectives

In order to optimise the daily functioning of the Break Free! partnership so that it is in the best possible shape to maximise its results in the remaining years, it is recommended to: Increase effective communication and involve translators (rather than online translation machines) for key documentation; increase transparency about budgets, including the learning budget; better utilise the learning component and strengthen ownership through improved facilitation of country level input; strengthen the PMEL system (see further below); develop Memoranda of Understanding for the consortia and implementing partners at country level as well as with regional institutions; develop contingency work plans that can be activated in times of crisis, and enhance networks in communities so that even with crises, there are channels to continue lobby and programme implementation.

### Capitalising on and expanding collaboration with national and sub-national government actors and expand strategic partnership with the ministry and embassies

While considerable effort is made to involve national and sub-national level government bodies towards policy change, in order to achieve further sustainable policy change, further investments are required. It should be acknowledged that this is more difficult in volatile contexts, where L&A activities at community or subnational level might yield more sustainable results, by creating a favourable direct environment for young people's SRHR. There is also room to further strengthen the strategic partnership with the ministry and embassies through more strategic use of each other's' strengths and networks. In line with the partnership agreement, advances in this regard should be addressed as a shared responsibility by the consortium, ministry and embassies.

### Adjusting the Break Free! PMEL to better track progress

While a relevant monitoring and evaluation framework exists that should guide the consortium at different levels in capturing progress and learnings, further improvements could be made to the PMEL system. These relate to operationalizing certain indicators (O1-5, O1-6 and O3-3); aligning understanding of the PMEL system between countries and among new officers through standard orientation; including unintended and negative outcomes through outcome harvesting; and increasing involvement of young people in PMEL processes.

# Management response letter

**Management response to the Mid Term Review of the Break Free! programme**

The purpose of this management letter is to highlight the Programme Committee and the Board of Directors of the Break Free! Consortium's response to the Mid Term Review (MTR) findings and recommendations. We present our overarching reflections and plans to tackle some of the challenges and recommendations that will enable the programme to achieve its intended results.

Main purpose of the MTR was for the consortium to use the results to learn and improve the ability of Break Free! to realise its intended outcomes. The MTR brought together routine monitoring data and externally substantiated outcome harvesting data, with qualitative mid-term data collected by external consultants in the Break Free! implementation countries (except Sudan). Data from all country MTR reports is consolidated and analysed by KIT, and the MTR Report includes recommendations to enhance implementation based on the findings.

Overall, the report shows that Break Free! generally is on track towards achieving its intended results by 2025. We are proud of the achievements thus far, especially given the context in which we all work. The MTR Report highlights the massive challenges coming from the external context, notably from political conflict in 6 out of 9 countries where Break Free! operates: the growing anti-human rights and anti-democratic movement – also coined as the 'pushback' to SRHR; the increasing fiscal crises that continue to feed unanticipated inflation across the continent; and devastating climate change impacts affecting livelihoods and survival of people and communities. Governments are absorbed in these polycrises, often making lobbying impossible or unhelpful, while target beneficiaries struggling with survival issues are less suspectable to participation. For the remaining implementation years, we will further focus the programme, by strengthening comprehensive lobby and advocacy plans, to ensure that we can achieve realistic and contextualized outcomes for our target groups.

The MTR concludes that the programme Theory of Change is broad enough to still stand, although it recommends to describe certain strategies of the ToC in more detail, including a recommendation to pay attention towards economic empowerment of youth. We recognize the struggles of target groups within the perfect storm of crises, and we acknowledge the grass-roots request for livelihood support from the communities in which we work. Addressing these needs is well beyond the made or scope of the programme, but we acknowledge the need for lobby and advocacy for economic empowerment and where possible, joined-up programming with other stakeholders active in the area.

The growing anti-human rights movement calls for a well-coordinated strategic response. A full-fledged analysis goes beyond this management letter, but its level of organisation and funding is unprecedented and risks for the safety and security for civil society actors are real. Partners and colleagues in civil society in programme countries are best placed to navigate the sensitivities and opportunities that surround matters of adolescent SRHR, and to assess where to invest their time and resources for greatest, most significant, and most urgent impact possible. At the same time, strategic alignment is required to ensure that Break Free! as a consortium remains a legitimate, relevant, and effective actor for SRHR. In the coming months we will re-strategize to position ourselves in the coming years, as bold and outspoken where possible, and as strategically diplomatic where necessary, consciously using the unique networks, linkages, expertise, and experiences of each of the consortium organisations and their partners. Our combined presence in, and access to, a variety of decision-making spaces at subnational, national, and regional levels is a unique strength that we must use with more authority in the coming years. We will invest in the coordination of efforts in 'countering the push-back' with other SRHR alliances funded under the SCS Fund and we also call on embassies and the Ministry to deepen our strategic partnership to align our lobby and influencing work around this.

Perhaps most vulnerable to the risks that come from an environment that is increasingly hostile and intolerant to those who speak out, are youth advocates. As a consortium with a focus on meaningful youth participation, we take seriously our responsibilities to keep the youth advocates with whom we work safe from bullying, exclusion, harassment and threats – online or in real life – which might result from their contacts with Break Free! and their efforts to stand up for their rights. We have come to realize that we need to step up our efforts around the

safeguarding of youth advocates, to be more than a briefing and procedure, but rather a continuous dialogue to support youth advocates to become or remain aware of the risks related to their involvement in the program. We will allocate required resources to develop and apply, together with youth involved in the programme, mitigation interventions and appropriate responses to emergencies.

The MTR concludes that meaningful youth participation is a critical element of Break Free! and that it has been a successful approach towards achieving results. To further strengthen the impact, it is recommended to increase the number of youth advocates and place more focus on diversity in terms of (gender) identities; urban and rural youth; in-school and out-of- school youth; and accommodating young people living with a disability. Country teams have called for more guidance regarding diversity and inclusion and the Programme Committee, and the consortium Desk will prioritize this in the coming months, in particular focusing on encouraging contextualized conversations at country and local level around what inclusion entails and how a more diverse group of young people can be best involved within and through the programme.

The findings of the partnership study of MTR are positive regarding power relations and collaboration in the consortium. Recommendations to further strengthen the collaboration include improvement of communication, in particular overcoming the French-English language barrier and strengthening the partnership with and within the Sahel countries. The need to improve coordination to facilitate in-country and cross-country learning is acknowledged and supporting a joint ownership and structure with improved opportunities for country teams to bring learning topics to agenda, will be prioritized. Furthermore, we already have embarked on a strategy to better incorporate country level input into the consortium strategies and interventions, by engaging the country coordinators more consistently with the Programme Committee.

The MTR report includes a few recommendations with regards to PMEL, including the need for guidance on the operationalisation and contextualization of specific indicators to ensure comparability between base-, mid- and end-line evaluations. The consortium's PMEL working group in the next couple of months will focus on reviewing the indicator framework, developing guidance for further operationalization of key indicators; potentially identifying 'nice to have' and 'need to have' indicators; and on reflecting on ambition levels and adjusting targets accordingly. Finally, the Programme Committee and Board of Directors wish to expressly mention that significant time, energy focus, and budget has been spent on compliance, notably on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Guidance on indicators and disaggregation levels for the rigid and highly detailed reporting framework was received only after reporting systems had been set up. In its current form, IATI reporting requires much more time than initially planned, which has affected our ability and resources to focus on other, more participatory and adapted PMEL issues and tasks.

The Program Committee and the Board of Directors of the Break Free! Consortium wish to acknowledge all colleagues from the consortium Desk, FAWE, Plan International and SAT as well as their offices, chapters and partner organisations involved in Break Free! for their time, effort, knowledge and insights put into the MTR of the program and the partnership. Great appreciation also goes to the KIT Royal Tropical Institute, technical partner to the consortium, for putting together and analysing the incredible amount of data and information.

We wish to thank the Ministry for the continued support to Break Free! The steadfastness of the Ministry in this development work and on the human rights that underpin it, during global upheavals and anti-rights movements has remained key to the success of Break Free! and all consortia.

On behalf of the Break Free! Programme Committee and Board of Directors,

Ms. G. Reus-Deelder, National Director
Plan International Nederland

Mr. Jonathan Gunthorp, Executive Director
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Africa Trust (SAT)

Ms. Martha R.L. Muhwezi, Executive Director
Forum for African Women Educationalists' (FAWE)

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Break Free! programme is funded by and in partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Strengthening Civil Society for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) partnership fund for the period from January 2021 to 2025. The Break Free! consortium consists of Plan International Netherlands, SRHR Africa Trust (SAT) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), with Rosaria Memorial Trust and KIT Royal Tropical Institute as technical partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as strategic partner. The aim of Break Free! is for adolescents to exercise their right to live free from teenage pregnancy and child marriage, supported by civil society. Break Free! is implemented in nine countries in Africa: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Sudan, and Zambia. It also includes a L&A component at the regional continental level.

To enhance common understanding of the context, a baseline study was conducted in 2021 to serve as a benchmark to track the programme's progress and achievements in the five years. In 2023, a MTR covering the period 2021 – mid 2023 was conducted, while an external end evaluation will be conducted in 2025. The findings of the MTR are presented in this MTR synthesis report.

## 1.2 Summary of the Break Free! outcome areas and main activities

### The Break Free! theory of change

Adolescents and youth across West, East and Southern Africa face considerable challenges in their health, education, and employment, due to early marriage, early and unintended pregnancies, and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to these issues. The West African region has one of the highest early marriage rates globally, and the largest percentage of women who reported a birth before the age of 15 and 18 years[3]. In East and Southern Africa, early marriage rates are also high, often linked to the also high rates of early and unintended pregnancies[4]. Access to education, information and services to improve young people's SRHR remains limited, additionally hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as conflict that negatively impacts social services for young people (see also section 4.1). As such, improved legal frameworks, policies, and strategies are needed to adequately meet the SRH and education needs and rights of adolescents and young people in West, East, and Southern Africa.

Against this backdrop, the Break Free! consortium strives to improve sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and wellbeing of adolescents and greater gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The programme aims to contribute to adolescents' fulfilment of their right to SRH, supporting their SRH and wellbeing, and enhanced equality of power relations between adolescent girls and boys. The persistent challenges that adolescents face regarding SRHR (sustainable development goal 3) and gender equality (sustainable development goal 5) are at the heart of the programme. The strategic programme objective of adolescents exercising their right to live free from teenage pregnancy and child marriage, supported by civil society, contributes to the above-defined impact.

To achieve this strategic objective, CSOs, youth-led groups and networks are strengthened to lobby and advocate for improved legislation and policy implementation to prevent child marriage and teenage pregnancy, and in some countries female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C).

3 UNFPA (2017) Review of Adolescent and Youth Policies, Strategies and Laws in Selected Countries in West Africa.
4 UNESCO (2018) Situational analysis on early and unintended pregnancy in Eastern and Southern Africa

The following three pathways of change lead towards the strategic programme objective:
**Outcome 1:** Adolescent girls at risk of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy access quality and safe education
**Outcome 2:** Duty bearers and decision-makers develop, resource and implement laws and policies that respond to adolescents' needs
**Outcome 3:** Adolescents access quality SRHR information, education and services

The first and third outcomes focus on awareness creation, changing of social norms and behaviour change by creating opportunities for girls and adolescents to claim their rights on quality and safe education (Outcome 1) and SRHR (Outcome 3). The second outcome focuses on creating awareness, political will, and civil society L&A capacity and advocacy towards duty bearers and decision makers so that they develop, resource and implement legislation and policies that respond to adolescents' needs concerning quality and safe education and SRHR. The three outcomes and their underlying pathways and strategies are presented in a ToC, see **Annex 1**.

## The Break Free! interventions and intervention areas

Under each of the three pathways, Break Free! implements several interventions in each country and at regional level. These interventions are implemented by one or a combination of the consortium partners. They vary in intensity, depending on the country's budget and focus. Table 1 provides an (non-exhaustive) overview of the main interventions under the three pathways.

### Table 1: Overview of main Break Free! activities

| Interventions | Comments/ examples |
|---|---|
| Outcome/ pathway 1 | |
| Setting standards for and training of teachers in child protection at schools | All countries |
| Advocacy for or support of the implementation of gender responsive education principles | Kenya, Mozambique, Niger |
| Community-based interventions to promote girls' education, quality and safe education, and child protection | All countries |
| Outcome/ pathway 2 | |
| Capacity strengthening of formal/informal CSO organisations, networks and youth organisations on quality and safe education and SRHR | All countries |
| L&A activities towards new or adjusted regional commitments, laws and policies at national, provincial, district, community (by-laws) level concerning quality and safe education and adolescent SRHR, incl. their harmonisation, implementation and budget allocation | All countries and the regional component |
| Contextual changes are thereby taken into account. For example, L&A in Burkina Faso first strived for a law change by 2025 at the national level through which the legal age of marriage would be set at 18 years in the country. Due to the recent military coup, this has now been replaced by a focus on provincial/community level to have policies in place towards avoiding marriage below the age of 18. o) | |
| Provide and strengthen safe spaces and platforms/networks for youth to meaningfully participate in L&A concerning quality and safe education and SRHR | All countries and the regional component |
| Outcome/ pathway 3 | |
| (Advocacy for) teacher training or delivery of sexuality education in primary/ post primary schools | Burkina Faso, Zambia |
| Capacity strengthening (incl. accountability) interventions involving adolescents and young people on SRHR and gender equality | All countries |

| Interventions | Comments/ examples |
|---|---|
| SRHR information provision to adolescents and (in selected countries) linking adolescents to SRH services | This is done through various channels. In Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and Zambia, it is done through the online platform YouthWyze. |
| Information dissemination/ campaigns/ dialogues targeting gatekeepers and duty bearers at community and district levels concerning adolescent SRHR | All countries |

In each of the nine countries, Break Free! works at national level, but also in specific districts. **Table 2** provides an overview of the sub-national implementation areas.

**Table 2: Overview of sub-national Break Free! implementation areas**

| Country | Sub-national implementation areas |
|---|---|
| Burkina Faso | South-Central region (Bazèga and Zoundwéogo provinces)<br>East region (Gourma province) |
| Ethiopia | Bahir Dar Zuria<br>Dangila<br>Fatiga Lukuma |
| Kenya | Nairobi<br>Kajiado<br>Tana River<br>Tharaka-Nithi |
| Malawi | Traditional Authority Njewa, Lilongwe districts and Traditional Authority Chiwalo, Machinga district |
| Mali | Bafoulabé<br>Bougouni<br>Kita<br>Yanfolila |
| Mozambique | Magovolas |
| Niger | Maijirgui<br>Mayahi<br>Tillabery |
| Sudan | North Darfur, now proposed in Kassala and White Nile states |
| Zambia | Kazungula, Kalomo, and Monze districts (Southern province) and Chadiza, Chipangali, Chipata, Kasenegwa, and Petauke districts (Eastern province) |

## 1.3 Reading guide

This report is a synthesis of eight country MTR reports and the MTR report of the regional component. In Chapter 2, the purpose and objectives of the MTR are outlined. Chapter 3 contains the methodology of the MTR. Chapter 4 presents the MTR findings, followed by a discussion (Chapter 5) and conclusions and recommendations (Chapter 6).

# 2. Purpose, objectives and evaluation questions of the mid-term review

Halfway into the programme, the Break Free! consortium wished to engage in a review and reflection process to help the consortium understand and assess the degree and quality of (expected and unexpected) change that has taken place from 2021 until mid-2023, and the likelihood of achieving the intended result of the programme in 2025. The focus of the MTR was on learning, and the insights will feed plans and strategic decisions for the remaining period of implementation.

The overall objective of the MTR was:

*To have up-to-date information on progress of the programme towards the intended outcomes, formulate recommendations to strengthen programme implementation and improve its ability to realise its intended outcomes.*

The specific objectives, and related evaluation questions per objective, of the MTR were:

| Specific objective | Evaluation questions |
|---|---|
| 1. To review the **contextual changes** and to analyse the theory of change, including the validity of assumptions, and to review the extent to which programme activities need to be adapted to fit reality. | Context and relevance:<br>a. To what extent has the context changed since the start of the program?<br>b. How is the context allowing the programme to be implemented as planned?<br>c. Is the ToC, including its underlying assumptions, still valid? |
| 2. To assess the **progress** of the Break Free! programme in the nine countries and the regional L&A component, towards its intended outcomes; and to give insights into how outcomes are achieved (or not) and for whom and why. | Progress against intended results:<br>a. To what extent is the Break Free! programme progressing towards the achievement of the intended 5-year outcomes per pathway and what is the likelihood of achieving target results?<br>b. What are factors for success, opportunities and challenges regarding implementing activities and achieving outputs and outcomes under the three pathways?<br>c. How does the planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning (PMEL) system support implementation and learning of the programme? |
| 3. To review to what extent Break Free! meaningfully **involves youth** in the programme, in particular in its L&A; and to extract enabling factors for strengthened youth L&A. | Youth involvement:<br>a. To what extent do Break Free! partner and implementing organisations meaningfully and inclusively involve youth in their organisation and in Break Free! activities, including in L&A?<br>b. What are the enabling factors for strong and meaningful involvement of youth in lobbying and advocacy around child and early marriage, teenage pregnancy and SRHR?<br>c. What are examples of successful advocacy efforts by youth groups or organisations? |
| 4. To reflect on the development of the **partnership** and its functioning: collaboration within the consortium, including local implementation partners; partnership with the Ministry and embassies; and collaboration with other stakeholders, including national governments. It looked at challenges, opportunities and lessons learned, with a specific focus on power relations. | Partnership:<br>a. How does the collaboration inside and outside the partnership affect the achievement of the intended 5-year objectives?<br>b. What are successes and challenges working as a consortium?<br>c. What is the added value of working in such a partnership? What are enabling factors in the partnership collaboration that contribute to the outcomes?<br>d. How does the consortium recognise power dynamics and promote equality in their collaborations? |

| Specific objective | Evaluation questions |
|---|---|
| 5. To formulate concrete **recommendations** on how to strengthen the programme both at country and global consortium level as well as to improve its ability to realise its intended outcomes. | Recommendations:<br>a. What lessons are identified from the period 2020-2022?<br>b. What changes/adjustments should be made in the Break Free! strategies and implementation to maximise its expected outcomes?<br>c. What are opportunities to strengthen the sustainability of the program?<br>d. What are opportunities to strengthen youth involvement in the program?<br>e. What are opportunities to strengthen partner relations within the consortium and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and other alliances? |

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 General overview of the mid-term review

The MTR covered the period from 1 January 2021 until 30 June 2023. It focused on the intervention areas and a variety of target groups reached by the programme (there were no comparison groups). The MTR used a mix of data collection methods using both programme and independent data collection and analysis:

- Data from Break Free! outcome harvesting and regular other monitoring;
- Qualitative mid-term data;
- Quantitative and qualitative data on youth involvement;
- Quantitative and qualitative data on the partnership.

This MTR synthesis report has been written by KIT Royal Tropical Institute, technical partner of Break Free!. It is based on eight country MTR reports, one regional MTR report, and the outcomes of nine MTR workshops (eight countries and the regional component) and the global MTR workshop (see further below). Due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan, MTR activities were paused. As such, no data on Sudan are being presented in this report, but reflection on changes in context is included for Sudan in section 4.1. Table 3 below provides an overview of all the study methods used to inform this MTR synthesis report, as well as the type and number of participants or respondents reached with these methods.

**Table 3 Overview of methods used and participants involved**

| Country | Routine monitoring data | Routine outcome harvesting | Key informant interviews (KIIs) | Focus Group Discussion (FGD) | MIYP | Partnership survey | MTR workshops |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Global | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | Global survey 396 respondents (218 adolescent/ young women & 178 adolescent/ young men) | Global survey 80 respondents (40 men; 37 women; 3 non-revealed) – 4 to 13 respondents per country/ regional and global teams. | 1 Global level workshop |
| Regional L&A component | ✓ | ✓ | N/A | N/A | | | Regional L&A component MTR workshop |
| Burkina Faso | ✓ | ✓ | 11 KIIs (Break Free! coordinator; consortium members/ implementing partners; government officials; community/ traditional leader; community health worker; teacher) | 4 (FGDs) (adolescent girls/boys 15 – 19 in/ out of school; youth (15 – 24); parents/ caregivers) (also covering issues with MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |

| Country | Routine monitoring data | Routine outcome harvesting | Key informant interviews (KIIs) | Focus Group Discussion (FGD) | MIYP | Partnership survey | MTR workshops |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethiopia | ✓ | ✓ | 10 KIIs | 5 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| Kenya | ✓ | ✓ | 8 KIIs | 5 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| Malawi | ✓ | ✓ | 10 KIIs | 4 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| Mali | ✓ | ✓ | 10 KIIs | 5 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| Mozambique | ✓ | ✓ | 7 KIIs | 5 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| Niger | ✓ | ✓ | 12 KIIs | 5 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| Zambia | ✓ | ✓ | 9 KIIs | 5 FGD (incl. issues of MIYP) | | | Country MTR workshop |
| **Total** | | | **77 KII** | **38 FGDs** | **396** | **80** | |

## Routine monitoring and outcome harvesting data.

The outcome harvesting and regular other monitoring data cover all implementation areas across each country and the regional level. So through the use of this data, the MTR is able to report on achievements in all geographical as well as all thematic areas covered by the Break Free! programme.

The routine outcome harvesting and regular other monitoring data that was documented since the onset of the Break Free! programme was analysed by the country consortia (see Annex 5 for monitoring data). For this purpose, outcome harvesting workshops took place in all countries and for the regional component in quarters 1 of 2022 and 2023. The workshops served as a platform for the partners to review the signs of change, link them to the outcome areas, establish their significance and define Programme's contribution to the change. In May through July 2023, selected outcome statements were validated by "external substantiators"[5] consisting of, amongst others, government district officers, non-governmental (United Nations/NGO) officers, AU ending harmful practice technical experts. gender/SRHR experts, youth CSO chairpersons, health workers, school staff, or community or religious leaders, who were invited to the workshop by the country consortia. In order to ensure triangulation of the outcome statements at least three external substantiators per outcome statement were consulted whether they fully agreed, agreed or partially agreed with the 'statement of the (outcome) story', 'the contribution (of the consortium)', and the 'significance of the outcome statement' besides providing an explanation to substantiate their choice. Based on the feedback from the substantiators the final outcome statements were developed.

## Qualitative mid-term data

In each country, a national external consultant, guided by KIT, was responsible for the collection of qualitative mid-term data, which also included focus group discussions (FGDs) on MIYP. In each country, the external consultant collaborated with a young researcher, especially for the youth-focused FGDs. One (1) implementation area was selected in each country based on the following criteria: the implementation area had to be exposed to several Break Free! interventions, present limited risks in relation to security considerations, and, preferably, be the same as baseline. Annex 3 provides an overview of the implementation areas selected for the qualitative mid-term data collection.

5 In Sudan, the Outcome Harvesting workshop did take place, but external substantiation did not, due to the conflict

In May 2023, in each country, between 7 – 12 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted. These key informants included the Break Free! country coordinator; one or two other Break Free! consortium members/ implementing partners; two or three government officials at district level (Ministries of Education, Health, Gender/Women); one or two community, traditional leaders or religious leaders; a community health worker and a (head) teacher. Selection criteria for the key informants were: Familiar with the Break Free! programme, for at least 6 months but preferably the entire 2 years the programme has been implemented; knowledgeable about SRHR; and able to speak about SRHR and Break Free! from their professional capacity. In addition, effort was made to maintain a gender balance, although this was in large part beyond control of the research team as participants were mainly targeted based on their professional capacity.

In each country also 5 FGDs were conducted. These included:

- 2 FGDs with adolescents 15 – 19 years (one with in-school and out-of-school girls; and another one with in-school and out-of-school boys), who had been reached by the Break Free! programme through school, community, youth club, or health service-related activities. Effort was made to include adolescents living with disabilities in the FGDs.
- 2 FGDs with youth (mixed-gender) aged 15-24 who were part of an existing youth group/club linked to the Break Free! programme and active in lobby & advocacy with as specific focus on MIYP.
- 1 FGD with parents/caregivers (mixed-gender) of adolescents and who had been reached by Break Free! either directly through community awareness raising activities, or indirectly through their adolescents being reached through school, community, youth club, or health service-related activities. Effort was made to seek a gender balance.

Recruitment of participants was the responsibility of the consultant, after consultation with the country consortia. This external qualitative data collection was not conducted for the regional component.

## Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation

Quantitative survey data on MIYP in regional, national and district level implementation areas, were collected by KIT, with facilitation of the country consortia and youth facilitators in May 2023. The survey was informed by the Flower of Participation, developed by CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality and by the ladder of participation. The anonymous survey assessed perceptions of youth on core elements and preconditions of MIYP and collected information on the participation of young people in L&A in and outside the Break Free! programme through open and closed questions. The survey was disseminated online through a link and offline through the KoboCollect app, with which the community- and youth facilitators reached out to various youth groups and clubs in the programme regional, national and district level implementation areas. Offline data that were collected were later uploaded to the Kobo server. Young people could respond to the survey in Amharic, English, French, Haoussa and Portuguese. The survey targeted young people aged between 15 and 34 years, with some countries targeting only young people between 15 and 24 years, who had been involved in the Break Free! programme either through an affiliated youth club/group or in a partner organisation. The MIYP survey had 396 respondents (178 males, 218 females). To complement the survey, two FGDs were carried out per country, during which young people were asked to reflect on their participation, support factors and barriers (see Table 3).

## Partnership

Data on the partnership was collected among global, regional, national and district level staff involved in the programme (strategic and implementing partners). The partnership assessment was aimed at identifying and assessing enabling (good practices) and disabling (lessons learned) dimensions of the partnership; unpacking the differences in decision-making power between organisations at the various governance and impact levels, and identifying recommendations for further strengthening partnership collaboration for the period of June 2023 until December 2025. This was done through an online survey (using Kobo toolbox) and an in-person sense-making session with contracted partners of Break Free! at the national and sub-national levels.

The survey design was informed by literature[6] on effective partnerships and assessed different dimensions of effective partnerships. The dimensions included efficiency and effectiveness; results and productivity; approach; attitudes and competencies; and resources and funds. It also focused on decision-making power during the partnership cycle i.e., scoping and building; managing and maintaining; reviewing and revising and sustaining actions. The survey consisted of a set of Likert-scale statements which assessed respondents' level of agreement and extent of decision-making regarding statements capturing these different dimensions. Responses were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5. Plan International Netherlands was responsible for quantitative data collection (which took place in April 2023), and KIT was responsible for qualitative data collection (a facilitated group discussion during country MTR workshops), and quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The partnership survey had 80 respondents (40 males, 37 females, and three respondents did not want to share). The partnership survey had four to 13 respondents per country/regional and global teams. About half of the respondents were involved in Break Free! for more than two years and 41% worked on L&A, while others worked on tasks such as capacity strengthening and coordination.

### MTR workshops

Eight (8) country MTR workshops and one (1) global MTR workshop were organised in June-July 2023 as described further below in the data analysis section. Additional insights from these workshops, especially around tacit knowledge, were also used as an additional data source.

## 3.2 Data analysis

Concerning the outcome harvesting and regular M&E data, the country/regional coordinators or PMEL advisors consolidated all information into a report. For the qualitative midline data, interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim, and, where relevant, simultaneously translated from local language to English, French or Portuguese. Consultants analysed the transcripts, based on the MTR objectives, and developed a summary of findings for their respective country. KIT researchers also read the transcripts and cross-checked and complemented the summaries. Analysis of the MIYP survey was conducted by KIT per country and for the regional component using Stata software. The analysis was mainly descriptive, and the core elements and preconditions of MIYP were aggregated into new variables, if relevant. Findings were presented per country and for the regional component in summary reports. The analysis of the partnership survey was conducted by KIT per country and for the regional and global components of the programme, using SPSS and Stata software. A descriptive analysis was done; the responses for the set of statements per dimension or construct were aggregated to assign a mean score. A low score of (1) represented the disabling nature of the dimension while a high score of (5) represented the strong enabling effect of the dimension on the partnership. Findings were presented in summary reports per country and for the regional component and the global partnership level.

The analysis, validation and sense-making phase ran from May to August 2023. The PMEL officer of each country coordinating organisation compiled and consolidated the data and analyses from the different MTR components (based on the summary reports of the substantiated outcome harvesting data, qualitative midline, MIYP survey and partnership survey findings). This overview was presented to the country consortia at country MTR workshops in June 2023, where the different preliminary findings were discussed by the country consortia (triangulation). The same was done for the regional component of the programme. The workshop served as a means for each country consortium to learn from the findings, reflect on programme progress, its success and challenges, how to improve MIYP, partnership collaboration, and validate the ToC and its assumptions. The workshops were co-facilitated by the country/regional coordinator and a KIT staff member. For each country and the regional component, KIT provided distance support for the remaining analyses and report writing afterwards. After this, all country MTR reports, the findings from the global MTR workshop in Lusaka and the regional MTR report were synthesised into this synthesis MTR report.

6 For the survey design the Brokering for Better Partnerships handbook and the Partos Power Awareness Tools were consulted.

## 3.3 Ethical considerations

The qualitative midline and the online youth involvement survey received ethical approval from the KIT Research Ethics Committee. The partnership survey received ethical approval by Plan International Netherlands. All participants who have been involved in this MTR have been part of the Break Free! programme.

# 4. Findings

## 4.1 Context and relevance

Throughout the MTR process, reflections have taken place on the context in which the programme is implemented. These reflections have focused on understanding the political, economic and social context and how this has allowed (or not) the programme to be implemented as planned. This section also includes a reflection on the validity of the ToC and its underlying assumptions.

### Political context

**Despite anti-rights movement and conflict heavily affecting programme implementation, an increased political awareness and commitment toward certain SRHR topics is observed**

In several countries (Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Niger), increased political awareness and commitment towards certain specific topics of SRHR programming, including the Break Free! programme implementation has been observed. At the same time, programming staff during the global MTR workshop concluded, that amidst this growing awareness for Break Free! topics, the political landscape in many countries since start of the programme was changing and growing anti-rights sentiments were contributing to more hostile and complex L&A contexts.

In Zambia and Kenya increased political will was noticed with regards to the Break Free! topics, while there is growing resistance, especially against CSE in schools. Elections in these two countries since start of the programme involved changes in the actual government, but did not result in departure from prior commitments. However, while in Zambia participants reported an improved political environment after elections that permitted Break Free! to operate freely in the advocacy space, the civic space is recently deteriorating.[7] In Niger, increased political will was noticed for opposing child marriage and promoting education, particularly as ways to increase economic growth. In Ethiopia, government commitment to end child marriage and FGM/C was shown by the development of the national costed road map to end child marriage and FGM/C, 2020-2024. It remains to be seen however whether this will be accompanied with sufficient allocation of funds to support grassroots-level or woreda-level child-and youth-focused programmes. In both Ethiopia and Malawi, resistance to CSE has increased over the past years culminating in not signing the renewed ESA commitment. For the Break Free! topics in general, however, the MTR findings suggest that in Malawi there is increased political will due to continuous engagement with policy makers and duty bearers. In Kenya, elections took place and although this involved changes in the actual government, it did not result in changes to prior commitments. In Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Sudan, it has been noted that, because of political instability and the current security crises in the countries (see more below), the government's main priority is “to protect the population” and that therefore there is little space/priority for SRHR related problems. As a result of this, political authorities in some of these countries were often not available to participate in programme related meetings, particularly at national level. Furthermore, the impact of climate change has reduced attention and funding towards SRHR related areas at local and national level because of prioritised emergency response that were required. Droughts in Kenya and cyclones in Malawi and Mozambique, often linked to climate change, have resulted in closure of schools and destroyed infrastructure.

7 Recent developments in Zambia after the MTR was conducted, show that there seems to be external threat from opposition actors on SRHR: the Ministry of Health informed officials within the ministry and cooperating partners to refrain from the use of the ‘S’ for sexuality in SRHR in official documents - based on international consensus that took place in 2021. However, CSOs have officially written back to MOH reminding them how this decision is incongruent with recent progressing policies and situation seem to be calm.

### Supportive policies and acts create a favourable environment, while implementation gaps persist

In several countries it was noted that the legal context has created an enabling environment for programme implementation. In some countries, the launch or renewal of supporting acts and policies (Zambia, Malawi) created this favourable environment for programme implementation, whereas in other countries reference was made to the already existing legal context (Ethiopia, Kenya). For example, in Zambia, the Free Education Policy, enactment of the Child Code Act No 12 of 2022 and the menstrual hygiene policy proved helpful in contributing to the aspirations of the Break Free!. In Malawi, the amendment of the Penal Code (raising the age of marriage from below 16 to 18 years), might have positive consequences on access to justice after SRHR violations, which aligns with programme objectives. In Ethiopia, the policy context created a favourable condition for strengthening linkages between consortium members, adolescents and young people, with duty bearers, authorities and line ministries in improving network capacities in lobbying and advocacy on SRHR.

However, existing policy implementation gaps in several countries were noted as a blocker towards the creation of a favourable legal context. For example, in Kenya and Ethiopia, challenges were encountered with the actual implementation of these laws and policies in place regarding child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and FGM/C, which requires scaling up of lobbying and advocacy for implementation. Also in Zambia, gaps in the nation-wide school infrastructure reportedly limited the effective implementation of the Free Education Policy.

### Growing controversies around progressive SRHR terminology , particularly CSE

There is increased objection to use of common SRHR language, with governments and other key stakeholders in several Break Free! countries objecting to the use of CSE arguing that the word “comprehensive” is considered ambiguous and encouraging morally and culturally unwanted behaviours in adolescents and young people Kenya, Ethiopia and Malawi did, for example, not sign the renewed ESA commitments for CSE. Some governments now call CSE ‘Life skills for health’, or ‘education for health and wellbeing’. Opposition to CSE, particularly in Eastern Africa, required a shift in the L&A approach, which often meant slowing down efforts while increasing advocacy toward and building support from political, religious and traditional leadership.

### Development of Regional level accountability frameworks

At regional level, the development of accountability frameworks was identified as a facilitator for programme implementation. The steps that are taken by the AU to develop an accountability framework on ending harmful practises and the launch of the community of practice on ending harmful practices by the AU; as well as efforts of RECs such as the SADC SRHR score card to monitor regional SRHR implementation, the new SADC model law and the Gender action plan by the EAC are promising and can be taken as factors that facilitate the implementation of the programme (see more under outcomes pathway two). The regional programme can leverage on the development of these frameworks and plans to further build its L&A relating to the Break Free! thematic focus.

### More local empowerment because of decentralisation: the case of Zambia

In 2022, the Government increased financial allocation to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from ZMW 1.5 million to over ZMW 25.5 million per constituency to encourage local development in rural and urban communities. This development provided the programme with opportunities to invest in social accountability monitoring for purposes of influencing budgets and plans that address health and education needs of adolescents and young people (see more on consequent results under chapter 4.2.2).

## Social context

### Conflict and insecurity

Six of nine Break Free! countries are currently facing conflict and/or security issues: Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Mozambique. In Mali and Burkina, coup d'états have taken place, in 2020 and 2022 respectively, and since then transitional governments are in place, headed by the military. In August 2023, just

after the mid-term evaluation reporting period (end of June 2023), a coup d'état has also taken place in Niger. The coups in Burkina Faso and Mali (and Niger later on) have resulted in their suspension from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as the AU. In addition to the political instability, the situation in the three countries is becoming more and more volatile, with regular attacks by armed groups. Due to conflict, many schools were closed in Burkina Faso and Niger and when people migrated to other areas, schools were oftentimes at full capacity, which prevented them from receiving education. In both Niger and Burkina Faso, a large percentage of girls, compared to other countries, are not in school, which requires a focus on out-of-school SRHR information. In Niger and Mali, it was noted that the implementation areas were relatively safe, nevertheless it was noted in Mali that because of insecurity, some youth groups from certain areas could not be included in activities. In Niger, it was noted that men and boys left the country for economic opportunities, which had an effect on the programming. In Sudan, an active war started in April 2023, which affected partners and girls and young women advocates from Break Free! Sudan to contribute to the Break Free! programme, including to the regional component. As a matter of fact, all Break Free! activities, including MTR data collection, needed to be suspended due to the outbreak of the conflict, and Break Free! has identified new regions for project implementation in the country. In Ethiopia, conflicts in different parts of the country led to the displacement of people, skewed income distribution, poverty and unemployment. In November 2022, the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed a cessation of hostilities agreement. Although this agreement brought an end to the two-year-long civil war, the war has also affected the Amhara region, where the programme is implemented. There is currently growing political tension between the federal government and the local militant forces in the Amhara region, affecting government priorities and young people's access to health and education facilities.[8] In Mozambique, instability due to the armed conflicts in the North of the country[9] influenced low budget allocation to SRH services which reportedly contributed to contraceptives stock out. Attention and budget of the governments in conflict or crisis situations was sometimes diverted to humanitarian activities or maintaining basic service delivery, and averted from sensitive topics such as SRHR to livelihood activities. The security situation in all countries required continuous flexibility and adaptability of the programme.

### Civic space

In several countries, concerns with regards to civic space have been noted (most notably in Kenya, Malawi, Mali). The extent to which this has influenced programme implementation varies across the different countries. In Kenya, for example, a shrinking civic and democratic space has become a major issue for civil society and other independent voices and actors, at all levels in the society. Despite recent progressive legislative moves to operationalise the 'Public Benefit Organisations' Act, human rights NGOs were routinely subject to public vilification, harassment, and attempts to undermine their operations. In Malawi, several vocal human rights defenders from the civic space were appointed to government positions, which has been perceived to silence civil society. However, the effect on the Break Free! programme has reportedly been limited, because the communities in the Break Free! areas in Malawi have sustained trust and remain supportive. In Mali, civil society has placed less pressure to advocate for SRHR issues as they fear imprisonment. On a positive note, increased civic space was noted in Zambia (for the period included in the MTR, see footnote 7), and in Ethiopia the revision of the CSO law, now permitting CSOs to conduct advocacy, has opened up civic space, particularly at local levels.

Reforms are taking place in the AU. There is preliminary discussion to put the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child under the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights or the AU

8 At the time of MTR data collection, while there was some unrest, implementation and data collection was possible and the programme could be implemented without interruption. Yet, at the time of submitting this report, there is increased conflict in the country including in Amhara, where the state of emergency is currently in effect, with ongoing unrest continuing to affect government priorities and young people's access to health and education facilities, as well as programme implementation.

9 At the time of submitting this report, the militant threat is likely to remain elevated in the Northern provinces, close to the implementation area of Mogovolas. Since 2017, there is continuous insurgency linked to Islamic State, which according to the UN has forced more than a million people to flee their homes and many fled ogovolas.

commission, as opposed to being an independent entity focusing on children rights. This was raised to be of concern as it may affect/ shrink the space for advocacy on children rights including the space for girls and young women speaking on the issues of teenage pregnancy, child marriage and FGM/C.

### Change in attitudes towards SRHR, girls' education and gender

In most countries, a change can be noticed in the social context showcasing a more progressive attitude amongst traditional leaders, parents and community members towards girls' education, SRHR and gender. This has mostly been noticed in the implementation areas of the programme, where community engagement and involvement of community leaders have played a critical role.

## Economic context

In all countries, it has been noted that inflation, linked to the global economic context and in certain countries to the security situation, has caused an increase in costs of the Break Free! activities compared to the initial budget planned. For instance, in Mali, the prices of fuel and other food items have risen, which resulted in additional costs for project officers at different levels. The economic developments have also led to an increase in the prices of basic health necessities/commodities and, in turn, have had a direct impact on the lives of adolescents and young people. This has in certain countries (Malawi, Kenya, Mali, Niger) led to a significant deterrence in the situation of girls and young women, especially with an increase in child marriage, early pregnancies, school dropouts and child labour. In Mali and Niger, it was noted that girls who participate in economic activities before school hours encounter challenges with school participation. In Ethiopia, inflation has affected project budgets and has led to a decreased willingness of the target group to participate in the programme due to low transportation and per diem payment (as well as reduced staff motivation/increased turnover). Indeed, challenging economic situations make girls and young women more vulnerable to negative SRHR outcomes, which is even more so the case in contexts where governments have deprioritised SRHR.

## Validity of Theory of Change and its underlying assumptions

Overall, based on the cross-country learnings it can be noted that the ToC is still valid given the contextual factors described above. However, several remarks can be made with regards to the ToC. Pathway 1 focuses on ensuring that adolescent girls at risk of CM/TP can access quality and safe education. Activities in this pathway could be strengthened by operationalising what exactly is understood as quality and safe education. Having a clear and common understanding of what this means can contribute to a targeted L&A approach towards decision-makers to ensure they are also aware of what is required for the provision of quality and safe education. Pathway 2 describes how to arrive towards decision-makers developing, resourcing and implementing laws and policies that respond to adolescents' needs. Regarding this pathway it was noted that across the countries, substantial focus has been given towards laws and policies at national level. However, opportunities are also there at local level, especially with regards to implementation of laws and policies and it is therefore recommended to highlight local level L&A more explicitly in the pathway. Although it has become clear in all countries that the economic context and financial difficulties strongly influence school drop out of girls, limited focus has been given towards this in the ToC. While programming around economic empowerment extends beyond the scope of Break Free!, L&A for girls' economic empowerment, as a main driver of child marriage, could be made explicit under pathway 2. For pathway 3, it was noted that while various countries have (L&A) activities on CSE implementation in schools, CSE is not specifically featured in the ToC. Lastly, while MIYP has a critical role in the programme, it is not explicitly mentioned in ToC. In addition to these general observations on the ToC, several country-specific changes have been proposed. For example, in Mali, the programme team suggested to change the language of pathway 2 to better showcase the focus of this pathway in Mali. This focus is not on changing laws and policies (due to the current political situation, as described above) but rather on creating a conducive environment to shape policies and legislation that meet the needs of young people and adolescents on SRHR and education.

## 4.2 Progress against intended results

### 4.2.1. Pathway 1: Adolescent girls at risk of child marriage or teenage pregnancy access quality and safe education

**Extent to which the Break Free! programme is progressing towards the achievement of the intended 5-year outcomes for pathway 1**

Outcome 1 (behavioural change) is achieved if adolescent girls receive gender-sensitive education and girls demand safe and gender-responsive education. Other conditions for outcome 1 are that parents, duty bearers and teachers prioritise and value girls' education; the capacity of parents/ caregivers is improved to practice positive parenting and that gatekeepers understand the benefits of SRHR, change norms and act. In addition, duty bearers and decision-makers are responsive to adolescents' needs (policy change), while an inclusive social movement promotes the prioritising of girls' education. The Break Bree! Programme has implemented activities at different levels to achieve the outcomes of pathway one.

At regional level, the Break Free! programme has been advocating for access to quality and safe education of girls via various platforms such as the AU where Break Free! provided input to the draft continental strategy on education, health, and wellbeing. At national levels, overall findings indicate that the Break Free! programme, in the majority of the countries, has focused and made progress towards getting and keeping girls in school. Break Free! has contributed to this by implementing different activities, especially around sensitisation and raising awareness. Countries programmes in Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia and Kenya have done various sensitisation campaigns with community stakeholders which included parents and young people, and in some countries (Malawi, Kenya), teachers, about the importance and value of girls and young women's education to improve their future prospects. These activities have resulted in a change in the attitudes and behaviour of stakeholders who now see the value of girls' education and the importance of keeping them in school.

> "There were mothers who used their girls to carry water and sell it on the street. But with the support of the Village Child Protection Committees, as soon as we see a mother use her daughter to sell during school hours, we take it back to the mother and let the girl go to school. There are even godmothers who are put in place to go round the houses to check that all the girls of school age are at school".
>
> **(Interview with a public protection official in Mayahi, Niger)**

At mid-term, much emphasis has been put on the first three indicators of this pathway (O1-1, O1-2 and O1-3), specially via awareness raising activities at national and community level in all the countries. When it comes to indicator O1-4, in Kenya, Malawi and Ethiopia, the programme focused on an improved safe school environment for girls by assessing if the minimum standards of child protection were implemented or needed to be put in place in the schools of the implementing sites. In Malawi and Mozambique, Break Free! organised capacity strengthening training for teachers to understand and be able follow the code of conduct.

> "We have created in the 21 communities, child protection committees. And these committees promote the principles and values of child protection in their communities and report"
>
> **(KII, consortium member, Mozambique)**

Some steps have been made by some countries on indicators O1-5 and O1-6, but in many countries, the progress for girls to be able to demand quality and safe education is not properly measurable. This is partly due to confusion and inconsistencies between baseline and mid-line in how to monitor this indicator (see also section

4.3 on PMEL). There are, however, some examples of progress. In several countries, girls who are pregnant or who have delivered are allowed back to continue studying, although stigma limits their participation in some cases. Activities also focused on strengthening the quality of education. For instance, in Burkina Faso, FAWE has developed in the context of the Break Free! programme a gender-sensitive education toolkit for pre-school and primary school teachers together with the National Training Institute for Education Personnel. This training aims to improve the quality of education that young people receive and to create a safer space for girls and young women. Break Free! Niger focused its efforts on lobbying the regional directorate of national education and strengthening its capacities, enabling the development and implementation of the teachers' code of conduct. This approach also contributed to sustainability, wherein these types of actions are governed by policy makers rather than NGOs. In addition, in Kenya, Break Free! advocated for adoption and inclusion of the FAWE Gender Responsive Pedagogy and School-Related Gender-Based Violence Toolkit by the Ministry of Education into the National teachers training policy to promote gender parity in education and eradication of Child marriage/ teenage pregnancy and FGM/C.

### Table 4: Indicator summary pathway 1

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original Target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O1-1 | Number of girls below 18 who left school due to CM and/or TP | 5705 | 1500 | 1114 | 1104 | School registers (retention rates/ dropout rates) |
| Note to O1-1: Target figures do not include Mali and Malawi, as no absolute values were provided. However, proportion can be found in the annex. | | | | | | |
| O1-2 | Extent to which girls drop out of school as a consequence of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy | Child marriage and teenage pregnancy are the main of contributing factors for girls to drop out of school. Once married girls can not return to school, as they have other responsibilities. A pregnant teenager may be ridiculed or stigmatised if they want to return to school. | School drop-out has decreased in the implementation area. Reason is multifold: 1) number of child marriage and teenage pregnancy have dropped, 2) girls can stay in school when pregnant. | No detailed targets | Decrease in drop-out due to child marriage and teenage pregnancy and improvement in reintegration in case of drop-out | Outcome harvesting; FGDs with girls/ boys; KII with teacher |
| O1-3 | Extent to which parents, care takers and teachers prioritise and value girls' education | Although there is an increase in the number of parents supporting their daughter's education, there are societal barriers that prevent many parents to do so. These include 1) girls' education deemed to be useless, 2) too expensive, 3) parents need more hands around the house | There is improvement in parents' support, especially in the following areas: 1) parents value more girls' education, 2) supporting education even when pregnant/ married. | No detailed targets | Improved acceptance from parents and teachers towards girls' education. Support reintegration to education when pregnant. Teachers have knowledge and skills to support girls in schools. | Outcome harvesting; FGDs with parents; KIIs with teacher |

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original Target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O1-4 | Number of schools in the programme implementation areas having in place minimum standards of child protection | 12 | 178 | 203 | 266 | Project monitoring documents |
| O1-5 | Number of adolescent girls in the programme implementation areas who report having support to continue their education | explanatory notes: Results of this indicator are not reported due to omissions and inconsistencies in the baseline and mid-term measurements. More details can be found in the annex. | | 23,629 | 49,608 | Programme documents |
| Note to O1-5: Target figures do not include Malawi, as no absolute values were provided. However, proportion can be found in the annex. | | | | | | |
| O1-6 | Extent to which girls demand safe and gender responsive education | There are several barriers that prevent girls to demand safe and gender responsive education: 1) lack of information and knowledge about the topic, 2) lack of platform and safe space, 3) restrictive social norms | There is still a lack of platforms and safe spaces for girls' demands, however there are promising signs in awareness raising in schools and advocate for specific issues, such as code of conduct, segregated latrines in schools, or improve communication between teachers and students | No detailed targets. | Girls involved in the programme have improved skills, especially in leadership and advocacy, to demand gender responsive education, e.g., safe school environment, prioritising girls' education, monitoring of policy implementation | Outcome harvesting; FGDs with girls harvesting; FGDs with girls |

### What is the likelihood of achieving target results for pathway 1?

At mid-term, the number of girls below 18 who left school due to child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy (O1-1) has reduced compared to the results at baseline. According to the data collected at mid-term we can see that there has been an improvement on this indicator which suggests a high likelihood of meeting the target for 2025. However, it should be noted that the mid-term total data exclude numbers for Mali and Malawi (numbers not available) and for Burkina Faso (where an explanation is sought for quantitative data suggesting an increase, and qualitative description a decrease) (see Annex 4).

Regarding indicator O1-2, in all countries, the qualitative data and the MTR reflection workshops highlight that the extent to which girls drop out of school as a consequence of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy has decreased compared to the baseline. For instance, in Kenya, a headteacher in Tharkara said:

> "Those who gave birth have come back to school… I have not put any restrictions on them, we encourage them to concentrate in schoolwork"
>
> **(KII, Headteacher Tharaka, Kenya)**

In Mozambique, a teacher from Namitel said:

> "In our meetings, we are having a positive impact. We are no longer registering the same [huge] numbers of CM and the number of girls in classes has equally increased"
>
> **(KII, teacher-2, Namitel, Mozambique)**

In Burkina Faso, qualitative data shows that the number of girls that drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy or child marriage remains high. This was supported by the discussions held in the reflection workshop where participants mentioned that although there has been some improvement, more actions were needed.

When it comes to the extent to which parents, care takers and teachers prioritise and value girls' education (O1-3), at mid-term, there is an improvement in all countries compared to baseline, according to the data collected at mid-term. The Break Free! programme has made great efforts into awareness raising activities and sensitisation on the importance of girl's education at various levels which indicates a high likelihood of achieving the target results. Overall, parents and tutors are now more willing to send their daughters to school and to support them while they are in school. This is encouraged at various levels, as we can see in the following quote from a government representative in Burkina Faso.

> "Yes we encourage them, even the girl being pregnant we encourage her to come, we encourage her to come and then you have alternatives to not dropping out of school because dropping out of school is not the solution and maybe a single mother but follow their classes correctly, like the others, don't be afraid, don't want to be ashamed, we advise them on this level"
>
> **(KII, Rep-Government, Burkina Faso)**

Finally, for the indicator on the extent to which girls demand safe and gender responsive education (O1-6), qualitative data shows that it is difficult to for girls to demand safe and gender- responsive education. However, at mid-term there are indications of some progress compared to baseline. For instance, the programme has offered capacity strengthening to schools on gender-responsive education, developed and disseminated code of conducts and child protection policies in schools and conducted awareness-raising campaigns at the local and national level. While these descriptions are not strictly about girls demanding safe and gender responsive education, they are an indication of relevant progress.

### Factors for success, opportunities and challenges regarding implementing activities and achieving outputs and outcomes under pathway 1

At national level, the MTR identified several success factors to achieve the outcomes under pathway 1. First, awareness raising or sensitisation campaigns were a widely used strategy in this pathway and have been identified as critical in bringing change. The campaigns did not only focus on SRHR topics, but also on the importance and benefits of girls and young women to be educated. A broad variety of actors has been targeted by the consortium through the awareness raising activities, from young people to family members, teachers, or policy makers. Implemented activities were adapted for each target group. All country teams have implemented these types of campaigns, which led to an active involvement of stakeholders. This would contribute specifically to indicator O1-3 directly and indirectly to indicators O1-O, O1-2, O1-5. What exactly made these campaigns and activities successful is not clear and needs more reflection and documentation from the consortium.

Second, to achieve a safe space in schools, some of the countries focused on developing or revising the child protection policies and teachers code of conduct in schools and conducted capacity strengthening of school staff so everyone was aware of the new policies. Another success factor highlighted in Niger was placing emphasis on building and strengthening the capacity of policy makers working on education, so that they are the ones implementing these types of policies in schools, rather than NGOs. These types of actions aim to work towards achieving sustainability by assigning responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of those policies to policy makers.

A clear opportunity highlighted by the MTR findings is the political will in most of the countries (Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ethiopia, Zambia and Malawi) to work on these topics. Political leaders and other government officials are willing to partner with other stakeholders like Break Free! to tackle different vices that stop girls' education like FGM /C, teenage pregnancies, and child marriages. In addition to the political will, in most countries there are policies or strategic plans developed to improve the education of young people and make schools a safe space for girls and young women. The Break Free! programme could utilise those policies to achieve the goals for pathway 1.

When it comes to challenges, the midline review identified several challenges affecting pathway 1. The principal challenge identified in this MTR is the unstable context of some of the countries where Break Free! programme is implemented and it plays a significant role in achieving this pathway. In some of the implementation areas in Burkina Faso, schools have been closed and the target population has been forced to move to other regions in the country due to the security situation. Moreover, in Ethiopia, due to the current humanitarian crisis the government's focus has shifted which might have an impact on the education-related investments in the country. This could also be the case in other countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso where there is an instable security situation. Furthermore, in other countries, children are engaged in economic activities to provide money to their family which is a disincentive for young people to stay in school. In addition, as presented in the context section, Burkina Faso and Niger have experienced several coups since the programme started to be implemented, potentially affecting sustainability and stakeholder engagement.

An additional challenge that garnered attention in Zambia, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique, was the absence of adequate educational facilities or the insufficiency of the existing infrastructures that could establish a secure environment for the youth. A relevant example of this is the dearth of adequately equipped toilet facilities to accommodate the needs of young people while menstruating.

Moreover, according to qualitative data and the country-specific MTR reports, it is difficult for girls and young women to demand safe and gender-responsive education. This is because girls are not represented in decision-making spaces where they can formally make these types of demands. There need to be more engagement groups and platforms that amplify youth voices at county/district level. Finally, girls who have gone through teenage pregnancy or child marriage are still stigmatised by the community which might make school re-entry more difficult.

### 4.2.2. Pathway 2: Duty bearers and decision-makers develop, resource and implement laws and policies that respond to adolescents' needs

#### Extent to which the Break Free! programme is progressing towards the achievement of the intended 5-year outcomes for pathway 2

At regional level, Break Free! contributed to the Southern Africa Development Community's Model Law on ending child marriage and their new SRHR strategy through participation in the development process; supported countries in advocating towards their Ministries of Education and Ministries of Health prior to the signing/renewal of the ESA Commitment on CSE and Adolescents and Youth Friendly Services; and contributed to the development to the AU and Southern Africa Development Community accountability frameworks on ending harmful practices (ensuring performance measurement and monitoring practises) as well as a community of practise (as part of the newly launched strategy by African Union Harmful Practices Unit (AUHPU) for children participation meeting on a quarterly basis). In this regard, Break Free! together with other CSO actors also co-designed the operationalisation plan for the accountability framework. Furthermore, Break Free! contributed to the East African Community Gender Action Plan. The Plan international African Union Liaison Office has furthermore succeeded in positioning Break Free! on strategic regional platforms such as African Committee of Experts on Rights and Welfare and the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign Network.

At national level, Malawi and Zambia recorded several revised laws to which Break Free! contributed to, such as the Penal Code and Child Code Act respectively. Break Free!, together with other CSOs, has played an active roles in such law and policy reviews. Other highlights included Break Free! Zambia having contributed to the renewed signing of the ESA Commitment on CSE; at the National Assembly, 22 Members of Parliament were mobilised and are now working as Champions on SRH and thanks to Break Free! Zambia's instrumental contribution, in collaboration with other like-minded CSOs, an SRH Committee was established in 2022. The tax on sanitary pads was reduced in Malawi, with a contribution from Break Free! L&A activities, and the tax removal is expected to increase access to pads. In Ethiopia, the Break Free! Alliance and other CSOs have influenced the improvement of different strategies during periodical revision, including the Education Sector Development Plan and the National Adolescents and Youth Health Strategy. The various L&A activities contributed to an enabling of CSOs to be represented in the development of different strategies which led to improvements of these strategies, and directed attention to girls education and access to health services for young people.

In Kenya, limited progress was reported on national-level L&A, as well as limited engagement of youth CSOs and overall visibility of Break Free!. However, in Kenya, advocacy against FGM/C seemed to get more attention (e.g. anti-FGM action plan and county-specific FGM policy) than advocacy on preventing child marriage and teenage pregnancy (some efforts to be highlighted are the review and dissemination of the re-entry policy and currently revised Education and Training Sector Gender Policy 2015). Overall, despite several achievements under pathway 2, the full implementation of policies remains a problem across countries. In the words of one key informant interviewed during the MTR:

> "Even if different policies and laws are enacted, there is [an] implementation gap (…) Moreover, policies and laws should be strengthened. In addition, attention should be given to the implementation of laws and policies. For example, you would be asked to provide evidence when you report child marriage or other cases. However, the marriage might be executed underground. So, you might not get evidence. As a result, attention should be given to this aspect of the law."
>
> **(KII with health officer, Ethiopia)**

At mid-term, the programme has not contributed to changes in laws and policies in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Mozambique. However, in Niger, the regional child protection committees established action plans against

child marriage because of awareness-raising and capacity-strengthening by Break Free!. Community and religious leaders have now started to raise awareness around child marriage themselves. In Mozambique, the Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms guidelines were revised, based on call from district level, and are now being implemented in the Break Free! implementation areas.

While tangible outcomes in some countries were not yet identified, progress can start with creating a more favourable environment for changing legal frameworks. In Ethiopia, stakeholders identified that at mid-term there was increased space for civil society, including young people, to engage in policy and strategy development, especially at local level, thanks to the contribution of the Break Free! programme. However, the sensitivity of certain SRH issues, the increasing focus of the Ethiopian government on conflict resolution and the increasing opposition to CSE remain challenges to centre SRHR on the policy agenda. In Mozambique, SRHR issues were discussed in a technical working group with government ministries and CSOs, but – as identified as a potential gap – religious leaders reportedly were left out as a target group for advocacy. In Mali, the programme provided reminders to government actors of the commitments made concerning the implementation of national and international conventions.

At the community-level, in Malawi, community bylaws were established against child marriage and teenage pregnancy and in Zambia, specifically against child marriage. Community structures have also revised bylaws in favour of prioritising girls' education over early marriage in Ethiopia.

When it comes to strengthening local and youth(-led) L&A efforts, across various countries the review demonstrated that youth were involved in SRHR campaigns, SRHR information and services provision, youth clubs/hubs, and social accountability mechanisms. As addressed in the quote below, Break Free! secured the representation of youth in community victim support unit committees in Malawi, through a bottom-up request from district level.

> "in it [guidelines for CVSUs] we had a village head, a health official, and others, but we wanted that we should have a youth representative. It is Break Free! that advocated for that. At the moment, the policy changed, the youths are now represented in that committee."
>
> **(KII with Youth-friendly health services coordinator, Malawi)**

Furthermore, young people are involved in advocacy at national and local level, for example with using scorecards and conducting SRHR campaigns. In Mali, youth participated in the development of municipal development plans (however, implementation of such action plans is hindered by lack of financing). In Mozambique, at district level, youth are now engaged in co-managing the SRH service provision of youth-friendly health service and Break Free! has also influenced the increased representation of youth in community decision-bodies like school councils and child protection committees.

The MTR demonstrates several achievements of self-driven youth-led L&A initiatives at community-level in Zambia, where young people have been participating in neighbourhood health committees (tasked with health priority setting and accountability), adolescent health technical working groups and local traditional governance structures. Furthermore, in Vubwi district, young people lobbied for the construction of an adolescent friendly space in the health facility, from the constituency development fund and in Petauke district, young people advocated for the change in the opening and closing hours of adolescent health spaces to accommodate school-going adolescents. Young people also initiated development of a dormitory in one school, through engagement of duty bearers to support construction process with funds from the constituency development fund.

## Table 5: Indicator summary pathway 2[10]

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original Target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SO2 | Description of policy/decision-making processes with improved participation of CSOs in political decision-making on adolescents' SRHR and education needs | There are an array of SRH and education-related laws, policies and strategies developed within a few years before BF! started across all nine countries. However, in some countries, the current legislation and customary law does not align with international conventions. Numerous national plans and policies for SRH have been developed and cost across all countries. The numerous gaps in policies, strategies and plans across countries resulting in failure to respond adequately to adolescent needs. A further theme emerging is that traditional and religious leaders exert negative influence on legislation and policy related to SRHR, FGM/C and CM. | Over the past 2,5 years country programmes established collaboration with CSOs, youth-led networks/groups with examples of improved participation in decision making. The different levels of participation are reported under O2.2 and O2.4. | 28 | Set out to improve on the following fronts: 1) participation of CSOs in political decision making relevant to BF!, 2) strengthened capacity of CSOs (esp. youth or women-led) | Advocacy logbook; Outcome harvesting; KIIs with government stakeholders and CSOs |
| Note to SO2: At the time of the baseline this indicator was formulated as a number, counting the policies and decision-making processes. However, following the recommendation of the baseline study, it was changes to a descriptive indicator. | | | | | | |
| O2-1 | Number of new and/or improved (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs* | 0 | 37 | 58 | 62 | Outcome harvesting; Consolidated Target Setting Template |
| O2-2 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments change their new and/or improved (international) commitments laws, policies, strategies and societal groups change their bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | There are several local, national and supra-national policies, laws and strategies that are relevant for the programme, e.g., these include legalisation regarding the official age of marriage, adolescence health, FGM, customary laws | The Programme contributed to this indicator on different levels: 1) local decision-makers to prioritise SRHR needs and education, 2) on national level to enforce legal age of marriage, include SRHR topics in school curriculum, create code of conduct for teachers, 3) on African Union level development of strategy and accountability framework on ending harmful practices | No detailed targets | Improvement is observed 1) bylaws respond to FGM policy, 2) focus on provincial L&A, and 3) contribution to more progressive laws and strategies. Generally, in crisis affected countries, the programme shifted focus to municipality and local level L&A activities. | Advocacy logbook; Outcome harvesting; KIIs with government stakeholders and CSOs |

10 Asterisk (*) after certain indicator descriptions mean that they contribute to MoFA SCS basket indicators. Details and disaggregation can be found in annex 4.

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original Target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O2-3 | Number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs being implemented* | 0 | 52 | 61 | 55 | Advocacy logbook; Outcome harvesting; KIIs with government stakeholders and CSOs |
| O2-4 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments and societal groups implemented their (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies, bylaws responding to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | No comprehensive baseline information available | The Programme contributed to this indicator on different levels: 1) local decision makers adjusted by-laws to ban harmful practices, 2) on national level implementing guidelines had been developed for policies, participating on technical groups, promoting readmission of girls | No detailed targets | Generally, in crisis affected countries, the programme shifted focus to municipality and local level L&A activities. E.g., increased activities with local (youth-led) CSOs, bylaws respond to adolescence needs | Advocacy logbook; Outcome harvesting; KIIs with government stakeholders and CSOs |
| O2-6 | Number of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth led CSOs including girls and young women) that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs * | 0 | 86 | 73 | 118 | Advocacy logbook; Outcome harvesting; KIIs with government stakeholders and CSOs; Youth survey |
| O2-7 | Description of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth led CSOs including girls and young women) (OH). | There is limited evidence on self-driven advocacy initiatives, however there are some technical committees and working groups in a few countries where youth are welcome to participate | Evidence across the countries shows self-driven advocacy in the main areas of 1) advocating for improved SRHR services, 2) incorporating SRHR content in the school curriculum, 3) adolescent friendly health services | No detailed targets | There following self-driven initiatives will be in the focus: 1) L&A by youths around SRHR and girls' educatio, 2) women-led CSOs lead initiatives on girls education and adolescence needs | CSO Overview; Advocacy Logbook; Capacity Assessment; Outcome harvesting; KIIs CSOs; youth FGDs |

### What is the likelihood of achieving target results for pathway 2?

At mid-term, the number of new and/or improved (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education need (O2-1) are 36. This total number is for a large part a contribution from Ethiopia, Malawi, and Zambia, and some regional efforts. In these countries, the improvements and changes under these strategies emanate from the continuous evidence-based L&A advocacy by different CSOs including Break Free! members. The major contributions of Break Free! are participation, technical support, and budget. In other countries, there is active participation in working groups (such as on raising legal age of marriage in Burkina Faso) and L&A efforts have taken place, but so far without new and/or improved outcomes at policy level. Notable is the little to no improved commitment in Kenya and Mozambique respectively (see Annex 4). The target set for 2025 is to increase the number of new and or improved commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws, with a focus on sub-national level, to 62 by 2025. This will

require a stepping up of efforts in all countries, especially because of the earlier described challenging context in the region.

In line with the above, the number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs being implemented (O2-3) has also augmented to a total of 52, suggesting a high likelihood of achieving target results. The ambition of the programme for 2025 is to achieve 55 of such implementation related changes by 2025, making it highly likely that this target will be achieved, and possibly more can be realised. While most countries show progress, implementing between 3 (Kenya) and 12 (Zambia), although there is no progress in Mozambique and value missing in Burkina Faso.

The number of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth led CSOs including girls and young women) that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs (O2-6) has risen to 101 in total, with a large contribution from the regional component, Zambia, and Niger, and to some extent Malawi. In light of the target 2025 being 118, results on this indicator at mid-line demonstrate a high likelihood of achieving, and possibly exceeding target results. Interestingly, the initiatives in Niger did not focus on SRHR directly, but more indirectly through facilitating awareness sessions on the harmful effects of drug addiction, exodus, the importance of community life, schooling for young girls, child marriage, sanitation sessions at health centres, at the town hall and other places in the municipality, and holding a community meeting on citizenship.

### Factors for success, opportunities and challenges regarding implementing activities and achieving outputs and outcomes under pathway 2

The regional L&A done by Break Free! is led by the Plan International African Union Liaison Office. Their strategy was to work with the AU to advocate for desired changes. Successful strategies to this effect included leveraging the existing regional partners (Plan, SAT and FAWE) as well as working around the AU theme (which in 2023 is expediating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and in 2024 will be Education) and engaging the SADC and the Council of Traditional leaders of Africa on matters of child, early and forced marriage and teenage pregnancy.

At national level, the MTR identified several success factors for achieving progress under this pathway. MIYP, such as strengthened credibility and attention from decision-makers through capacity building activities for youth-led CSOs (especially in Malawi, Zambia and Niger) emerged as a key enabling factor in this regard. However, it remains unclear what the subsequent actions and direct results of these trainings were. Youth-led CSOs in turn have come up with youth alliances in specific wards at the local level that are engaged in cascading SRHR information to their peers (for instance in Kenya). Other success factors are media campaigns and outreach activities, making strategic use of existing structures (such as youth groups, technical working groups) and strengthening them has led to their increased legitimacy to influence decision-makers at the local level (particularly in Mali and Ethiopia). Evidence-based insights have further contributed to informing the lobbying and advocacy insights, with programme staff highlighting the usefulness of the findings from the studies on — lessons learnt from YouthWyze Zambia and Malawi, the state of CSE in East and West African countries, and on youth advocacy. Collaborating with partner organisations who have a positive reputation furthermore provided Break Free! with a seat in important platforms. As the quote below about a recent law change in Zambia demonstrates, the Break Free! programme in Zambia has been building on previous efforts of consortium members to effect policy change.

> "The third factor is in line with the Child Code Act. Although Break Free! started when this discussion had started way back but we were a part of the people and part of the organisations that started providing feedback on strengthening the case with the Minister of Justice when we were providing feedback on the Child Code Act 12 of 2022. So now it is law and we did participate in contributing to that agenda galvanizing efforts among the civil society organisations."
>
> **(Key informant interview, consortium partner, Zambia).**

There are some challenges to reaching the outcomes under pathway two. At the regional level, engaging regional decision-makers is a complex process, which can be time-consuming. For instance, the limited AU entry points at regional level for CSOs. Furthermore, the lack of lobbying and advocacy activities at the regional level in West Africa has been a challenge.

Across countries, there appeared to be a disconnect between the regional and country-level programming. Similarly, national and district-level L&A strategies could be better connected. Furthermore, in several countries the partners' roles and responsibilities are distinctly separated which hinders the transfer of knowledge from the local level to the national level's L&A. For instance, in the case of AfriYAN, the organisation focuses on national level L&A in West Africa. However, because these efforts are not funded by Break Free!, the programme does not leverage on their established position and limits their role to implementing YouthWyze only (which is their primary responsibility under Break Free!). Another observation was that the involvement of youth is not as inclusive. Older and well-established youth advocates from the capital cities were invited more often to L&A spaces. The terms of 'peer educators' and 'youth advocates' are often used interchangeably, which can sometimes pose challenges in maintaining transparency regarding the specific L&A tasks assigned to young people. While working under transitional governments has been highlighted as a particular challenge, it has allowed Break Free! increased space to work with religious leaders on sensitive topics, such as the Break Free! issues.

### 4.2.3. Pathway 3: Adolescents access quality SRHR information, education and services

#### Extent to which the Break Free! programme is progressing towards the achievement of the intended 5-year outcomes for pathway 3

The regional programme has engaged at the level of Regional Economic Communities, in close collaboration with other CSOs, to develop a regional accountability framework. This framework pertains to the renewed commitments made by the ESA ministerial authorities regarding CSE and the provision of Adolescents and Youth-Friendly services. The regional accountability framework holds significant relevance for the thematic areas associated with Break Free! in terms of SRHR and the prevention of teenage pregnancy. Additionally, Break Free! has embarked on a noteworthy initiative by engaging with the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa within the SADC. Under the leadership of this Council's chairperson, a call to action has been issued to African traditional leaders, urging them to develop transformative by-laws that promote positive cultural practices. This call to action is pivotal in addressing and rectifying the negative social norms that perpetuate harmful practices, including child marriage.

At the national level, the MTR findings reveal that youth have experienced enhanced access to sexual and reproductive health information in all countries. This excludes Sudan where data is unavailable. Each country has adopted distinct strategies within this pathway. Some have prioritised CSE in schools (e.g., Malawi, Zambia), leveraged Champions of Change (notably in Malawi), or established youth clubs and hubs (observed in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger, Malawi, and Zambia). Others have concentrated their efforts on enhancing the accessibility of youth-friendly static (such as at health facilities) and outreach services (seen in Malawi and Zambia), utilised radio programming (evident in Kenya and Malawi), deployed peer educators (as witnessed in Ethiopia and Zambia), harnessed the digital platform YouthWyze via Facebook (employed in Burkina Faso, Niger, Ethiopia,

Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Mali), or initiated campaigns such as the distribution of condoms in schools (notably in Mozambique). Collectively, these endeavours have contributed to the increased and enhanced access to high-quality SRH information and education for adolescents and young people over the past two years. In select countries, notably Ethiopia and Burkina Faso, the focus has been on menstrual health education as a preliminary step to initiate discussions on CSE, recognizing the sensitivities surrounding this topic.

### Table 6: Indicator summary pathway 3

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original Target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O3-1 | Number of adolescents aged 10 - 24 in the programme implementation areas utilizing SRH services including modern contraceptives | 34,212 | 104,747 | 72,682 | 80,413 | Monitoring data, project records |
| Note to O3-1: In Ethiopia, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Zambia baseline information is incomplete, and results are provided in only percentage instead of absolute numbers. However, the mid-term results are complete, and included in the programme level results. | | | | | | |
| O3-2 | Number of adolescents aged 10-24 in the programme implementation areas reached with SRHR information/education * | 25,245 | 173,617 | 129,183 | 187,026 | Project records on SRHR information/ education (for instance attendance sheets) |
| Note to O3-2: In Ethiopia the baseline information is incomplete, and results are provided in only percentage instead of absolute numbers. However, the mid-term results are complete, and included in the programme level results. Proportion can be found in the annex. | | | | | | |
| O3-3 | Quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) | There is no or limited evidence on the quality of SRHR education. There is need to adapt the content to local context. In several countries CSE is a sensitive topic and often not discussed | There is improvement in sharing information about SRHR and access to this information too. This domain, however is still sensitive in the Programme countries and require more time | No detailed targets | Targets cover the following areas: 1) improved access to quality CSE and/or SRHR education material, 2) provide capacity building for teachers and community health care workers on SRHR, 3) work with adolescence to channel their opinions about health care services | Project documentation; KIIs and FGDs with various participants |
| O3-4 | Changes observed of adolescents who freely and safely demand SRHR services and information | No comprehensive baseline information available | The changes observed are multifold, specifically 1) adolescents and young women a better informed about SRHR and the available services so they can make better informed decisions, 2) more adolescence demand youth SRH services, 3) men are more supportive of women using SRH services | No detailed targets | Targets include the following areas: 1) adolescence demand SRHR services and information, 2) effective L&A for adolescence friendly SRHR services, 3) group specific platforms created for discussions on SRH needs and to address GBV | Outcome harvesting; KIIs and FGDs with various participants |

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original Target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O3-5 | Changes observed that gatekeepers (including teachers, health and community workers) take action on improved (A)SRHR | No comprehensive baseline information available | Changes are observed in 1) there is more willingness among teachers and health care workers to support girls avoiding child marriage or teenage pregnancy, 2) health centre services become more youth friendly, e.g., adjusted opening hours, welcoming and friendly atmosphere, more emphasis on the relationship between health care worker and patient | No detailed targets | Targets are defined in the following domains: 1) gatekeepers take actions for improved SRHR, 2) gatekeepers' actions have positive effect on youth, e.g., they make healthy and respectful sexual choices, and being aware of STIs, 3) youth health workers are active in peer-to-peer exchange on SRHR, 4) gatekeepers display positive social norms | Outcome harvesting: FGDs; KIIs with teacher, health worker and traditional leader; other KIIs |
| O3-7 | Changes observed that parents and caretakers adopt positive social norms on adolescent SRHR, gender equality and inclusion | No comprehensive baseline information available | The following changes were observed: 1) parents are more supportive of their daughter's education (especially, if the education is free), 2) better parent-child communication, 3) refusal of following the practice of child marriage | No detailed targets | Targets are defined in the following areas: 1) parents display positive social norms in SRHR and gender equality, 2) due to change in parents girls' education is prioritised, 3) parents are more responsive to their children's needs and listening to them | Outcome harvesting; FGDs and KIIs with various participants |

### What is the likelihood of achieving target results for pathway 3?

Overall, the results achieved through this pathway have been positive. Based on the quantitative indicators in O3-1 and O3-2, clear progress has been made in increasing access to and utilisation of SRHR services, information, and education. In fact, the target 2025 for the number/percentage of adolescents aged 10 - 24 in the programme implementation areas utilising SRH services including modern contraceptive has already been achieved at mid-line. Evaluating the quality of SRHR education and information (O3-3) remains a challenge, as there exist no well-defined criteria for determining when quality education and information are considered to have been achieved. Most countries do report an increased access to such education and information, and some reflect on improved knowledge on, for instance, menstruation management (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Niger) and improved capacities of teachers to provide SRHR education (Malawi) to illustrate how the quality of education and information seems to have improved.

Qualitative data indicate that young people are increasingly aware of their right to SRHR information and services, which could eventually increase their demand (O3.4). An absence of clear avenues where young people can voice their demands in some countries (see also reflection on O1-6 above) limits their uptake of these services. It should be noted that, even when there is demand, long distances to health facilities and stockouts limit the delivery of quality services. This is further aggravated in countries affected by conflict (see section 4.1). However, gate keepers, parents, and caretakers seem to adopt increasingly favourable attitudes towards SRHR in almost all countries (O3-5 and O3-6). In some countries, key informants note that, despite improved attitudes,

parents remain a weak link to effective uptake of SRHR services especially when affected by alcohol abuse, neglect, and unsupportive cultural norms (e.g., in Kenya). What is notable is that the increased positive social norms adopted by parents not only contributed to young people accessing more information and schooling, but also seemed to have contributed to reduced unsafe abortions. As one parent in Burkina Faso stated:

> "About 2 or 3 years ago, if a girl got pregnant, she wasn't even allowed into the family home. But now we've all been taught about this, which has helped girls to maintain their pregnancies until they give birth. It should be noted that this has helped to reduce the number of unsafe abortions."
>
> **(FGD with parents and caregivers, Burkina Faso)**

### Factors for success, opportunities and challenges regarding implementing activities and achieving outputs and outcomes under pathway 3

Through effective community mobilisation, demand creation for sexual and reproductive health services, utilisation of the YouthWyze platform through digital channels, collaboration with educational institutions, and the establishment of connections between youth groups and local healthcare facilities, the programme has demonstrated the efficacy of these strategies. These efforts have yielded positive outcomes in achieving the objectives outlined in pathway three.

At the national level, the MTR identified key success factors in advancing pathway three. The set up and use of the YouthWyze online platform stands out as a major achievement in the programme's first half. YouthWyze is a versatile offline and online intervention. It includes a social media platform using Facebook, and radio to disseminate comprehensive SRHR information to young people in various countries, including Niger, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and the newly launched Mali. In Burkina Faso, the chat box feature within the platform has become one of the most used services under the Break Free! programme. YouthWyze has not only improved access to SRH information and services but also generated data to support advocacy efforts emphasizing targeted youth health interventions and investments in demand creation activities through radio, sports, school-based clubs, and out-of-school youth groups, thus accelerating access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Another success factor highlighted in the MTR is the programme's adept use of existing structures like youth clubs and hubs as well as the involvement of traditional leaders for effective community outreach and sensitisation. For example, in Malawi and Zambia, the programme raised awareness about SRHR issues, leading to changes in the conduct of initiation ceremonies, as described in the quote below.

> "R5: I have also seen our leaders acting up the needs of the adolescent. For example, our leaders were not being transparent about adolescent health. But now after seeing that Break Free! project with the outcome tool which involves duty bearers and health workers we have the outcome to develop the laws and regulations to help in the delivery. We can see now that our leaders who are the chiefs, chieftainesses, community chairpersons, mayors have now come to understand the effect of child marriage, initiation ceremonies that used to take place in the rural areas. At the moment they have changed the strategy on how to conduct these ceremonies in the rural areas which is a result of the Break Free! project."
>
> **(FGD, boys in Zambia)**

Break Free! has also dispelled myths among many youth and adults regarding the use of contraceptives, eliminating the misconception that it leads to infertility. Findings showed that active involvement of men and boys in interventions, such as in radio sessions in Kenya, can be a success factor in increasing access to information for adolescents and young people.

The strategic utilisation of digital technology as an intervention has been underscored as a promising avenue for extending the dissemination of high-quality information on SRHR to a wider range of young people. This approach can also facilitates access to essential services. This was specifically mentioned during the MTR workshops in Burkina Faso and Kenya. This could be further done via YouthWyze platform. The engagement of government service providers in YouthWyze in Malawi and Zambia offer opportunities for the Break Free! efforts to be sustainable. Moreover, strengthening relationships with key external stakeholders like religious leaders will ensure sustainability when the project comes to an end.

Across several countries, the resistance to the promotion of CSE and SRHR issues significantly impacted the efforts within this pathway (see also pathway 2). In response to this challenge, the regional programme has worked through Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT) to hold Nhangas, which provide a platform where young people engage in discussions with traditional leaders regarding topics encompassed by the Break Free! thematic areas, including child marriage and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health services. These dialogues have initiated conversations around the challenges encountered by young individuals in the realm of SRHR, emphasizing the support required from traditional leaders to combat negative social norms contributing to child marriage.

At national level, a consistent challenge across all countries is that lobbying and advocacy activities generate substantial demand. However, the scope of the programme does not encompass the provision of SRHR services. Also, where Break Free! has created demand for services, stock outs of commodities for SRHR services, and limited human and financial resources sometimes pose challenges. For instance, in Ethiopia, as mentioned by key informants working in the Dangila Health Office, the Break Free! programme, has supported 17 Health centres in strengthening youth-friendly corners. However, the youth-friendly services still lack well-trained staff, dedicated space, and finance. Barriers in the supply chain of health-related commodities remain obstacles at the national and local levels in several Break Free! countries. In Malawi, the FGD participants highlighted the lack of contraceptives:

> "Sometimes, when girls want to get contraceptives, the health care workers inform them that the type of contraceptive certain girls want to access is not available"
>
> **(P1, FGD with boys, TA Chiwalo, Machinga, Malawi).**

Despite the documented progress in demand creation and increased acceptance from gate keepers and parents, challenges persist, including high rates of teenage pregnancy and child marriage. A key factor seems to be the consistent lack of access to contraceptives; distribution of contraceptives within schools remains a contentious issue, and the minimum age for accessing sexual and reproductive health services (versus the age of sexual consent) remains a subject of ambiguity. In Zambia, there exists disharmony in policies concerning the age of marriage, while in Malawi, some key stakeholders expressed concerns that providing adolescent sexual and reproductive health services may lead to increased sexual activity among adolescents. Furthermore, in both Mozambique and Malawi, a prevalent lack of knowledge and misconceptions regarding contraceptives persist, despite dedicated efforts to address these issues. In Malawi, a shortage of contraceptives further compounds the difficulties young people face in accessing such services.

## 4.3 Planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning within Break Free!

To ensure the effectiveness and impact of the programme, a detailed PMEL system has been put in place, which programme staff overall considered crucial for assessing progress, adapting strategies, and sharing best practices across consortium partners and across countries. However, there appears to have been limited involvement of country teams in the initial setup of the PMEL framework for Break Free!, which can be regarded as a missed opportunity to gather valuable insights and relevant data from country specific perspectives. Another issue highlighted was that not all recommendations from the baseline study, such as that of indicators needing to focus more on those groups “targeted by Break Free! programme", have been appropriately incorporated into the PMEL system, which could still be addressed to ensure its effectiveness and user-friendliness. Unclarity on certain indicators resulted into late, inaccurate, or inconsistent reporting (see specific recommendations in section 6.2). The use of a wide array of tools and confusion around specific indicators further raised concerns about the potential for information overload. This challenge could be mitigated by providing clearer guidance on when and how to use specific tools effectively. Outcome Harvesting as a methodology has largely been evaluated as successful. Introspection allowed for focus to be on outcomes, which streamlined the choice of activities. As mentioned in the Malawi country MTR report, it “provides the right resource of evidence highlighting the key outcomes that the programme achieved.” While it has effectively worked to document key programme outcomes in many countries, questions remain about its effectiveness in capturing negative outcomes, challenges, and unintended effects.

Language differences within the consortium furthermore affect PMEL, most notably in the translation of key PMEL documents into French. This has resulted in a lack of consistency (in English as well as in French documents) and misunderstandings, as certain terms may not carry the same meaning in both languages (see, for instance, “social movements” translating into “social media” in Mali’s ToC. Technical language used in some documents can be a barrier, as highlighted in Mozambique, requiring more contextualisation to ensure all stakeholders can effectively engage with the PMEL system. In similar vein, language capacity has also affected direct interactions between the global team and the Break Free! consortia in West Africa, which has hindered the functioning of the PMEL system in these countries. Some countries also concluded that a more strategic and advocacy-focused use of PMEL to address knowledge gaps and improve programme results would be needed. The regional team also noted that unclear roles within the MTR process and limited MIYP in the PMEL processes were shortcomings.

The use of studies conducted by KIT for evidence-informed practice, the MTR workshops and sharing of good practices between countries were seen as positive examples of learning (particularly highlighted in the MTR reports from Ethiopia, Malawi and Mali). Findings from the partnership survey confirmed this: about 80% of the survey respondents felt that enough learning opportunities are provided within Break Free!, and 62% felt that there are opportunities for learning from other programme staff. During the global MTR workshop, participants identified a consortium-wide need for more learning opportunities and transparency around

budgets for learning. Several countries indicated that learning and exchange opportunities between consortium partners were missing and that they were committed to creating these moments. Other suggestions included capitalising and evaluating tacit knowledge production and offering exchange visits between countries. Some dissatisfaction with the learning component of the programme included the late kick-off, transparency issues, and challenges with organising webinars. In this regard, the MTR findings suggest that complex consortium structures, including ambiguities in roles and responsibilities when it comes to the learning agenda, have resulted in a lack of coordination and effective engagement. The intended set up of an online learning hub, for instance, has not come off the ground, however, at mid-term there is a new learning group established committed to creating more robust online spaces for sharing and organising learning opportunities.

## 4.4 Meaningful and inclusive youth participation

**Youth clubs are the most popular form of engaging young people**

Overall, most survey respondents (63%) were involved in the Break Free! programme through a youth group or club. This is not surprising since the respondents were largely targeted through these groups. More than half (54%) indicated that they had participated in awareness-raising activities; 28% worked or volunteered for one of the Break Free! consortium partners and 26% were members of a formal youth organisation. The least number of young people indicated to have participated in regional-level advocacy activities (3%) or (sub)national-level L&A activities (16%). Similarly, the FGDs and MIYP sessions during the country workshops showed that young people were mainly involved in youth clubs.

**Young people are positive about their engagement in Break Free! and in L&A activities outside of Break Free!, but voice challenges around acceptance by duty bearers and decision makers**

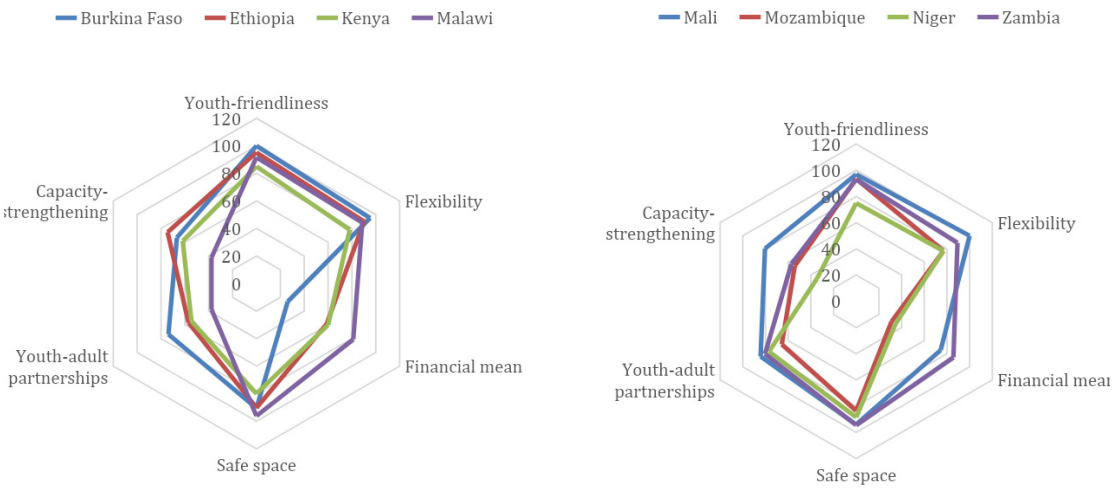
Young people throughout all countries responded positively to the survey and agreed that their participation was meaningful and inclusive. In the survey, 90% agreed that their participation in the Break Free! programme was mostly or completely meaningful and inclusive. A young woman (23 years) from Kenya agreed that her participation is meaningful because of *"Getting the chance and the space to participate in the change I want to see in my community". A young man from Mali explained that "Through the Break Free! programme, I've developed my self-esteem, I've learned a lot and I continue to share what I've learned and use it to help other young people in my family, at the hang-out with my friends, etc."*. However, during the FGDs, young people started to become more critical about their involvement, especially in terms of respect and acceptance by duty bearers and decision-makers. In Mozambique, for instance, an adolescent boy highlighted: *"We are discriminated based on our age…. We are considered as not having capacity"* (FGD, adolescent boy). With regards to youth involvement in L&A activities (indicator O2.5), 252 of 394 (64%) respondents reported participating in policy and decision-making activities, and 237 out of 265 (89%) found their participation meaningful (see Table 7 below). This suggests that less than two thirds of young people involved in Break Free! do participate at such levels of L&A, but when they do, they find it meaningful.

In line with the high score of MIYP, core elements were also scored highly in the survey; ninety-five percent (95%) of respondents felt they received enough information regarding their specific role in the programme. The majority (86%) of respondents felt they were frequently or always making their own choices about how they participate in the programme), in voicing their opinions and ideas within the programme (89%) and in participating in decision-making processes in the programme (85%). Most (95%) of the respondents agreed that they enjoyed full responsibility over at least one of the aspects of organising activities. The majority of respondents (88%) agreed that diverse young people were participating, although 9% did not have knowledge about this. Overall, young people living with disabilities were mentioned as a group for which extra efforts of inclusion were organised. Groups that were mentioned to be left out include out-of-school youth, youth from rural areas and LGBTIQ+ youth, although this varied per country.

**Young people are most positive about youth-friendliness and a safe space to participate, and flexibility. More attention is needed to financial means, capacity strengthening, and youth-adult partnerships**

The survey asked a number of questions about the **preconditions** for MIYP, including whether the programme was youth-friendly (are the materials used attractive to young people?), flexible (are schedules e.g. school, work, etc. and accessibility of activities taken into account?), financial resources (including fair remuneration and reimbursement of expenses), a safe space (to express themselves freely and ask questions), young-adult partnerships (shared decision- making and mentoring) and capacity-strengthening (whether opportunities are offered for self-development). During the analysis, the answers to the different questions were combined to form the six preconditions shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Preconditions of meaningful and inclusive youth participation**




Overall, the programme scored high on **youth-friendliness** (93% agreed), creating a **safe space** (90% agreed) and **flexibility** (89%). **Financial means** scored lowest in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Niger, ranging between 26% and 35% of respondents agreeing that fair compensation and reimbursement of expenses were offered. Similar findings were found during the country MTR workshops. Financial means and available budget were discussed in almost all the countries but especially as a challenge in Burkina Faso, Mali, Ethiopia and Niger. In Mali, the Break Free! programme combined financial means and resources with other programmes and organisations to organise joint activities that were co-created with young people. Opportunities for **youth-adult partnerships** and collaboration between youth and adults scored highest in Mali (84%) followed by Zambia (80%) and Niger (77%) while in Kenya, Ethiopia and Malawi, less than 60% of respondents agreed that these opportunities were offered. In Niger, young people participating in the reflection workshop and Break Free! programme, indicated that in a follow-up programme, youth-led organisations should be included in the consortium acting as an equal partner. Regarding **capacity-strengthening**, young people were most critical about the availability of opportunities in Malawi and Niger with less than 2 in 5 people agreeing that regular opportunities for capacity strengthening were offered. In Ethiopia and Mali, young people scored it highest.

**The majority of girls and young women report to not feel at greater risk due to their involvement in Break Free! and have trust in reporting mechanisms, although there are large differences between countries and girls and young women do not always know where to report issues.**

With regards to **safeguarding** indicators, overall, young women do not feel at greater risk due to their involvement in Break Free! (82.1% reported to not feel at greater risk). If they would feel at risk, 75.7% would know how to report it, and 82.1% would trust the reporting mechanism (see also Table 7 below). It should be noted, however, that these safeguarding indicators differ per country (see also Annex 4). Niger, for instance,

reports lower scores under the safeguarding indicators (only 58% of young women do not feel at greater risk, and 54.6% would know where to report an issue). Similarly, in Malawi, only 61.5% of young women report to not feel at greater risk due to their Break Free! involvement, which is lower than the average, but they do know where to access the reporting mechanism (73%) and have trust in this mechanism (84%). Knowledge how to report issues is low in Ethiopia (59.2% and Mali (55.2%), but there is trust in the reporting mechanisms (81.3% and 100% respectively). Trust in reporting mechanisms is also high in Kenya (94%). Burkina Faso, Mozambique, and Zambia report relatively high scores on all safeguarding indicators. Given the progress, it is likely that the targets for 2025 will be met, and the targets were adjusted to reflect higher (more positive) indicators (i.e., more young women to report not feeling at greater risk, to know where to report if they would feel at risk, and to trust the mechanism).

### Table 7: Indicator summary of meaningful and inclusive youth participation and safeguarding

| Indicator number | Indicator description | Baseline value | Mid-term result | Original target 2025 | Adjusted Target 2025 | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O2-5 | Number of youth aged 10 - 24 who report having participated in policy and decision-making bodies and the number (and %) of them who perceive their participation as meaningful. | 8 young people (based on Ethiopia baseline data only, for other contexts no data) | 252 out of 394 respondents (64%) reported having participated in policy and decision-making bodies in-and outside of the Break Free! programme.<br><br>237 out of 265 (89%) perceived their participation as meaningful. | 1194 | 1367 | Youth survey |
| SG-1 | Percentage of girls and young women who do not feel at greater risk of harm due to Break Free! involvement | No data | 179 out of 218 (82.1%) | 80% | 95% | Youth survey |
| SG-2 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have trust in the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | No data | 151 out of 180 (88.8%) knew how to report a risk | 80% | 95% | Youth survey |
| SG-3 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have access to the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns[11] | No data | 165 out of 218 (75.7%) | 80% | 95% | Youth survey |

11 The question posed in the survey asked whether the respondent knows how to report it, which does not fully reflect the indicator on having access, but should give a general sense of it

### Over two-thirds of young people have participated in L&A activities, although in varying degrees of meaningfulness

The youth survey found that 69% of the respondents had participated in L&A towards policy and decision-makers in their area, district, country or at regional level over the first half of the Break Free! programme. For the L&A activities within the Break Free! programme, most were led by young people (aged 15-24; 48%) or by both young people and adults together (32%). The most mentioned topics for L&A were young people's SRHR (74%), child marriage (69%) and teenage pregnancy (68%).

While this is a positive finding, involvement of young people in L&A activities was lower in some countries than others (50% of surveyed youth in Niger, 58.8% in Ethiopia, and 60.4% in Malawi, compared to 75.4% in Mozambique and 92.2% in Mali), and often focused mainly on community level. In some countries, young people were involved more as the audience of awareness raising activities, rather than as actors. Additionally, their existing participation was not always seen as meaningful. For instance, in Malawi, at district level, youth did not have a full voice in the District Council. If they wanted to voice their concerns or express their views, they always had to convince an adult counsellor to speak on their behalf. Similarly, in Kenya, it was observed that while youth involvement is gaining popularity and being normalised in policy development activities, their input is often not taken along by adults. Due to socio-cultural ideas of the value of seniority, young people have limited influence. This point was also discussed during the global MTR workshop where participants reflected on the influence and acceptability of the cultural values on the extent of youth participation. The participants did not reach consensus on whether it was better to accept and work within the cultural boundaries or to keep challenging them. From the FGDs, it seems that these circumstances are influencing the sense of meaningfulness among young people involved in L&A activities organised through Break Free!. In Malawi, for instance, participants discussed that youth in some cases were perceived as immature and that their views are not respected, arguing that they feel used - especially during political campaigns.

> "Most of times, the things that youth parliamentarians discuss are those that are imposed. They are told you have to discuss this (…) And in most cases, whatever is discussed in youth parliament is not used in the normal parliament.",
>
> **(R6, FGD with youth advocates, Malawi)**

Similarly in Zambia, the opposition of some individual local duty bearers to youth participation was mentioned. During the FGDs with young people, participants indicated that certain local duty bearers thought that youth were too young and not trained or competent enough to make meaningful contributions to SRHR.

> "Some local duty bearers do not respect the young people's opinions because they think we are too young to give the information about SRHR services. (…) Also government, some government officers think that we are not professional enough on how we can talk to young people and adolescents in the communities. (…) they think for us to deliver this information to intended population, we need to undergo a certain type of high training so that maybe we should be professional enough to handle those people."
>
> **(FGD, youths 15-24 years, Zambia)**

### Working with existing youth networks and positive attitudes of Break Free! staff are enabling factors for meaningful and inclusive youth participation

Throughout the qualitative data and the MTR workshops, a set of enabling factors for MIYP were identified. The most mentioned enabler was working through existing youth networks and youth groups. In Burkina Faso and

Mali, for instance, working through youth clubs that have been previously set up in other programmes proved to be efficient. Additionally, in the West-African countries, working with a partner like AfriYAN who regroups the various existing youth organisations in the countries enabled the programme to have a larger reach. Furthermore, engaging young people through sports in Zambia and Kenya was mentioned as a success factor. Lastly, the attitudes of consortium staff was marked as a crucial enabler towards MIYP. This was especially seen in Mali and Malawi. This included giving young people opportunities and proper mentoring to enable them to fully participate. Regarding L&A specifically, a success factor for MIYP that was mentioned during the global MTR workshop was the cascade model used in Malawi. In practice, the cascade model allowed the youth representatives to collect input from young people at community level and bring the emerging issues and solutions into the national-level decision-making and advocacy spaces. This model does not yet seem to be reproduced in other countries. However, in Mali, a peer education system was used to organise capacity-strengthening sessions on advocacy and pilot youth-led advocacy initiatives at the national and community levels, and on social media. Furthermore, in Ethiopia, Zambia and Niger, acceptance of government officials regarding youth involvement was mentioned as an enabling factor to meaningful youth participation in L&A. Lastly, social media were mentioned in numerous countries as a venue to get input and contribute to advocacy efforts.

### Budget, capacity, and lack of conceptual clarity are the biggest barriers to meaningful and inclusive youth participation

Next to the enabling factors, a set of disabling factors were identified throughout the MTR. Overall, throughout all countries, the lack of allocated budget to have young people participate in all national and regional L&A activities was mentioned. Secondly, the lack of capacity of both young people and adults were mentioned as a barrier to MIYP. Throughout the global MTR workshop, the discussion around what MIYP means, showed that teams are held back by the lack of conceptual clarity. The extent of youth participation was therefore more reliant on consortium staff's attitudes than on their capacity to meaningfully engage young people. Thirdly, gaps in inclusion were observed. While most countries were trying to involve young people living with disabilities, none ensured the participation of LGBTIQ+ youth – a group that is discriminated against in all countries. Country-specific laws may have a deterring effect on such efforts, while in some country MTR workshops it has further been acknowledged that although LGBTIQ+ youth were not directly involved, the programme did not discriminate against sexual orientation. Furthermore, in Kenya, it was noted that it was not always possible for the Break Free! programme to include young people under the legal age of 18 years in advocacy initiatives. However, the programme used strategies to get input and feedback from minors and their ideas are taken along at the county or national level.

## Examples of successful advocacy efforts by youth groups or organisations

Across the countries, young people seemed to be more engaged in L&A at the district and community level than at national level. In Kenya, young people indicated to have been able to lobby for the nomination of young people in the Senate and country assembly with the result that some young people were actually nominated. At a lower level, they achieved better representation of young people in school boards of management.

In Malawi, at national level, youth advocates in Break Free! contributed to the **development of new laws** (e.g. National Youth Policy) and the review of existing laws (e.g., the Youth-friendly Health Services Strategy and the guidelines on Community Victim Support Units). Concerning the review of the Community Victim Support Units guidelines, the question for an adjustment came from the district level and Break Free! organised representation of youth towards the Ministry of Gender, after which the guidelines were successfully adjusted. The adjustment entails that in every Community Victim Support Unit, youth are now represented in the committee.

In Zambia, youth have been participating in priority setting processes as **members of the neighbourhood health committees**, and adolescent health technical working groups and actively participated in dialogue meetings in the health facilities on a quarterly basis. Youth have also been involved in community dialogues with community members and traditional leaders to discuss various issues including SRH issues, in addition

to successfully lobbying for SRH needs integration into traditional governance systems, and changing health facilities opening hours (a/o, see also pathway 2).

In Niger, a **parliamentary information day and a "night of influence" (soirée d'influence)** were organised together with youth advocates to advocate for girls' education and retaining young people in school. These two activities were aimed at governmental and parliamentary authorities, and were attended by 50 members of parliament. Young people from the Break Free! implementation area took the space to tell their life stories and why education is important for young people, specifically to reduce child marriage. As a result, strong commitments were made to promote girls' education.

As part of regional level L&A activities, girls were able to speak to traditional leaders from the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa for the first time at the **pre-summit Gender Is My Agenda Campaign** in Lusaka Zambia, and on a created platform for dialogue (Nhanga) between SADC traditional leaders and young girls to speak on the issues around harmful practices. After the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign, the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa had a meeting at the sidelines of the Regional Economic Communities meeting in Lusaka in 2022. The Chairperson with other traditional leaders discussed the issues that were brought forward within the Nhanga. In connection with this, the Southern African Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa chairperson for the first time made a call to action at the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign summit in Zambia for African traditional leaders to develop transformative bylaws that promote positive cultural practices.

## 4.5 Partnership

### Partnership dimensions with enabling and disabling effects on the partnership

Across all countries, all partnership dimensions were identified as enabling, except the resources and funds dimension, which scored relatively lower across the board (**Figure 2**).

When zooming into **efficiency and effectiveness**, the dimension had an overall score of 4.2. Under this dimension, it was found that the staff involved in Break Free! were clear on the aim of the partnership, their and others' roles, and they were content with the support of senior management within their organisations. One statement under this dimension had more 'neutral' responses; this concerned whether organisations hold each other accountable. Survey respondents at the global level and in Mali found the efficiency and effectiveness dimension to be a little less enabling (<4.0) compared to other countries. In contrast, respondents in Malawi considered it highly enabling (>4.5) for their organisations.

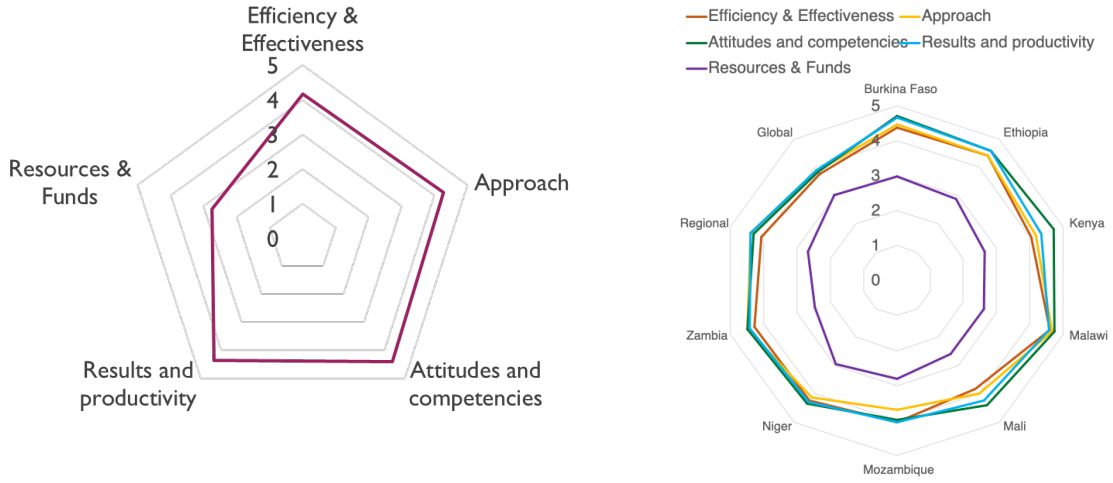
The efficiency and effectiveness dimension also focused on whether information is shared within the partnership and whether there is regularity and there are clear processes concerning performance monitoring. The learning opportunities were generally appreciated by survey participants, particularly in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia. During the global consortium meeting it was established that sharing of information within countries was smoother than sharing of information between countries. In some countries however, information sharing within the countries also had room for improvement. More regular meetings and information exchange via WhatsApp were recommended. Global MTR workshop participants also identified a need for more intra-country information exchange or exchange visits, because (implementing) partners often work on different interventions in different implementation areas (and were therefore sometimes said to work in silos). Therefore, there is a need for improved cross-learning and coordination. The three West-African countries particularly expressed the need for better inter-country information sharing. Results on monitoring and evaluation processes are shared in Section 4.3. It was widely shared that inter-country information sharing is expected to improve after the global MTR workshop, as this was the first occasion for many Break Free! staff to physically meet each other. As such, the lack of a kick-off meeting was identified as a missed opportunity.

The **approach** dimension had an overall score of 4.3. Survey respondents indicated that they understand each organisation's work and acknowledge what each organisation brings to the partnership. The respondents in Mozambique and at the global level scored this dimension lower (<3.5) than the consortium average score, while those in Malawi and Zambia scored this dimension as highly enabling (>=4.5).

All countries scored the **attitudes and competencies** dimension as enabling or highly enabling for their organisations, led by respondents in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya and Malawi (>=4.5), where respondents in the latter two countries mentioned good teamwork and role divisions. The average consortium score was 4.4 for this dimension. The survey results indicate that Break Free! staff believe that individuals working in the consortium have the right knowledge and skills to do so. However, in some countries such as Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, high staff turn-over hindered the coordination and implementation of the programme. Break Free! staff were also perceived to have a collaboration mind-set and commitment to the partnership and the programme (both at individual and organisational levels). There was less agreement and more neutrality about openness and transparency of participation and investments of different partners involved.

The **results and productivity** dimension had an average consortium score of 4.4. Respondents in Burkina Faso scored the results and productivity dimension as highly enabling for their organisations (>=4.5) alongside respondents in Malawi, and Ethiopia. The enabling score reflected respondents' high scores provided to the various statements under this dimension. For example, the work within Break Free! was seen as meaningful and satisfying, there was appreciation of capacity strengthening within Break Free!, and the partnership was thought to provide new opportunities at organisational level. For example, in the MTR workshop in Zambia, it was mentioned that the partnership provided the partners the opportunity to jointly apply for other funding and to amplify L&A efforts. There was relatively less agreement that Break Free! provides new opportunities at individual level.

**Figure 2: Survey results partnership dimensions for the overall partnership (left) and for the partnership disaggregated by levels/countries (right)**




The **resources and funds** dimension was found to be relatively disabling across the board, with an average consortium score of 2.7, particularly for respondents in Zambia, Malawi and Mali (<3.0). For respondents working in Burkina Faso, Niger and in the global team, this dimension was not enabling nor disabling (=3.0) for their organisation. For the global team, this score could be linked to their role in managing the consortium at a multi-country level. Under this dimension, there were quite some mixed responses (agreement and disagreement to the underlying statements, as well as neutral responses). Some respondents thought that their organisation's budget for Break Free! is not sufficient for the activities that they are expected to implement. In relation to this, some staff thought that the programme puts a strain on human and other resources within their organisations. Some respondents agreed that the terms and conditions of funding in Break Free! are

complex and restrictive, and not conducive to the realities of their organisation's work. During the global MTR workshop, it was concluded that there is sometimes a lack of clarity about the extent to which there is flexibility in budgeting at country level (in other words, there is more flexibility than programme staff often think there is).

In addition, during the global MTR workshop, it was concluded that there has been a lack of clarity on the extent to which budgets can be shared for transparency. It was concluded that it would be helpful to share the overall budgets of all partners involved during annual planning meetings at country and regional levels. In addition, global MTR workshop participants found that more transparency is needed about the flex fund and the learning budget, and about the role that the Plan Centre of Excellence will have in coordinating the learning component of Break Free!. Also, there should be more transparency around what the technical partners KIT and especially Rosaria Memorial Trust can do (and cannot do). After annual planning, partners' work plans at country and regional levels should be shared to see possibilities for joint activities, because consortium staff felt that there is more room for pulling resources from each organisation together for key and joint activities. To increase inter-country information sharing, a more regular consortium newsletter, the set-up of country coordinator online meetings, and setting up a Facebook page for information sharing were recommended, on top of the existing and well-evaluated consortium-wide webinars.
In Mali, implementing partners (sub-contractors) receive funding for three to six months, which results in implementation gaps (because of late disbursements of funds and time lapses between contracts). This also led to the consortium in Mali facing underspending of budgets. Global MTR workshop participants identified the need for more streamlined sub-contracting. Some country lead organisations preferred to receive one budget to divide among partners in countries, instead of the current situation where budgets for each of the partners come from the global Plan, SAT, and FAWE offices.

### Power dynamics and equality in collaboration

Among all partnership survey respondents, 70% felt that there is equal collaboration between global and country staff. For instance, in Ethiopia, the team felt that global consortium level offered good ideas and support. However, during the MTR workshops in Kenya, Malawi and Niger, some decision-making from the global level was perceived as too top down. Among the country teams, there were high levels of agreement that the lead organisations in the respective countries are effectively leading the consortium and that consortium partners are collaborating well with the country lead organisations. In Kenya and Ethiopia, the teams added that decision-making was shared between national and local levels. In the global MTR workshop, while discussing the governance structure of Break Free!, a need was expressed for setting up a network of country (and the regional) coordinators, for monthly exchange and joint decision-making. This could also assist in establishing stronger connections between country consortia and the Break Free! Programme Committee, a connection that was assessed as currently weak. For example, country coordinators cannot solve issues of partner organisations at country level but should have a platform where they can share such issues with the coordinators of the overarching partner organisations (Plan, SAT and FAWE at global level) who sit in the Programme Committee, who can then take such issues up with their country offices. Another recommendation established in the global MTR workshop was that there is a need for Memoranda of Understanding between consortium and implementing partners at country level, with a focus on how to work together and who is involved in what type of decisions. In countries such as Mali and Niger, this seems particularly important, because the (leading) Plan offices in these countries coordinate but do not implement activities themselves; this is done by implementing partners.

The four dimensions that were scored concerned survey respondents' perceived decision-making power concerned the four phases of a partnership cycle: scoping and building; managing and maintaining; sustaining; and reviewing and revising. The average consortium scores for these dimensions were 3.5; 3.6; 3.4; and 3.6 respectively, indicating a perceived medium power in all phases. It should be noted that a score of 5 might not be a score that is always wished for, as individual statements under each dimension were scored with a 5 for 'decide', while a score of 4 meant 'co-decide; co-decision is more often expected in partnerships such as Break Free!. For the Break Free! programme across nine countries and operating with a global and regional team, there were some variations in the levels of perceived decision-making power, as can be seen in Figure 3.

Respondents in Mozambique and Zambia felt least involved in **scoping and building** the partnership (=<3.0) while those in Niger1 felt the highest levels of decision-making (4.7) for this dimension. Overall, survey respondents perceived a high decision-making power concerning the selection of implementation areas for Break Free!, but they perceived much less decision-making power on budget allocations between partners.

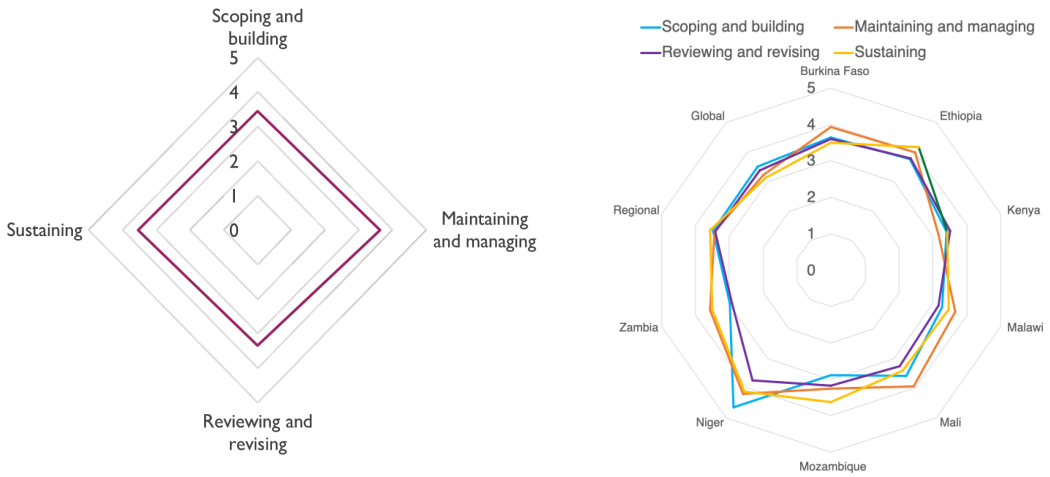
For the next phase of the partnership cycle of **managing and maintaining**, respondents in Kenya, Mozambique, and at the global level experienced lower levels of decision-making power (<3.5) than the consortium average of 3.6. For the global team, this could be linked to their geographical position and scope of control, which do not contribute as much to day-to-day implementation and managing of the partnership. In contrast, respondents in Niger, Mali and in Ethiopia experienced higher decision-making power during this phase (>=4.0). Across countries, survey respondents indicated that there was a high decision-making power regarding day-to-day activity implementation, which activities should be funded, and the L&A agendas. Relatively less decision-making power was felt to be there regarding reporting lines, who should be involved in the external presentation of Break Free!, and task divisions.

In the global MTR workshop, external representation and branding were further discussed. It was concluded that Break Free! has been late with producing branding guidelines, and some people at the country level are not aware of them. This makes decisions around external representation problematic in some countries, such as in Malawi, where one of the partner organisations was felt to emphasise its own brand too often instead of the Break Free! brand. In addition, not all staff are aware of the existence of a Break Free! communication plan – and its implementation is therefore not getting sufficient attention. This could be related to capacity constraints (for example, SAT as an organisation does not have a separate communications officer). It was also concluded that Break Free! lacks social media presence. It is needed to intensify social media presence, especially when this can support L&A activities at all levels.

Overall, survey respondents from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia felt that their organisations were a bit less involved in making decisions during the r**eviewing and revising** phase than respondents in other countries and at regional and global levels (<=3.2 versus 3.4 for the consortium average score). Overall, survey respondents did feel they or their organisations had decision-making power regarding adjustments in the L&A agenda, annual programme plans, and who measures which indicator (for monitoring and evaluation). Less decision-making power was perceived about formulating the indicators and adjusting the agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Survey respondents in Ethiopia and Niger reported higher levels of decision-making power of their organisation in the **sustaining** phase (>=4.1) in comparison with the average consortium score of 3.6. In general, consortium staff felt that there was high decision-making power on decisions about which lessons should be documented and which interventions should be scaled. Less decision-making power was perceived concerning whether and with whom to continue the partnership. This could be because conversations on the future partnership have not yet started at all levels. This also means that planning for an exit strategy should be initiated soon to ensure a smooth transition when the programme concludes.

**Figure 3: Survey results perceived decision-making power across the partnership cycle for the overall partnership (left) and for the partnership disaggregated by levels/countries (right)**




## Interaction with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Of all survey respondents, 41% had never been in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Royal Dutch Embassy. Those who had been in touch (59% percent), had mostly been in touch to share information, including accountability-related information. Of these, 60% also reported that they had been involved in more strategic discussions on progress and direction of the programme with the Ministry or the Embassy. The topic least discussed with the Ministry/Embassy by these respondents was on exploring opportunities for further collaboration (30%). The quality of the interactions with the Ministry and Embassy was scored 7.1 out of ten (n=46) (with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent) for the consortium average, with Malawi having the highest score (8.4, n=5) and Kenya having the lowest score (4, n=3). In the Kenya MTR workshop, participants explained that the lack of regular communication between partners, lack of visibility towards the Ministry and Embassy and limited contact with the Ministry focal point for Break Free! in Kenya led to sub-optimal collaboration. For instance, not all consortium members were aware that the country coordinator gave a presentation to the Embassy about Break Free!. Another concern was that Break Free! had limited contact with their assigned Ministry focal point when in fact, other consortia funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kenya (e.g. She Leads and Power to You(th)) had their (different)Ministry focal points visit programme activities. This pointed to the need for improved communication with the Ministry and the Embassy, especially on strategic directions of the partnerships and how to build on each others' strengths. Reflections at the global MTR workshop in Lusaka showed that focus of the relationship with the Embassies and the Ministry is perceived as being centred around grant compliance and an upstream accountability. Interactions are often focused on providing information, rather than strategic discussions and alignment of efforts on Break Free! topics.

# 5. Discussion

## 5.1 Lessons learned from the period 2020-half 2023

By taking time to look into the achievements of the Break Free! programme so far, the following lessons were identified.

### Building upon previous work and established processes contributes to achieving results

The Break Free! programme builds upon previous work from consortium partners as well as other CSOs in the countries and established processes and networks to lobby for change, recognizing that shifting laws, policies, guidelines and strategies but also norms and attitudes is a gradual but effective strategy. That this approach delivers results is evidenced by revisions of laws that have materialised in the period reported on, formal commitments towards CSE and Adolescents and Youth-Friendly services that have been realised, increasing capacity of youth to advocate and speak out for their rights, and an increasingly progressive stance among traditional leaders, parents, and community members observed regarding girls' education, SRHR, and gender issues in many of the Break Free! implementation areas. As a result of this, in many of the Break Free! countries, partners report progress on getting and keeping girls in school and increasing access to SRH(R) information and services.

### Good progress made in relation to core Break Free! indicators in spite of conflict and a shrinking civic democratic space

The high level of conflict and insecurity in six of the nine countries has a negative impact on the programme, resulting in SRHR information and services for young people to lose governments' priority and causing school drop-out, migration and displacement. While in several countries increased political will is seen in relation to the programme areas, in most if not all countries a shrinking civic and democratic space is observed. In addition, the region is prone to natural disasters, frequently linked to climate change, as was evidenced in this first half of the Break Free! programme. In spite of this, as mentioned above, the consortium made good progress towards the core target of getting and keeping girls in school. The target to be achieved for this indicator by 2025 seems reachable, as the school drop-out decreased significantly over the first half of the programme from 5707 at baseline to 1500 at mid-line making a further reduction to 1068 girls seem achievable. The number of schools engaged in the programme seems to be on course, with from 12 at baseline, to 178 with the ambition to increase this to 266 in 2025. In terms of support for girls to continue their education and to be able to demand safe and gender responsive education, still much work needs to be done. Good progress was made in several countries in relation to the development of new and or improved commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws as well as in relation to the implementation of SRHR and education commitments and policies in the countries as well as at regional level. But there were also a number of countries, where no such progress was made, in spite of efforts by the partners. Furthermore, access to SRHR information and services increased, with the 2025 target of youth utilising SRH services having already been reached. Successful MIYP is taken place with room to strengthen youth involvement in actual decision making. While many of the core targets set seem to be achievable, there is also a strong need to sustain achievements realised especially in a context where the shrinking civic democratic space negatively impacts the focus on the right towards SRH, and more specifically, comprehensive sexuality education.

### The ToC continues to be valid but there is scope to further detail the ToC to enhance its strategic guidance

The MTR found that the ToC in the different settings and contexts remains valid to provide strategic guidance to the L&A activities in the volatile context in the region. While reflecting on the validity of the ToC, the MTR process also identified several opportunities to detail the ToC so that it can provide further strategic direction of effective implementation. These opportunities include:

- Making the focus placed on L&A activities targeting the local level more explicit within the ToC. This would not only make local actors more aware about laws and policies approved at the national level but also provide a push for these actors to implement these. This is especially relevant as the full implementation of policies was found to be a problem across countries. In addition, more localised L&A activities would also likely provide room for settings with a more shrinking space for SRH to still advocate with local actors with whom they could build alliances. To support such local level advocacy, continued use of regional resources, such as the Nhanga platform that helped young people to counteract resistance to the promotion of CSE and SRHR, could be used. This platform assists young people to engage in discussions with traditional leaders on – amongst others – issues of child marriage and SRHR.
- Further operationalise what quality and safe education entails as this could help sharpen L&A activities towards decision-makers in terms of what could be strengthened and or improved around quality and safe education. This could possibly be done through a multi-faceted approach that involves government agencies, schools, teachers, parents, youth, and communities as an entry point to the L&A activities to jointly discuss what students should know and be able to do; possible capacity levels of teachers; standards for safe and inclusive learning environments free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment through codes of conduct that are enforced; ensuring curricula are up to date and provide adequate learning materials; and monitoring in place, using Ministries' quality standards where they exist. Various products developed in different Break Free! countries could be used as starting points for such an advocacy trajectory, such as code of conducts for teachers, minimum standards for child protection for a safe school environment, and gender sensitive toolkits. The operationalisation would also help to better track achievements realised in relation to quality and safe education for the remainder of the programme.
- In addition, the ToC could benefit from explicitly mentioning a number of issues such as CSE, economic empowerment and MIYP, all essential elements to empower, strengthen and amplify the voice of girls and young people, to demand safe and gender responsive education, and with that contribute to the success of the Break Free! programme.

## In spite of achievements reported, opportunities exist to foster a stronger joint strategic approach to L&A within Break Free!

The MTR showed that while the current L&A activities are contributing to change in relation to the different pathways, there are also opportunities to use a more strategic approach for L&A through the collaborative creation of comprehensive advocacy plans. Such advocacy plans would include clearly defined outcomes and results, contextually appropriate entry points, a series of activities building upon and reinforcing each other, MIYP principles taken on board, and clear indicators for the monitoring and evaluation towards achieving outcomes and results.

## YouthWyze, the online social media platform used by Break Free!, has proven to be an important avenue for improved access to SRHR information for young people in the region

The YouthWyze online social platform was commended by MTR participants for the key role it plays in increasing the access to high-quality SRHR information for young people in the region, as well as being able to encourage the uptake of SRH services amongst young people. In addition, the platform has proven to be a useful tool for the generation of data for accountability and L&A purposes. There is broad consensus amongst Break Free! consortium members that digital technology has an important role to play in further increasing access to SRHR information and services and that the YouthWyze Platform is a suitable instrument for this.

## Successful demand creation of SRH services by the programme is regularly affected by stock-out or SRH service not being able to cope with the demand, and Break Free! not being able to budget for the delivery of SRH services as part of the programme

A consistent challenge across countries is that the Break Free! programme through its L&A activities creates demand for services but does not have control over these services itself. In quite a few places when young people are turning to SRH services, they experience stock-outs and over-burdened facilities, which in turn has the risk to negatively affect subsequent SRH service uptake by these young people. This is especially challenging, as Break Free! as an advocacy programme is not able to fund SRH service delivery itself according to the grant requirements from MoFA. However, Break Free! can continue to target the health system with L&A efforts for improved supply/stock of contraceptives and better service provision.

## Adjustments to the Break Free! PMEL systems are required to better track progress

The MTR process clearly demonstrated the need to adjust the Break Free! PMEL system so that it is better equipped to inform progress of the programme at all levels. While some adjustments have been made to the PMEL system based on baseline recommendations, such as conversing some quantitative indicators into qualitative indicators, Break Free! staff across countries agreed that there could be further improvements to the PMEL system. Examples of suggestions included a reduction of the current wide array of tools, a reduction of the number of indicators currently being tracked through prioritising only the most essential ones, clarification of what these indicators mean (in different contexts and settings) and how they should be measured/calculated, and continuous refresher training for all stakeholders engaged in the PMEL system. To be more specific, examples for improvements included specifying when indicators focused on those “targeted by Break Free! programme", clarifying how to measure ‘demand for’ safe and gender responsive education (O1-6), and what is meant by, for instance, quality of SRHR education and information (indicator O3-3). In addition, better ways of tracking and documenting the results of sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns will need to be put in place to better understand what makes these campaigns successful. Also increased involvement of MIYP in the PMEL processes is expected to improve this area of work.

## Learning and evidence-informed practice appreciated but room for further learning

There is wide agreement in Break Free! that the studies undertaken contribute to evidence-informed practices and that learning is facilitated through, for instance, webinars and workshops and sharing of information within countries. A need is felt to strengthen the learning further through an online learning space or more webinars and opportunities for cross-country exchange that could assist with (tacit) knowledge production and exchange, both between countries as well as between consortium partners in countries.

## Youth appreciate MIYP efforts within the Break Free! programme but voice challenges as well

The large majority of young people across countries involved in the programme indicated to find their participation meaningful and inclusive in terms of being able to voice their opinions. While young people also acknowledge involvement in decision-making, in terms of actual decision-making power there are still quite some gaps. Challenges exist in youth sometimes not being listened to in policy development events or in decision making bodies such as District Councils. This leaves room to develop strategies on how to increase youth’s influence in such spaces through for instance mentoring and coaching.  Furthermore, in spite of the programme being able to reach quite a diverse group of youth, there is less involvement of rural youth, LGBTIQ+ youth and out-of-school youth at present. This indicates a need to place more effort in reaching out to these groups. In addition, also within the consortium itself, opportunities exist to expand MIYP by having young people be more consistently involved in annual planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation activities in a meaningful way.

### Mostly well-established partnerships but high staff turnover and language differences pose challenges

All partners appreciate the efficiency and effectiveness, the approach taken, the attitudes and competencies of the various partners (in spite of the high staff turnover), as well as the results and productivity of the Break Free! partnership. The partners were somewhat less appreciative of the resource and funds dimension of the partnership due to, for instance, budgets for their organisation being seen as insufficient or programme activities being seen as putting a strain on their human resource capacity. The MTR process found that a lack of clarity on the flexibility in budgeting at country level and lack of transparency on the budget as a whole, contributed to this less positive perspective on the resource and fund dimensions. Furthermore, high staff turnover affects effective collaboration within and between countries, and dedicated efforts are needed to retain staff as well as have effective onboarding processes in place for new staff to grasp the ToC and PMEL system, amongst others. Also, partners see opportunities for further collaboration through improved collaborative planning. The MTR furthermore found that there is room to improve collaboration in the Sahel countries, where the partnerships were newly established at the onset of Break Free!. No kick off meeting with involvement of the global level could take place in these countries. Additionally, language challenges affected the common understanding of the indicators to be reported on and related PMEL framework as well as the ToC. These language issues also make access to cross-country learning more difficult. Addressing the issues on transparency around budget and resources, joint planning for making optimal use of each other's capacity and resources as well as strengthening the partnership in Sahel countries will require additional attention in the period ahead.

## 5.2 Strengths and limitations of the MTR

The core strength of the MTR is its participatory process through which the MTR was conducted with involvement of all partners and external and young researchers, at country, regional and global level. The MTR workshops, where country level data were reviewed, served to deepen the reflection on the data which consisted of a range of sources for each country but also to look across countries for commonalities and differences and further explore these. Country reports and the insights from the reflection workshops were subsequently synthesised and reviewed by all country partners for further validation and to deepen and complement the analysis. Another strength of the MTR is the strong youth voice coming through, through the MIYP survey, FGDs on MIYP with youth and the use of a young researcher. This contributes to a better understanding of achievements realised from the perspectives of youth, as well as their insights on ways forward in the subsequent phase of the programme to contribute to further achievements.

In terms of limitations of the MTR, time-limitation did not allow for the different data collection methods to feed into - and therewith build upon - each other. Instead, data collection had to be undertaken in parallel. In addition, the participatory nature of the MTR approach has a trade-off when it comes to the objectivity of the findings compared to when a completely external approach for the MTR would have been used. We however believe that this participatory nature, allowed the MTR to better tap into tacit knowledge not yet documented than would otherwise have been the case. This tacit knowledge was especially harvested during the MTR reflection workshops. To counter a potential bias, external consultants were sub-contracted in each country to conduct qualitative data collection. Furthermore, through the use of methods such as outcome harvesting, which concentrated on positive outcomes achieved, we may have missed capturing some negative/unintended outcomes that may have occurred. The qualitative data collection to some extent mitigated this limitation as it gave independent complementary insight into some of the outcome harvesting findings. However, it has to be taken in mind that this qualitative midline data was only collected in one geographical area per country.

In addition, one of the lessons learned is that the programme builds upon previous work of the partners and established processes, this makes it not possible to attribute achievements purely to the Break Free! programme. It is only possible to state that the Break Free! programme contributed to these achievements rather than claim they are the sole achievement of the programme. Lastly, the earlier mentioned issues with monitoring data mean that the mid- term review is not able to track progress against all indicators included in

the framework. This caused that the team who worked on the synthesis of achievements so far, had to work with inconsistencies in reporting across countries, including data sources not always being transparent. Further work on improving the framework will be undertaken in the second half of the programme, while for this MTR report explanatory notes have been provided in the results tables in chapters 4.2 and 4.4. as well as in Annex 4.

# 6. Conclusion and recommendations

## 6.1 Conclusions

The aim of this MTR was to have up-to-date information on progress of the programme towards the intended outcomes, formulate recommendations to strengthen programme implementation and improve its ability to realise its intended outcomes. As such, a review and reflection process has taken place. The findings are intended to help the consortium understand and assess the degree and quality of (expected and unexpected) change that has taken place from 2021 until mid-2023, and the likelihood of achieving the intended result of the programme in 2025.

The MTR showed that numerous and significant changes and challenges in the political, social and economic context in the region have affected the first half of the Break Free! programme in the eight countries included in this MTR. Nevertheless, good progress has been made in all three outcome areas, aiming to getting and keeping girls in school, in relation to the development of new and or improved commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws as well as in relation to the implementation of SRHR and education commitments and policies in the countries as well as at regional level. Access to SRHR information and services for young people has also substantially been improved, as has the application of MIYP. Progress is less clear on some indicators that may be harder to achieve, but might also require further operationalisation. Examples of this are “continued support for education of girls” (O1-5) and “enabling girls to demand safe and gender responsive education” (O3-4). While a relevant monitoring and evaluation framework exists that should guide the consortium at different levels in capturing progress and learnings, not all country consortia partners always understand the framework which leads to inconsistent application and limited learning. Comparability issues between baseline and midline monitoring data on certain indicators have further challenged the quality of this MTR. The review indicated that the Break Free! ToC continues to be valid but could benefit from including MIYP as a strategy and requires further specification related to quality and safe education, L&A for SRHR service provision and economic empowerment as well as clarification around the inclusion of CSE. The safeguarding indicators show that girls and young women who are involved in Break Free! do not feel at greater risk, and know and trust the reporting mechanisms would they feel at risk. However, this varies strongly per country and context-specific attention is needed in countries where girls and young women report less safety or access. Specific attention is needed to safeguarding in contexts where anti-rights movements are vocal as young people might not be initially aware of this as they start participating within the consortium.

The MTR showed that due to the fragile political and social context in some countries, national level L&A is only possible at a very limited level. As such, L&A activities have focused more on sub-national levels in some countries where often times more flexibility exists and where there is more scope to make changes, such as improving implementation of existing policies. These efforts need to be strengthened and scaled up where possible.

Advocacy activities can be improved by reaching and involving more diverse youth through schools; community-mobilisation events, as well as through digital platforms. Furthermore, the need to strengthen MIYP in actual decision-making power both within the consortium and within external decision making, was identified.

Connecting regional, national and lower-level L&A to reinforce efforts and to strategically counter act opposition to issues such as CSE is seen as essential by all partners. Partners agreed that this could be realised through the joint development of comprehensive advocacy plans by all partners – including youth-led organisations - where activities reinforce each other. Thereby it has to be acknowledged that Break Free! is a very comprehensive programme with a budget that is not too large, requiring priorities to be set at country level based on previous experiences, different needs and different viable entry points for contextualised advocacy.

In terms of the Break Free! consortium itself, the partnership is well established but there is room to strengthen the partnerships with and within the Sahel countries. While considerable effort is made to involve national and sub-national level government bodies towards policy change, in order to achieve further sustainable policy change, further investments are required. There is also room to further strengthen the strategic partnership with the ministry and embassies through more pro-active communication which would allow discussing opportunities to build upon each other's strengths and networks, and broaden the current focus, which is experienced as more on upstream accountability.

## 6.2 Recommendations

### Updating and clarifying nuances in the ToC

Based on the MTR findings, it is recommended to include a mentioning of MIYP as a strategy in the ToC. At mid-line, there is further opportunity to detail in the ToC what quality and safe education entails and to put stronger focus on L&A economic empowerment, especially as social changes are hard to achieve in a context where basic economic necessities are lacking. There might also be a need to clarify within the consortium on how to navigate a potential inclusion of CSE (or contextually appropriate terms for school-based sexuality education) in the ToC.

### Fostering of a stronger joint strategic approach to L&A within Break Free!

The MTR showed that while the current L&A activities are contributing to change in relation to the different pathways, there are also opportunities to use a more strategic approach for L&A. It is recommended that Break Free! country consortia collaboratively create comprehensive advocacy plans with clearly defined outcomes and results. These should use contextually appropriate entry points and terminology; include a series of activities (including evidence generation) building upon and reinforcing each other; take on board the MIYP principles, and set clear indicators for the monitoring and evaluation towards achieving outcomes and results. These plans should be designed on the basis of local level needs and ensure that they include accountability mechanisms to inform communities about national level achievements. Further defining what is meant with quality and safe education (O3-3) would help to make the advocacy plans clearer in terms of what is expected to be achieved through L&A in this area or what process could potentially be put in place to work towards this.

### Enhancing a dedicated focus on risks and mitigation strategies related to L&A efforts in conflict-affected settings

The findings suggest it will be imperative to strengthen local-level L&A activities to ensure that they resonate with the unique country contexts in fragile environments. Additionally, responding to the learning needs of consortium partners, a new empirical study led by KIT may inform tailoring of strategies for maximum impact in the second half of the programme. To comprehensively address the complexities of conflict-affected settings, it will be further essential to augment the risk matrix. Potential risks and opportunities associated with youth involvement, as they speak out on potentially sensitive topics in an environment with increasing anti-human-rights sentiments, requires specific attention. By taking these steps, the programme and its monitoring system can be more effective, adaptable, and responsive to advancing SRHR and gender equality in conflict-affected countries.

### Enhancing meaningful and inclusive youth participation towards decision making

MIYP is a critical element of Break Free! and has been a successful approach towards achieving results. The programme should continue to advocate for permanent seats for youth in decision making spaces, ranging from local level (for instance village committees, district development committees etc, maybe also school boards) to national level (health advisory boards, technical working groups, national consultation mechanisms would need to continue. While youth leaders engaged in training and capacity building, there is room to increase and diversify the number of youth advocates. It would be recommended to make efforts to identify youth organisations active in rural areas, LGBITQ organisations (where possible) and to accommodate young people living with a disability.

The programme could use mechanisms to reach out of school youths more (for instance, through sports activities). It is recommended that youth leaders who received capacity building are followed up on with mentoring and coaching activities. This could provide further strategic direction for youth advocates towards how to function strategically and effectively in more formal decision-making bodies. Prior to supporting such mentoring and coaching activities by Break Free! actors, it may be useful to first conduct value clarification exercises on MIYP by these actors. That could result in a Break Free! specific guidance document on what is meant by MIYP and when and how young people could be best involved within and through the programme. The programme could potentially sub-contract the newly identified youth-led organisations or develop memoranda of understanding with them to formalise their involvement. Another recommendation is to include MIYP as an explicit strategy in the Break Free! ToC, instead of having MIYP only featured in pathway 3 as is currently the case. This would create more consistent attention for MIYP.

### Reflect on safeguarding implications beyond safeguarding indicators

The overall safeguarding indicators in this MTR report show a positive trend, and the Break Free! consortium was able to adjust safeguarding targets to higher percentages. However, the consortium is encouraged to reflect explicitly on what else is needed beyond reporting mechanisms for young people in order for youth to be informed and aware of the context they will be navigating as youth SRHR advocates. This is particularly important in countries were anti-human-rights movements are active, as young people might not be initially informed, aware, or oversee the potential risks of advocating for SRHR in such spaces. Youth involvement as SRHR advocates might pose risks to them in these contexts, and that should be reflected upon and mitigation strategies should be included in a risk matrix.

### Strengthening the operations of the Break Free! partnership towards reaching its objectives

In order to optimise the daily functioning of the Break Free! partnership so that it is in the best possible shape to maximise its results in the remaining years, it is recommended to:

- Increase effective communication within the Break Free! consortium through, for instance, country level WhatsApp groups; country and regional coordinators monthly meetings; and more regular inter-country information sharing through newsletters and the Break Free! Facebook page.
- Building onto ongoing efforts, increase early as well as content- and context-aware engagement of translators. Further improve consistency throughout all French translations of key guidance and terminology in ToC and PMEL documents to strengthen communication and fidelity in PMEL data.
- Develop Memoranda of Understanding between consortium and implementing partners at country level, with a focus on how to work together and who is involved in what type of decisions[12].
- Increase transparency about budgets (including learning budgets) and budgeting processes and procedures at the different levels of the consortium, and explain options for flexibility at country level.
- Better utilise the learning component through the development of a learning document/plan for the next 2 years. Strengthen ownership by improving the system for country level input on these plans/documents.

### Capitalising and expanding collaboration with national and sub-national government actors and use partnership with the ministry and embassies in a more strategic manner

Considerable effort has been made to involve national and sub-national level government bodies towards policy change. The programme can capitalise on such collaborations as it enters the next phase, in order to achieve further sustainable policy change. It should be acknowledged that this is more difficult in volatile contexts, where L&A activities at community or subnational level, rather than national level, might yield more sustainable results. There is also room to further strengthen the partnership with the ministry and embassies by making more strategic use of each other's strengths and networks that could support learning and collaboration across actors with similar goals. In line with the partnership agreement, advances in this regard should be addressed as a shared responsibility by the consortium, ministry and embassies.

12 In countries such as Mali and Niger, this seems particularly important, because the (leading) Plan offices in these countries coordinate but do not implement activities themselves; this is done by implementing partners.

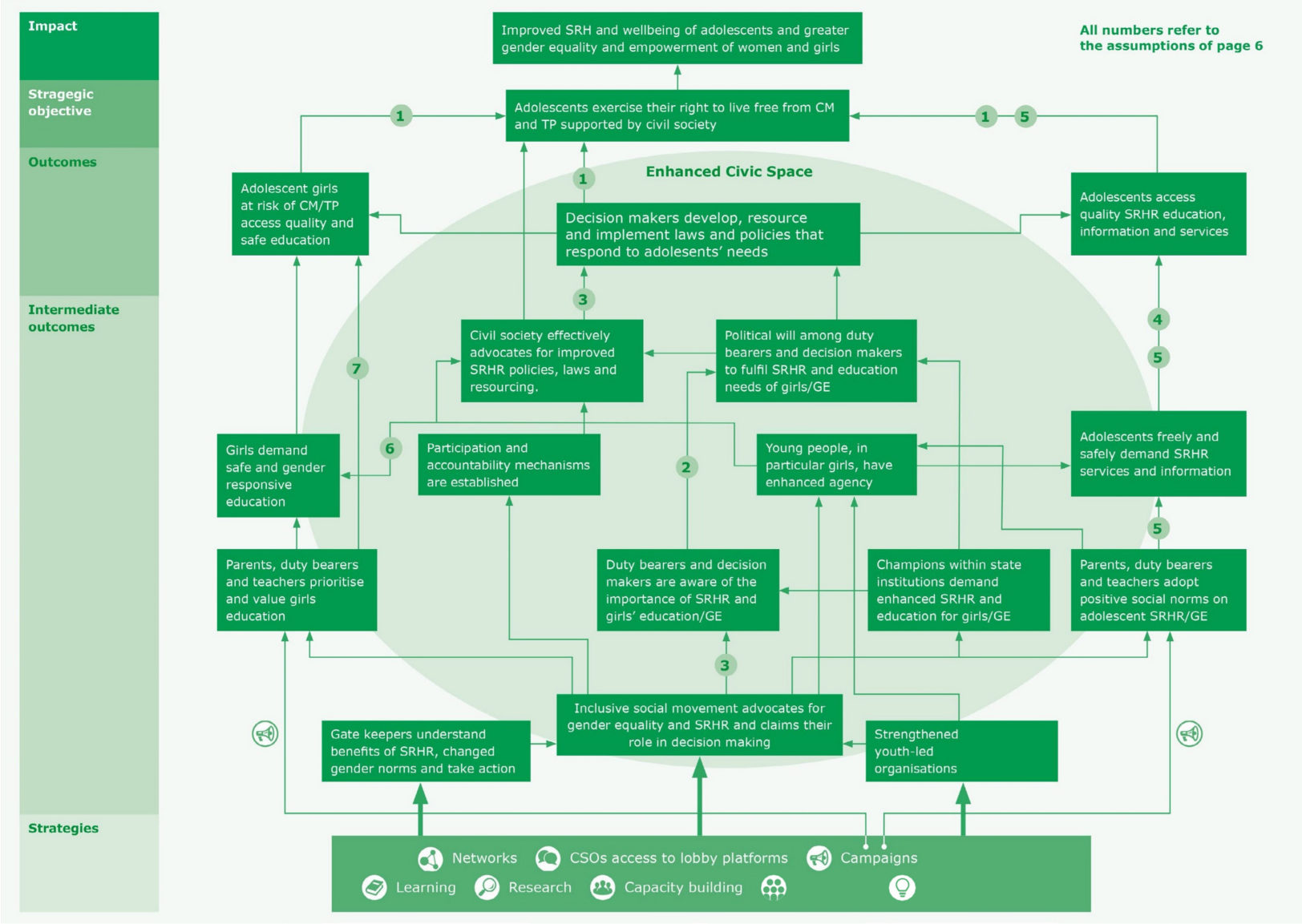
### Adjusting the Break Free! PMEL to better track progress

While a relevant monitoring and evaluation framework exists that guides the consortium at different levels in capturing progress and learnings, further improvements could be made to the PMEL system. These include:

- Improve or clarify the operationalisation of certain indicators, and reconsider its use to programme monitoring. To be more precise:
  - o Indicator O1-5 (Number/Percentage of adolescent girls in the programme implementation areas who report having support to continue their education) has been interpreted differently across countries. Differences in understanding related to who this support comes from – parents, teachers, or government structures - and what the support entails. The PMEL working group and country level officers can also reflect on how much tracking this indicator serves the programme, as it tracks an indirect effect of the programme (having support in place is a result of L&A or awareness raising activities).
  - o Indicator O1-6 (Extent to which girls demand safe and gender responsive education) needs clarification on how 'demand' has been operationalised.
  - o Indicator O3-3 (Quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) needs clarification of what is meant by 'quality' and from what sources of information or education specifically (in/exclusion criteria).
- Include unintended and negative outcomes through outcome harvesting.
- Establish standard orientation of all (new) stakeholders engaged in the PMEL system.
- Increase involvement of young people in the PMEL processes.
- Reflect on the programme's ambitions level and how they can be captured in targets. For certain targets, the Break Free! consortium might want to increase targets, seeing that some have already been exceeded (O3-1) and others are close to being reached at mid-line (O2-3; O2-6; O3-2)[13].
- For end evaluation, make sure the outcome signs are already identified so that they could be taken along in subsequent (qualitative) data collection.
- For end evaluation, make sure that operationalisations of indicators are clear to all country teams, as well as the sources for some of the indicators as measured in base- and mid-line, as comparability will be key. Good archiving and handovers to onboarding PMEL officers is also key in view of high staff turnover.

13 O2.3 referring to number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs being implemented; O2.6 to number of self-driven advocacy initiatives that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs; O3-1 to number of adolescents utilizing SRH services; O3-2 to number of adolescents reached with SRHR information/education.

# **Annex 1** Theory of change



# **Annex 2** Overview of sites for qualitative data collection

The below Table provides an overview of sites for qualitative data collection per country.

### Selected implementation areas for qualitative MTR data collection

| Country | Selected implementation area for qualitative MTR data collection |
|---|---|
| Burkina Faso | National level / Ouagadougou<br>South-Central region (Bazèga and Zoundwéogo provinces) |
| Mali | National level / Bamako<br>Bougouni |
| Niger | National level / Niamey<br>Maijirgui<br>Mayahi |
| Ethiopia | National level / Addis Ababa<br>Dangila |
| Kenya | National level / Nairobi<br>Tharaka-Nithi |
| Malawi | National level / Lilongwe<br>Machinga (Traditional Authority) Chiwalo) |
| Mozambique | National level / Maputo<br>Magovolas |
| Zambia | National level / Lusaka<br>Chipata and Petauke districts (Eastern province) |

# Annex 3 Demographics of respondents of youth survey

A survey was conducted as part of this MTR to reviewed to what extent Break Free! meaningfully involves youth in the programme. In total, 396 young people aged 15-34 responded to the survey. The mean age was 21.7 (±4.5), ranging from 18.2 years in Mali to 25.1 in Kenya. These mean ages should be interpreted with caution since the country teams were asked to define their target age range themselves. As a result, some countries (a.o., Mali, Ethiopia and Zambia) decided to focus on 15-24 years, while other countries extended the age range to 34 years of age. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the sample identified as female, and 45% as male. While the option was provided to specify another gender, no one chose this option. Regarding the relationship and marital status, two thirds (67%) of the respondents indicated being single; 16% had a boy- or girlfriend and 15% was married of whom 11 were in the age group of 15-19 years old. In total, 47% of the respondents were residing in rural areas, 30% in urban and 23% in semi-urban areas, with larges differences between countries. Basic demographics can be found in the Table below.

### Demographics of the youth respondents to the survey

| Variable | Burkina Faso | Ethiopia | Kenya | Malawi | Mali | Mozambique | Niger | Sudan | Zambia | Regional | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean age | 22.7 (5.3) | 19.3 (2.6) | 25.1 (3.6) | 23.0 (2.7) | 18.2 (3.1) | 21.3 (5.6) | 23.1 (5.6) | - | 21.3 (3.1) | 23.2 (3.9) | **21.7 (4.5)** |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 21 (50%) | 27 (47%) | 37 (67%) | 26 (49%) | 29 (57%) | 33 (54%) | 12 (46%) | - | 33 (59%) | 10 (77%) | **218 (55%)** |
| Male | 21 (50%) | 24 (47%) | 18 (33%) | 27 (51%) | 22 (43%) | 28 (46%) | 14 (54%) | - | 23 (41%) | 3 (23%) | **178 (45%)** |
| **Marital/relationship status** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Single | 25 (60%) | 50 (98%) | 36 (66%) | 25 (47%) | 25 (49%) | 48 (79%) | 10 (39%) | - | 49 (88%) | 6 (46%) | **268 (68%)** |
| Boy/girlfriend | 9 (21%) | 0 (0%) | 14 (26%) | 15 (28%) | 11 (22%) | 4 (7%) | 5 (19%) | - | 5 (9%) | 5 (39%) | **64 (16%)** |
| Married | 7 (67%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (7%) | 13 (25%) | 15 (29%) | 9 (15%) | 11 (42%) | - | 2 (4%) | 2 (15% | **61 (15%)** |
| Other | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | - | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | **3 (1%)** |
| **Residence** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Urban | 24 (57%) | 18 (35%) | 26 (47%) | 10 (19%) | 4 (8%) | 7 (12%) | 1 (4%) | - | 27 (48%) | 7 (54%) | **118 (30%)** |
| Semi-urban | 4 (10%) | 20 (39%) | 16 (29%) | 12 (23%) | 10 (20%) | 15 (25%) | 0 (0%) | - | 14 (25%) | 5 (39%) | **91 (23%)** |
| Rural | 14 (33%) | 13 (26%) | 13 (24%) | 31 (59%) | 37 (73%) | 39 (64%) | 25 (96%) | - | 15 (27%) | 1 (8%) | **187 (47%)** |
| **Total** | **42** | **51** | **55** | **53** | **51** | **61** | **26** | **-** | **56** | **13** | **396** |

# Annex 4 Overview of all indicator results (country specific with basket indicators)

## 1. Ethiopia, Kenya, Regional L&A

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| SO2 | Description of policy/decision-making processes with improved participation of CSOs in political decision-making on adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | no description | MoE and MoH are engaging CSOs at different levels of decision-making in developing strategies and policies. E.g. CSOs have contributed to the revision of the School related gender base violence policy development and different CSOs take part in the updating process of the national adolescents and Youth Health Strategy (2021-2025): ESDP VI (2021 – 2025) CSOs participate in the annual meeting of the social standing committee and provide their input on ending CM and TP<br><br>Different government sector offices (education, WCSA, police, courts, health, etc.) work together to provide SRH services and education for young people. Local CBOs (e.g. Edirs) have been involved in the program by providing protection for girls against child marriage | 0 | This did not come out explicitly from the findings. However, there is political goodwill and good relationships among Break Free! and political decision-makers. However, it should be noted that there are 3 policies that are in different stages ie education and gender policy, counselling and guidance policy school re-entry policy, anti FGM policy. | n/a | n/a |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| O1-1 | Number/Percentage of girls below 18 who left school due to CM and/or TP | | | 18,80% | 9 students from a total of 11.130 (0.08%) Adolescent girls from targeted 30 schools are dropping out due to CM and teenage pregnancy. | 407 (5%) | 215 (2.6%) | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O1-2 | Extent to which girls drop out of school as a consequence of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy | | | Qualitative data indicates that the school dropout rate among girls as a consequence of CM/TP is extensive in Dangila. Few girls return to school following marriage or childbirth, due to stigma and pressure to focus on household and childcare responsibilities. | School dropout has decreased because of a decrease in child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.<br>However, re-entry remains difficult due to social stigma. Decline in CM&TP among girls in junior classes (grade 8 or below) while those in high schools there is still more work to do by involving young boys<br>> Girls drop out because of early marriage and teenage pregnancy is reduced from time to time. Girls' School attendance rate improved.<br>> Child protection committee the data reported in the suggestion box child marriage cases indicated reduced.<br>> Health centers safe abortion reports decreased from time to time. | Qualitative data on the extent to which girls drop out of school because of CM and TP reveals that it occurs frequently in Tana River County. The principal and teacher interviewees in Gafuru confirmed high dropout rates of girls in at their school in the past 12 months due to CM. | The data indicates a reduction of school drop out as a result of teenage pregnancies over the last 2 years; girls who get pregnant are able to go back to school. Also, parents and the girls themselves are aware that they can go back to school when pregnant and even after delivery- and this is made possible by parents who are able to take care of the babies to allow the young mothers to go to school. | n/a | n/a |
| O1-3 | Extent to which parents, care takers and teachers prioritize and value girls' education | | | School staff in Dangila appear to prioritise and value girls' education and take active steps to minimise school dropouts among female pupils. The extent to which parents/caregivers prioritise and value girls' education is based on multiple factors, including location/region and level of education. Parents are reportedly beginning to see the benefits of the educated girl child; e.g. her ability to progress to tertiary education and/or to obtain employment, which allows her to contribute to family finances/family support. | Parents seem more willing to send their daughters to school and also to support them while they are in school. Girls who are part of the Break Free program are educating their parents about the value of girls' education. Some parents have also received awareness raising training by the program. Teachers in schools are also educating girls about the importance of girls' education, who in turn teach their parents. | Qualitative data on the extent to which parents, caretakers and teachers prioritise and value girls' education depends on their socio-economic status and culture. In Gafuru village parents do not value girls' education while the teachers do prioritise it. Kenya has a high gross enrolment rate of both boys and girls at primary and secondary levels. | There is some change in attitude among parents in relation to education especially for girls- parents are now more comfortable in taking their girls to school compared to before; including those who get pregnant in school are given an opportunity to go back to school after giving birth. Some parent's attitude towards girls' education has really changed positively, they even prefer supporting girls' education to boys. Alongside, there is an inclusion of female teachers in the school to encourage young girls to dream and achieve. | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O1-4 | Number of schools in the programme implementation areas are applying minimum standards of child protection | | | 0 | 5 schools fully fulfilled and in place minimum standards of child protection.<br>25 schools partially fulfilled meeting the minimum standards of child protection. | 0 | 65 schools<br>A school assessment survey was conducted in 62 schools. 21 schools in both Kajiado and Tana River and 20 schools in Tharaka Nithi. All the 62 schools have a school protection policy that protect children from abuse in schools. They have a staff code of conduct, they have and adhere to procedures for screening and hiring staff and volunteers, have a process for reporting staff violations of protection policies and the policies in place are being implemented. | n/a | n/a |
| O1-5 | Number/Percentage of adolescent girls in the programme implementation areas who report having support to continue their education | | | 85,70% | 100% All target students are getting the support to continue their education | 5294 (64.5%) | 1222 (23%) | n/a | n/a |
| O1-6 | Extent to which girls demand safe & gender responsive education | | | Qualitative data indicates that girls are unaware of the concept of gender responsive education and currently lack structures and platforms to demand safe and gender responsive education. Social and cultural norms also discourage girls from expressing themselves / speaking out about their specific needs. | > The established child protection committee at school brings a conducive learning environment for girls to continue their education.<br>> Adolescent girls are provided with scholastic materials to support them in continuing their education.<br>> Peer-to-peer sessions improve girls' participation, confidence, decision making and academic performance.<br>> Adolescent girls are actively using services that help them to continue their education (e.g. sanitary pads, rooms for changing sanitary pads) | Qualitative data on the extent to which girls demand safe and gender responsive education reveals that there are few platforms for girls to demand safe and gender responsive education and they lack the skills to do so. | Girls in these communities are not able to demand safe and gender responsive education. They continue to lack a platforms to do so. However, they are in peer engagement groups where they discuss their issues and also use this as an opportunity to reach out to their peers on SRHR information. There is no youth representation at county level to allow for AYPs to have a voice in decision making. | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-1 | Number of new and/or improved (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs * | SRH015 | # of laws blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 0 | 0 | This did not come out explicitly from the findings. | No data is available on the number of new or improved commitments that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs, but the qualitative data reveals a number of relevant international and regional charters protocols and instruments in place pertaining to SRH, TP, CM and FGM/C. | 0 |
| | | SRH016 | # of governmental policies blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| | | SRH018 | # of by-laws blocked, adopted, improved for leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| | | SRH019 | # of international agreements blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 6 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-2 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments change their new and/or improved (international) commitments laws, policies, strategies and societal groups change their bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | Although a number of recent developments in relation to policy and legislation around CM, FGM/C and adolescent health were noted in the course of this study, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these changes were influenced by lobbying and advocacy activities given that civil society has only recently been allowed to recommence full operations. | The Break Free! Consortium and other CSOs have tried to influence the improvement of different strategies during periodical revision. The different L&A activities enable CSOs to be represented in the development of different strategies that help them raise their voice. The CSO's engagement was essential for the improvements under some strategies listed below.<br><br>ESDP VI (2021 – 2025) has given more emphasis and recognizes the role of education to end CM and key barriers to girls' education such as low parental aspiration for girls' education, lack of gender-sensitive facilities and lack of gender-sensitive teacher training.<br>National Adolescents and Youth Health Strategy (2021-2025): Emphasizes the expansion of AYH services. | Although there have been recent changes to policy and legislation around CM, FGM/C and adolescent health, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these changes were influenced by L&A activities although it is clear from the findings that platforms for youth to influence decision-making are extremely limited. | Little or no findings related to L&A in this section- In one of the sites however, there have been initiatives to develop an Anti-FGM action plan due to the time-consuming process of developing a County specific FGM policy | The exact number of commitments, laws, policies, strategies and by-laws being implemented is difficult to determine. Implementation depends on a) strength of the legal system in the country, b) accountability mechanisms and c) strength of civil society mechanisms. Respondent insights into the status of commitments to these instruments reveal that countries in the SADC region are generally doing well whereas those in the West Africa region are not doing particularly well. Countries that have political leaders speaking out against CM and FGM/C and supporting SRHR and education of young people, coupled with a supportive legislative framework are generally progressing well. | As a result of lobby and advocacy the programme contributed to development of 2 policies/ strategies at AU level which are accountability framework on ending HP and community of practice. Community of practice is the newly launched strategy by AUHPU for children participation on quarterly basis while accountability frameworks is to ensure that good performance measurement and monitoring practices are in place to track progress on the elimination of harmful practices by AU Member States.<br><br>At RECs level there are 4 policies/model laws at SADC i.e. (SADC SRHR strategy, SADC SRHR accountability framework and SADC model laws on ending child marriage) and 1 at EAC (Gender action plan). I The regional programme worked through BF! countries to lobby for signing of the ESA commitments and 2 BF countries (Zambia and Mozambique) signed while Malawi and Kenya did not sign the commitment. This remains the advocacy opportunity for the programme. |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-3 | Number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs being implemented* | SCS011 | # of laws for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SCS012 | # of governmental policies for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SCS014 | # of by-laws for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SCS015 | # of international agreements for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| O2-4 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments and societal groups implemented their (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies, bylaws responding to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | n/a | > At the district level as a result of the L&A activities community groups and religious leaders amended their by-laws.<br>> National Adolescents and Youth Health Strategy (2021-2025): Local government structures (e.g. woreda sector offices) are now more responsive and committed to the needs of young people.<br>> Health Sector Transformation Plan HSTP-II (2021-2025) is developed and implementation is currently underway | n/a | This did not come out from our findings- this can be an area of focus in the next implementation phase. | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-5 | Number/Percentage of youths aged 10 - 24 who report having participated in policy and decision-making bodies and the number (and %) of them who perceive their participation as meaningful* | SRH002 | # of youth (female) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | 15,90% | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| | | | # of youth (male) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| | | | # of youth (other) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (gender not-specified) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | | 0 | 0 | 42 out of 55 (76.4% ) of the respondents to the MIYP survey reported having participated in policy and decision-making bodies. Of these 39 out of 42 (93%) perceived their participation as meaningful in these bodies | 0 | 0 |
| O2-6 | Number of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/ youth led CSOs including girls and young women) that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs* | SCS041 | # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 31 |
| | | SCS042 | # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency at sub-national level | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-7 | Description of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/ youth led CSOs including girls and young women) (OH). | | | The study generated limited evidence of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/ youth-led CSOs including girls and young women). However, the MoWCY has invited the Ethiopian Youth Federation to participate in its Technical Working Group. The same ministry is planning to establish a youth council to support the development of its youth policy. This council will include high school and university students with the aim of improving adolescents' engagement in political decision-making processes. | Different self-driven advocacy initiatives are conducted at the national and district level. At the national level FAWE-Eth, TaYA and ODWaC had advocacy initiatives towards improved SRHR service for youth, ending CM and TP. At the district level, six CSOs (youth-led) associations are established by the women and social Affairs office to improve youth participation and engagement in L&A and support the SRH needs of the youth at the community level. A Dutch-funded SRHR alliance in Ethiopia has been established to maximize the advocacy initiatives and facilitate joint activities and initiatives on SRHR. MoH has reestablished the Adolescent Youth Health TWG and invited CSOs to collaborate to promote health education and information that empower children, adolescents and youth at the national level. | There is limited evidence of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/ youth-led CSOs including girls and young women) uncovered in this study but one example is youth participation in the AMREF's Youth in Action (Y-ACT) where they contributed to developing a Sexual Reproductive and Gender Based Violence Policy for Kakamega County | One respondent noted that there is a youth group in Tana River County who are receiving mentorship from the BF! Program to conduct advocacy activities for SRHR. This was not directly captured in the qualitative mid-term findings- however there was reported efforts for young people in groups to reach out to their peers with SRHR related information and messages both informally as individuals and as part of youth groups | Collaborate on continental opportunities for girls and young women to engage with AU organs like Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), Ending Child Marriage Campaign, the Saleema initiative, RECs and ACERWC | At the AU level the regional programme supported the youth advocacy trainings and participation of girls and young women in Pre-GIMAC summits organized under the margin of the AU summit twice in a year. The initiative creates a platform for the provision of inputs from girls' and young women's perspective that then was presented to the head of states. The regional Programme also created a platform in Nhanga form for girls and young women to discuss with traditional leaders from SADC COTLA on issues pertaining to child marriage and SRHR services. Webinar was organized with aim of engaging children and young people to share experience on the child marriage and other harmful practices and also create mechanisms of interacting with children from the whole of Africa. Furthermore, the CSO forum which is organized at the margins of the African Committee of Experts on the rights and welfare of Children (ACERWC) session held twice a year. One of the consortium member FAWE, has been engaging in the CSO Forum secretariat as management Committee (board) that enabled the regional programme leverage to influence agendas around the BF! thematic areas in the CSO forum leading to the main committee session. |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-1 | Number/Percentage of adolescents aged 10 - 24 in the programme implementation areas utilizing SRH services including modern contraceptives | | | 79,80% | Girls/ 24.183<br>Boys/ 26.705<br>Total/ 50.888 | 41% | 0% (the project is not tracking this indicator) | n/a | n/a |
| O3-2 | Number/Percentage of adolescents aged 10-24 in the programme implementation areas reached with SRHR information/ education * | SRH003 | # of young people (female) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/ AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 31417 | 0 | 0 | n/a | n/a |
| | | | # of young people (male) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/ AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 30354 | 0 | 0 | n/a | n/a |
| | | | # of young people (other) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/ AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a | n/a |
| | | | # of young people (gender non-specified) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/ AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25035 | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-3 | Quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) | | | There is limited evidence on the quality of available SRHR education and information as a result of insufficient quality assurance and monitoring. There is limited knowledge and implementation of the CSE curricula noted in the National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health (AYRH) Strategy. CSE is reportedly viewed as contrary to Ethiopia's norms, culture and value systems. The development and validation of the communication and advocacy strategy for Education for Health and Well-being (EHW) for Ethiopia at the end of 2020 aims to address gaps in current CSE provision. | The Break Free! Program has increased adolescent girls' access to quality SRHR education and information and this in turn has increased SRH service utilization by adolescent girls. Examples include increased knowledge of management of menstruation, and accessing sanitary pads.<br>YMCA has created a social media platform (Facebook and Telegram) for SRH information/education to access information easily.<br>There is an improvement in the quality of services as a result of the establishment of youth-friendly corners and the capacity building provided for health center professionals however there is still a gap in the quality of service in health facilities. | There is no solid evidence on the quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) available but qualitative findings reveal that these interventions are either non-existent (CSE) or the SRH information is sub-standard and insufficient. | Increased access to SRHR education- at Country level- through clubs called Tuseme in Kajiado County, Teen mother meetings/ groups and Health clubs in schools.<br>Young people were also able to access information through Community meeting on SRHR issues. | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-4 | Changes observed of adolescents who freely and safely demand SRHR services and information | | | n/a | Adolescent girls have now become more open to discussing menstruation freely and seeking SRH services from youth-friendly SRHR centres. They are also open to discussing SRHR issues with their teachers. Peers-to-peers education is helping girls access SRHR information and services<br>> Adolescent girls` have knowledge about STI disease its transmission and treatment, and practical knowledge about how to use a sanitary pad.<br>> Adolescents' health-seeking behaviors for access to SRH services increased during the project period | n/a | Demand for SRHR services and information by the AYPs were not prominent - and this was attributed largely due to the cultural contexts where the programme is being implemented. | n/a | n/a |
| O3-5 | Changes observed that gatekeepers (including teachers, health and community workers) take action on improved (A) SRHR | | | n/a | > Schools established separated MHM rooms for girls.<br>> Health facilities established separated youth-friendly service units and assigned focal persons.<br>> Caregivers or parents started to promote SRH information to their children.<br>Increased awareness amongst teachers and health workers thanks to awareness-raising training, resulting in more willingness to help girls avoid CM and TP, or are pregnant | n/a | Teachers, health workers, religious leaders are involved in providing SRHR information to young people through health clubs, teen mothers groups, churches | n/a | n/a |
| O3-7 | Changes observed that parents and caretakers adopt positive social norms on adolescent SRHR, gender equality and inclusion | | | n/a | Key informants (e.g., teachers) report that parents are less forceful when it comes to enforcing marriage proposals, and more allowing young girls to focus on their education and seek help on SRHR issues<br>> Girls' domestic work reduced<br>> Girls' school performance improved. | n/a | Although parents support and value girls; education more than before, they remain the 'weak link' to effective uptake and adoption of SRHR information and interventions because of alcohol abuse, neglect and negative cultural and religious norms (where SRHR related information is taboo) | n/a | n/a |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Ethiopia | | Kenya | | Regional L&A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| SG-1 | Percentage of girls and young women who do not feel at greater risk of harm due to Break Free! involvement | | | 0 | 92,60% | 0 | 30 out of 37 (81%) girls and young women (15-34 years) did not feel at risk due to Break Free! Involvement | n/a | n/a |
| SG-2 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have trust in the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | | | 0 | 81,30% | 0 | 29 out of 31 (94%) girls and young women (10-24 years) who knew how to report when they felt at risk said they have trust in the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | n/a | n/a |
| SG-3 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have access to the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | | | 0 | 59,20% | 0 | 31 out of 27 (84%) girls and young women (10-24 years) know how to report if they feel at risk | n/a | n/a |

## 2. Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| SO2 | Description of policy/decision-making processes with improved participation of CSOs in political decision-making on adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | Civic space is open in Burkina Faso and engagement with government is formalised via an agreement. Government always consults with civil society organisations (CSOs) in political decision-making on SRHR and education needs. | An advocacy group (with an advocacy plan) has been set up to raise the legal age of marriage for girls to 18 in Burkina Faso to ensure educational continuity for girls at risk of child marriage. This group is made up of more than 15 CSOs and supported by allies including five (05) ministries and their central/technical directorates | No information is available on the number of policy/decision-making processes with better CSO participation in policy decision-making on adolescents' SRHR and education needs | Program activities made it possible to identify CSOs and youth groups/associations whose members were organized into community committees and networks. They then benefited from capacity building in awareness-raising and advocacy. This allowed them to develop and carry out awareness and advocacy action plans and also to participate in the development of municipal development plans.<br>5 international commitments of laws, policies, strategies and regulations address the needs of adolescents in SRHR and education being implemented. | > Government has a high level of commitment to youth SRH in Niger; civic space in the SRH sector is open and there are a number of CSOs participating in the space on a variety of platforms.<br>> Some youth networks participate actively in this space to influence SRH policy and implementation although their lobbying and advocacy capacity needs to be strengthened. | no description available |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| O1-1 | Number/ Percentage of girls below 18 who left school due to CM and/or TP | | | 298 | 423 | 9,7% | 7% | 1360 (6%) | 159 (0,8%) |
| | | | | explanatory note: Mali was left out of the calculation of the total, due to incomplete baseline information and results were provided in only percentage instead of absolute numbers. | | | | | |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O1-2 | Extent to which girls drop out of school as a consequence of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy | | | Qualitative data on the extent to which girls drop out of school as a consequence of CM and TP reveals that it occurs frequently. The principal and teacher interviewees confirmed high dropout rates of girls in their school in the past 12 months. Girls in rural areas seldomly come back to school after delivery of their child. | The girls note the presence of cases of pregnant girls or mothers of children in schools, which means that there is less dropout from school due to pregnancy.<br>This perception of girls is consolidated by interviews with government representatives (Education and Social Work), parents, and leaders on the fact of actions and changes in behavior at the school administration level, and within families and of the community means that many girls who are pregnant and even after giving birth do not drop out of school. But for this they need everyone's support. | CM is viewed as the key contributing factor to girls leaving school, mainly due to the high domestic workload that girls are required to perform once married. Husbands may also forbid their wives from returning to school. It appears to be socially accepted that girls return to school following childbirth , provided they have support with childcare. Remaining in school during and after pregnancy is becoming increasingly socially acceptable, among community members as well as school staff. However, some girls do still leave school after falling pregnant because of embarrassment, shame and teasing. | At this stage of the program, measures have been taken to encourage girls to remain in school. Concerning child marriage, the practice has declined considerably. And also in case there is a teenage pregnancy (Married or not) arrangements are made at community and school levels to facilitate the girl's reintegration into school or vocational training. | The two most frequently mentioned reasons are CM and the parents' perceived lack of interest in their children's education. This is supported by 2016 World Bank study on factors leading girls to drop out of school: low levels of parental education, poor learning outcomes, cost, failure in primary school completion of exams, lack of nearby secondary schools, some girls never enrolling in school or enrolling too late and demands made on first daughters at home. | > the poverty of the households which does not allow the parents to ensure the minimum for their daughters<br>> the lack of a tutor (distance from schools)<br>> gender-based violence on the way to school<br>> fear of being ridiculed by peers after pregnancy |
| O1-3 | Extent to which parents, care takers and teachers prioritize and value girls' education | | | Qualitative data on the extent to which parents, caregivers and teachers prioritise and value girls' education reveals that this has improved over time due to intense awareness creation. This can be seen from the increased girl enrolment rates. Girls are, however, still given more household chores than boys. | We see the willingness of parents, guardians and teachers to give priority and value to the education of girls through their decisions in favor of the continuation of the school. The school administration facilitates this collaboration with social services which support the most deprived.<br>Generally speaking, we know that due to the national policy of positive discrimination, the priority and value given to the education of girls has been a reality. | There is a growing shift towards parent / caregiver support of girls' education, particularly among those living in urban areas. Parents are reportedly beginning to see the benefits of an educated girl child, including her ability to obtain employment as well as her commitment – and potential financial contributions – towards her family. However, a high number of girls are still withdrawn from school to provide domestic support or to marry. | With awareness raising and advocacy, parents/ guardians and community leaders (mayors) understood the benefits of girls' education. Some parents give them the same opportunities as boys by reducing domestic chores. Thus, many parents have decided to keep their daughters in school as much as their abilities allow. A large majority of municipal elected officials (mayors) decided during deliberations to raise awareness at community level, particularly in places of worship (mosques) on the importance of keeping girls in school and not celebrating child marriages to enable girls to be kept in school. | Mixed findings: Girls and boys in school say parents value girls education, whilst girls and boys out of school say parents do not value girls education. Parents indicate that they do value girls' education but struggle to participate actively in their daughters' schooling. A number of study respondents said that parents/caregivers prioritise keeping girls at home for housework rather over enrolling them at school. | Girls and boys in school say that parents attach importance to the schooling of the girl while boys and girls not in school believe that parents attach less importance to the schooling of the girl. Parents indicate that they value the daughter's education but find it difficult to actively participate in their daughters' schooling |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O1-4 | Number of schools in the programme implementation areas are applying minimum standards of child protection | | | 0 | 8 | 12 (30%) | 28 or 70% of schools out of 40 | 0 | 20 |
| O1-5 | Number/ Percentage of adolescent girls in the programme implementation areas who report having support to continue their education | | | explanatory notes: Results of this indicator are not reported due to omissions and inconsistencies in the baseline and mid-term measurements. Large differences between baseline and mid-term values indicatoed that the indicator was understood and measured in different ways. Also, the schools where the programme is implemented were not selected yet at the time of the baseline study, this also caused inconsistency between the baseline and mind-term results. Thererfore, the baseline and mid-term results are not comparable within countries. | | | | | |
| O1-6 | Extent to which girls demand safe & gender responsive education | | | Qualitative data on the extent to which girls demand safe and gender responsive education reveals limited platforms for girls to demand safe and gender responsive education. Furthermore, they lack the courage and the framework to express themselves as cultural norms prevent them from expressing themselves. | Even if girls do not demand in the form of demands or questions, they are aware and remind us of the importance of school and education for young girls. They also believe that efforts should be made, including by the Program, through concrete actions to prevent girls who are victims of unwanted pregnancies from dropping out of school for lack of resources. They also know that sending girls to school is a way to combat early marriage, even if it is done at the girl's initiative. | Qualitative data indicates that girls are aware of the concept of gender-responsive education, but currently lack structures and the capacity to demand safe and gender-responsive education.<br><br>No specific channels or platforms appear to be in place at the school or community level for girls to demand safe and gender-sensitive education. Furthermore, respondents generally felt that girls lacked the capacity to demand it. This is understandable given that girls are generally not encouraged to speak up and make demands or express their specific needs. That's something the girls haven't been able to do, and they haven't had many opportunities to do it | Through the Break Free program! girls have understood that they too have the right to quality education. And their expectations in relation to respect for this right to education are the reduction of rural and domestic work; the involvement of parents in school monitoring and the strengthening of communication between parents and girls on SRHR issues, the continued awareness-raising of teachers about acts of harassment and other gender-based violence, specifically rape. | Only a few ad hoc interventions to create platforms for girls to demand safe and gender responsive education. Study participants had limited understanding of the term "gender-responsive education." Girls lack the capacity to demand safe and gender responsive education. | > the code of conduct which takes into account gender aspects<br>> action plans<br>> internal regulations in schools<br>> separate latrines |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-1 | Number of new and/or improved (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs * | SRH015 | # of laws blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SRH016 | # of governmental policies blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SRH018 | # of by-laws blocked, adopted, improved for leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SRH019 | # of international agreements blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-2 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments change their new and/or improved (international) commitments laws, policies, strategies and societal groups change their bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | It is difficult to determine the extent to which any changes in policy or legislation were influenced by L&A activities, although CSOs are advocating for change in SRHR. The platforms for youth to influence decision-making exist but are limited. | A module of pedagogy sensitive to gender and inclusion was integrated into the initial training program for early childhood educators and school teachers at the INFPE during the validation workshop of all the training modules of the institute following the advocacy actions of Break Free!<br>> the ministries in charge of health, national education, youth, justice, gender and family have each established Break Free focal points in April 2022<br>> The focal points of the ministries concerned participated effectively in the work of the advocacy groups on the themes of raising the legal age of marriage; | Although a number of recent developments in relation to policy and legislation around FGM and adolescent health were noted, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these changes were influenced by L&A activities. Furthermore, traditional and religious leaders often appear to exert a negative influence on legislation and policy related to SRHR. | Training and awareness sessions were organized by the program and its civil society partners for young people who then carried out advocacy actions on the abandonment of child marriage and dropping out of school at the school level. intervention communities. Municipal leaders ratified (in the presence of adolescents and young people) and gradually committed to changing things. All these efforts at the local level are brought up to the national level so that the actors of the program can act through these local conventions at the central level to revise or even take new legal provisions in relation to the abandonment of child marriage and other practices of gender. | It is difficult to determine the extent to which changes in policy and legislation have been influenced by L&A activities. One example is the Network of Youth Ambassadors for Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People and Adolescents participated in several working committees to influence polices, strategic plans and programmes for youth and as a result, 15% of the health budget was allocated to adolescent SRH. | At this stage we have not yet recorded any modification of the legal text to meet the needs of adolescents in terms of SRHR and education but during the influence evening and the parliamentary information day where more than 50 parliamentarians, members of the government, notably the Minister of the Interior, the SG of the Ministry of Education and the Minister of Health, took part and committed to taking action in favor of keeping girls in school and against child marriages and unwanted pregnancies. |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-3 | Number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs being implemented* | SCS011 | # of laws for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | SCS012 | # of governmental policies for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | SCS014 | # of by-laws for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | no data available | 0 | 08 community commitments that meet the reproductive health needs of adolescents The reproductive law (SR law of 2002), the international convention on the rights of the child, the schooling policy for girls, the policy on reproductive health, the Maputo protocol, the national policy for the promotion and protection of child, the national multi-sectoral strategy to end child marriage in Mali (March 2021) | 0 | 0 |
| | | SCS015 | # of international agreements for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | 0 | no data available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-4 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments and societal groups implemented their (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies, bylaws responding to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | n/a | The module of pedagogy sensitive to gender and inclusion integrated into the initial training program for early childhood educators and school teachers<br>> The information and awareness guide on the SRH of adolescents in schools was submitted for validation by ministerial actors and CSOs<br>> The ministries of health, national education, youth, justice, gender and family have each set up Break Free focal points from April 2022<br>> The focal points of the ministries concerned participated effectively in the work of the advocacy groups;<br>>The consultation/ exchange frameworks between government actors and CSOs have been strengthened. | n/a | Advocacy activities are being done at the national level, but a change in law has not been achieved at the moment. It is a process and during the project the focus is rather placed on the creation of an environment favorable to the implementation of policies and programs by the State and the harmonization of the various laws, policies and national codes with international texts. ratified by Mali. | n/a | From a government point of view, we note the making of commitments within the framework of improving the schooling of young girls. On the other hand, at the societal level, religious and customary leaders have made commitments to promote the retention of girls in school. And for this, several awareness-raising and support actions have been carried out.<br>Along the same lines, community structures, notably CVPEs, have developed action plans (Ref page 10) |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-5 | Number/ Percentage of youths aged 10 - 24 who report having participated in policy and decision-making bodies and the number (and %) of them who perceive their participation as meaningful* | SRH002 | # of youth (female) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningfu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (male) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (other) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (gender not-specified) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | no data | 26 out of 42 youth (61.9%) reported participating in policy development and decision-making activities inside and outside of the Break Free! 25 out of 26(96%) felt their participation was meaningful . | 0 | 33 people or 65%. | no data | 11 out of 24 (45.8%) participated in L&A outside of Break Free, 10 out of 11 (90.9%) found their participation meaningful |
| O2-6 | Number of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/ youth led CSOs including girls and young women) that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs* | SCS041 | # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| | | SCS042 | # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency at sub-national level | | 2 | 0 | On a national level: 2 advocacy initiatives carried out by change agents with municipalities for access to SRHR services | 0 | 0 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-7 | Description of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/ youth led CSOs including girls and young women) (OH). | | | Limited evidence of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth-led CSOs including girls and young women) was uncovered in this study but one example is youth participation in the Generation Equality Forum led by the First Lady. | - Advocacy for improving the consideration of gender in the training of school teachers and early childhood educators at the INFPE<br><br>- Advocacy for the integration of adolescent SRHR in primary and post-primary school education programs in Burkina Faso<br><br>- Advocacy for raising the legal age of marriage to 18 in Burkina Faso | The study generated some evidence of self-driven advocacy initiatives by youth-led CSOs; for example, it was reported that the National Youth Advisory Board (NYAB) had effectively used the run up to presidential elections to advocate for candidates' inclusion of child rights protection in their election campaigns. | Youth and women's CSOs, carried out advocacy activities to take into account the needs of adolescents and young people. This resulted in: the revision of the PDSEC of a municipality and the commitment of other municipalities to do the same in order to facilitate young people's access to adapted health services; the adoption of local conventions for the abandonment of child marriage. Campaigns were initiated by young people through mass events, radio broadcasts, the organization of sketches in order to challenge the authorities for improvement of reproductive health services. The authorities have made public declarations and promises of commitment to support health structures in the provision of the reproductive.health services provided. | the Network of Youth Ambassadors for Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People and Adolescents participates on relevant technical working committees to influence policy change in the sector and UNICEF has recently supported youth participation in policy making. | > awareness sessions on the harmful effects of drug addiction, exodus, the importance of community life, schooling for young girls, child marriage<br>> sanitation sessions at health centers, at the town hall and other places in the municipality<br>> community meeting on citizenship |
| O3-1 | Number/ Percentage of adolescents aged 10 - 24 in the programme implementation areas utilizing SRH services including modern contraceptives | | | 37,50% | 8793 | 80 or 13% | 301 or 49% | 57 | 133 |
| | | | | explanatory notes: In Ethiopia, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Zambia baseline information is incomplete, and results are provided in only percentage instead of absolute numbers. However, the mid-term results are complete, and included in the programme level results. | | | | | |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-2 | Number/ Percentage of adolescents aged 10-24 in the programme implementation areas reached with SRHR information/ education * | SRH003 | # of young people (female) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of young people (male) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of young people (other) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of young people (gender non-specified) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 8002 | 292 or 49% | 417 (70%) adolescents/ young people aged 10 to 24 surveyed in the area are reached by information concerning SRH | 191 | 1767 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-3 | Quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) | | | No solid evidence is available on the quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) but qualitative findings reveal that these interventions are either non-existent (CSE) or the quality of the SRH information materials is sub-standard. CSE is yet to be integrated in the national curriculum and teachers have not been trained on how to teach SRH. | This quality is appreciated by the girls: they declared that they knew more about how to "avoid early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases". This information also includes the issue of cervical cancer and breast cancer. They say they know the importance and advantages of family planning and birth spacing in relation to children's schooling. They cited having received information on menstrual management. Finally, they noted the fact of having received information on the use of social networks. | SRH information appears to be provided mainly via mass media and digital platforms. Therefore, there was some concern about exposure to misinformation or poor quality SRH information. Parent/caregiver education and support was recommended by study participants - to equip caregivers to have conversations with their children about SRH issues; to reinforce quality messaging and counteract misinformation and poor advice. | Since the arrival of the program, adolescents and young people have had access to information on SRHR through health workers, community relays and teachers at school as well. Parents were also trained so that they could maintain the discussion framework with their children at home. It was announced by participants that these adolescents and young people are increasingly asking health workers and teachers to obtain more information on SRHR | There is no solid evidence on the quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) available but it was noted that what is available could be adapted to make it more suitable to the context. SRH is being taught as part of the school curriculum in life sciences and home economics. | Family economics and life and earth sciences courses at school level to enable them to acquire knowledge about SRHR. Thanks to these young beneficiary girls achieve better management of menstrual hygiene through practical application of sanitary napkins, management of the menstrual cycle, knowledge of the female genital organ. |
| O3-4 | Changes observed of adolescents who freely and safely demand SRHR services and information | | | n/a | Young people are better informed and succeed in school and in life; | n/a | With the program, the barrier between young people and health workers is being broken down. Adolescents and young people go to health facilities themselves to obtain certain contraceptives such as condoms and injectables. They also go to these health facilities to ask questions and seek information related to SRHR. | n/a | > Young people and women are increasingly coming to seek information on illnesses and Contraceptives, especially depots, are the most used by women<br>> More and more men are encouraging women to use RH services and information<br>> Increase in service attendance, despite the distance of certain villages from more questions on SRHR<br>> self-reporting of young girls aged 15 to 19 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-5 | Changes observed that gatekeepers (including teachers, health and community workers) take action on improved (A)SRHR | | | n/a | They can adopt a sexuality while protecting themselves with methods; | n/a | Each actor plays their role by putting in place measures to improve the SRHR of adolescents such as more adapted hours of availability of center services, qualified and attentive staff, and available inputs.<br>Taking into account and budgeting in social, economic and cultural development plans in municipalities; raise the priority questions of young people in terms of SSDR within the meetings of the joint committee responsible for managing the CSOs. | n/a | the increasingly displayed and assumed involvement and support of parents, children, administrative and customary authorities.<br>To this end, parents discuss freely with their children about the harms of early and unwanted pregnancies with raising awareness about visiting health centers for contraception issues.<br>health workers are more welcoming and listen<br>To young people, they guide them and provide them with the necessary support. |
| O3-7 | Changes observed that parents and caretakers adopt positive social norms on adolescent SRHR, gender equality and inclusion | | | n/a | They manage to protect themselves from early pregnancies thanks to contraceptive methods | n/a | The program's training and awareness sessions have made it possible to change the adoption of positive social norms in terms of SRHR, such as the reduction in cases of early and forced marriage; keeping girls in school by reducing the burden of domestic and rural work, establishing communication between parents and adolescents on sexuality issues | n/a | > Commitment made by religious leaders to promote the enrollment and retention of girls in school<br>> holding awareness sessions by traditional leaders on the importance of keeping girls in school<br>> refusal of religious and customary leaders to celebrate child marriages or marriages where the husband is in exodus commonly called "armen guirké"<br>> willingness of parents to enroll children with disabilities in school. We have registered :<br>In Maijirgui<br>6 physically challenged students<br>3 hearing impaired<br>2 albinos<br>To Mayahi<br>5 hearing impaired<br>3visually impaired<br>1 physically disabled |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Burkina Faso | | Mali | | Niger | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| SG-1 | Percentage of girls and young women who do not feel at greater risk of harm due to Break Free! involvement | | | no data | 20 respondents out of 21 (94%) | 0 | 15 young people (29%) felt very supported, 26 (51%) supported and 8 (16%) supported by Break Free. | no data | 7 out of 12 (58%) |
| SG-2 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have trust in the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | | | no data | 17 out of 19 (89%) | 0 | 100% | no data | 7 out of 11 (64%) |
| SG-3 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have access to the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | | | no data | 19 out of 21 (90.5%) | 0 | 33 people or 65% | no data | 6 out of 12 (54.6%) |

## 3. Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Malawi | | Mozambique | | Zambia | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| SO2 | Description of policy/ decision-making processes with improved participation of CSOs in political decision-making on adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | 0 | The Break Free! consortium and other CSOs conduct meetings with Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies aimed at L&A for policies, legislation and services to address adolescent SRHR and education needs. Examples of processes with good CSO participation were: the review of the Penal Code, teachers' Code of Conduct and CVSU guidelines. CSO participation were: the review of the Penal Code, teachers' Code of Conduct and CVSU guidelines. | > CSOs do participate in political decision-making on adolescents' SRHR and education needs, but the frequency of this participation and its level of impact are unclear.<br>> Civic space is available for CSOs to participate in political decision-making, although there is uncertainty on whether spaces for their involvement are sufficient or just not sufficiently used to make changes at national level | 0 | CSOs play a critical role in monitoring policy implementation and service delivery, and there is generally an enabling space and platforms for CSO participation. | CSOs including those from Break Free! participated in the development of the Adolescent Health Strategy which has provided guidance for providing SRH to adolescents. CSOs including those from Break Free! advocated for inclusion of youths in the Neighbourhood Health Committees (NHCs) in order for youths to participate in health priority setting and accountability processes. |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| O1-1 | Number/Percentage of girls below 18 who left school due to CM and/or TP | | | Data from the two districts :<br>Chiwalo had a total number of 2692 girls with a total of 127 dropouts in 2021/22 academic calender. Overall girl dropout rate was 4.7%<br><br>Njewa had 9457 girls with a total of 395 dropouts. dropout was reprsenting 4.2% girl drop out | Data from the two districts. Njewa has a total of 10,727 girls with a total of 168 dropouts in 2022/23 academic calendar. Girl dropout rate is 1.5%. Chiwalo has 2,904 girls with 192 dropouts. Girl dropout rate is 6.6%. Average girl dropout rate is 4.1%. | 46 (12.32%) for CM<br>77 (20.68%) for TP | 39 (5.38%) for CM<br>33 (4.56%) for TP | 903 (30%) | 262 (8.7%) |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Malawi | | Mozambique | | Zambia | |
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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O1-2 | Extent to which girls drop out of school as a consequence of child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy | | | Most girls did not return to school after delivery. The girls also confirmed that pregnant girls were ridiculed and shamed at school. The girls would suffer alot comparing to the boy because they were the ones carrying the pregnancy (SH baseline report) | Community participants of the qualitative midline indicated that the number of girls dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy and child marriage has decreased compared to the period before Break Free! programme implementation. | In Mozambique, it is common for girls to drop out of school. The main reasons for girls dropping out of school include:<br>-Poverty: cannot afford supplies; have to help with income generating activities<br>-Child Marriage<br>-Teenage Pregnancy<br>-No access to secondary schools | Notable decrease in terms of school dropout. Through Break Free! teachers and young people are more involved in raising awareness on the dangers of CM/TP and in engaging victims, their respective parents and gatekeepers at community level and become the agents of change. Those that have fallen victim have the support to reintegrated in schools. | Pregnancy was mentioned across all respondents as a key reason for girls dropping out of school. Tracking attrition due to TP or CM is challenging for schools as many cases go undetected or are hidden by the community. In addition to pregnancy, poverty and lack of hope are critical reasons why girls drop out of school. Covid-19 has played a role in children not returning to school in 2020–2021 (up to 60 children were reported as not having returned to school for the one school sampled). | Participants indicated that there has been a reduction in the dropout rate due to child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy (CM/TP). Contributing factors are 1) increased sensitization on the importance of education and the effects of CM/TP, 2) the implementation of the Free Education Policy and application of bylaws against early marriage and 3) the modification of content in the curriculum for initiation ceremonies. |
| O1-3 | Extent to which parents, care takers and teachers prioritize and value girls' education | | | Most parents perceive investing in a girl's education as a waste of resources so keeping girls in school is not yet a priority for most parents. Currently, the only support provided for girls is encouraging them to ask questions in class and encouraging them to take an interest in science subjects. With most parents still uncooperative on educating girls, teachers lack the capacity to follow-up on those that drop out | The popularization of the school readmission policy and engagement of communities (through role models, champions of change) has created awareness among parents and other stakeholders and they now increasingly prioritize and value girls' education. | Some parents/ caregivers value and prioritize education for girls, through scholar councils they assist in monitoring children to keep them in school and increasing awareness of the importance of education, as well as identifying children who are out of school and motivating them to return back. | The attitude of teachers and parents is gradually changing following a policy on re-integration of girls back to school after TP/ CM. Parents are now appreciating the need for their daughters to acquire education. Several factors could be attributed to this change in attitude including increased awareness on the harmful impact of CM/TP; and strict adherence and enforcement of laws by the police and prosecution of elders who play a role in a case of CM. | Girls are expected to be submissive and are reared to care for their husbands and children. Education is not prioritised for girls. | All interviews showed that there has been an increase in the extent to which parents, caretakers and teachers prioritize and value girls' education due to increased sensitization on the importance of education, as well as the removal of school fees. |
| O1-4 | Number of schools in the programme implementation areas are applying minimum standards of child protection | | | n/a | 14 (representing 66.6%) | 0 | 11 | 0 | 27 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Malawi | | Mozambique | | Zambia | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O1-5 | Number/Percentage of adolescent girls in the programme implementation areas who report having support to continue their education | | | explanatory notes: Results of this indicator are not reported due to omissions and inconsistencies in the baseline and mid-term measurements. Large differences between baseline and mid-term values indicatoed that the indicator was understood and measured in different ways. Also, the schools where the programme is implemented were not selected yet at the time of the baseline study, this also caused inconsistency between the baseline and mind-term results. Thererfore, the baseline and mid-term results are not comparable within countries. | | | | | |
| O1-6 | Extent to which girls demand safe & gender responsive education | | | The girls from the study seemed unaware of platforms and channels avalable for demanding safe and gender responsive education | This is still difficult to achieve given the current context: e.g., shortage of female student hostels, shortage of female teachers, shortage of WASH facilities in schools. BF! has tried and advocated for allocation of female teachers to some schools. An interviewed headteacher in TA Chiwalo reported that girls demanded change rooms, which is a sign of girls demanding safe and gender responsive education. | Girls lack the capacity to demand safe and gender responsive education. However there are some platforms such as ALÔ VIDA (Free Service Line of the Ministry of Health), other governmental programmes and initiatives (Rapariga BIZ, I Am Capable, and The Assembly's Committee on Social, Gender, and Environmental Issues), as well as from NGOs and school platforms. | Girls are notably taking part in the efforts against CM/ TP. They are now playing lead roles in raising awareness on the risks. They are taking the messages to their peers, to parents and traditional leaders. Through clubs, hgirls are taking part in influencing the nullification of marriages of their peers and also their reintegration in school. | Patriarchy is consistently mentioned to influence the dynamics between men and women, and the roles that girls and women play. The submissive roles that girls and women are socialised into make it challenging for girls to demand gender responsive programming. Initiatives to address challenges within the school/learning environment that disadvantage girls have not yet been addressed. | In the FGDs, the girls largely talked about them (in collaboration with Break Free!) helping other girls who were at risk of pregnancy in accessing education. |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Malawi | | Mozambique | | Zambia | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-1 | Number of new and/or improved (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs* | SRH015 | # of laws blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | SRH016 | # of governmental policies blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | | SRH018 | # of by-laws blocked, adopted, improved for leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | SRH019 | # of international agreements blocked, adopted, improved leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Code | Break Free! Indicator | MFA SCS/SRHR basket indicators | | Malawi | | Mozambique | | Zambia | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-2 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments change their new and/or improved (international) commitments laws, policies, strategies and societal groups change their bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | Although there have been recent changes to policy and legislation around CM and TP, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these changes were influenced by lobby and advocacy activities. Although it is clear from the findings that platforms for youth to influence decision-making are extremely limited. | Due to Break Free! L&A activities, laws, policies and guidelines were revised and Government and communities are implementing them e.g., CVSU guidelines (changed to enable youth involvement) Code of Conduct for teachers (changed to provide clarity on how teachers should behave) Penal Code (definition of child changed from 16 to 18 years) Community bylaws (changed to aim to prevent child marriage and teenage pregnancy) | Although there have been recent changes to policy and legislation around CM, FGM/C and adolescent health, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these changes were influenced by L&A activities although it is clear from the findings that platforms for youth to influence decision-making are extremely limited. | So far, during the time under review (2.5 year), there have been no changes in new laws and there has not been any improved commitments. | There are, however, still some key gaps in the legislation, policy, strategies and by-laws:<br>• Customary law has no minimum age for marriage while the age of consent under statutory law is 21.<br>• The age of consent for SRHR services is 16, which prevents access to services. This is further explored in section<br>• There is a lack alignment between education and health policies, particularly in relation to the definition of a child (considered 0–14 years at MoH).<br>• There is a need to contextualise laws and policies.<br>• Policies and strategies do not have clear implementation plans (with targets, budget allocation), which makes implementation and monitoring of performance against commitments a challenge. | Government made commitments in addressing new HIV infections among young people. Regarding ESA Commitments, the Government signed the new Eastern and Southern Africa Commitments. At National Assembly, 22 MPs were mobilized and working as Champions on SRH and an SRH Committee was established in 2022 Through lobbying by CSOs, the Government developed the Child Code Act, which has progressive content on child protection. Through community engagement, some traditional leadership structures have included youths. Implementation of bylaws against early marriage and pregnancy. |

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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-3 | Number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and bylaws that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs being implemented* | SCS011 | # of laws for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | It is difficult to determine the exact number of (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies and by-laws that are being implemented that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs, but qualitative data from the BF study by SH revealed that their implementation is yet to take place as many have only recently been promulgated. Source (SH BF baseline study, 2021) | The target is 6 laws and 6 policies implemented. These laws are the Penal Code; Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act; Gender Equality Act; the Constitution of Malawi; Child Care, Protection and Justice Act; and the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management. Under policies there is the National Youth policy, SRHR Policy, YFHS strategy, Ending Child Marriage Strategy, School Readmission policy and the Education Policy. These are being implemented but not fully. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | SCS012 | # of governmental policies for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | | SCS014 | # of by-laws for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | SCS015 | # of international agreements for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement; | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-4 | Explanation on how - as a result of L&A activities - governments and societal groups implemented their (international) commitments, laws, policies, strategies, bylaws responding to adolescents' SRHR and education needs | | | Although there have been recent changes to policy and legislation around CM and TP, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these changes were influenced by lobby and advocacy activities. Although it is clear from the findings that platforms for youth to influence decision-making are extremely limited<br><br>Source (SH BF Baseline study, 2021) | - The mid-term data show that the re-admission policy is being actively used in TA Chiwalo. The Ministry of Education readmitted 131 girls out of 146 learners who reported having dropped out of school in 2022.<br>- The revised CVSU guidelines are being implemented in TA Chiwalo, so youth now participate in these structures.<br>- At national level, tax on sanitary pads was removed, which resulted in a 16.5% price reduction. | n/a | Mozambique is the signatory to a number of international instruments that promote human rights to include SRHR; and in the spirit of localizing them has developed a number of laws and policy instruments. Through Break Free! they are putting together data in the impact areas in Mozambique to counter the disapproval of and instrument to retain the girls in school by MEDH. Despite the effort by FAWE and other network CSO through FAWE, it is notably hard for them to break through in achieving meaningful changes of policies and laws as evidenced by the lack of approval of laws and in some instances policies on SRHR in Mozambique since 2020 . | At the start of BF!, the community-based groups and some Government structures were not adequately informed about their role in preventing TP, CM and promoting access to SRH services | Key strategies for supporting the implementation process include:<br>-CSOs, including from Break Free!, being part of adolescent health and child projection technical working groups.<br>-training youths in lobbying, advocacy and social accountability by Break Free!<br>-Inclusion of youths in adolescent health governance, neighbourhood and local government committees like the Ward Development Committees.<br><br>Child Protection framework was developed including the Child Participation Manual.<br>Adolescent Health Strategy, Menstrual Health Hygiene policy and the National HIV/AIDS Strategy aimed at increasing access to Pre exposure prophylaxis and post exposure prophylaxis |

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| O2-5 | Number/Percentage of youths aged 10 - 24 who report having participated in policy and decision-making bodies and the number (and %) of them who perceive their participation as meaningful* | SRH002 | # of youth (female) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningfu | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 | no data | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (male) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 | no data | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (other) using SRH services who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | no data | 0 |
| | | | # of youth (gender not-specified) who participate in policy and decision-making bodies who perceive their participation as meaningful | 0 | 0 | no data | 33 out of 61 (54.1%) have participated in policy decision-making bodies, and 23 out of 33 (90.9%) perceived their participation as meaningful | no data | 40 out of 56 (71.4%) have participated in L&A outside of Break Free!, and 36 out of 40 (90%) found their participation meaningful |
| O2-6 | Number of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth led CSOs including girls and young women) that respond to adolescents' SRHR and education needs* | SCS041 | # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| | | SCS042 | # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency at sub-national level | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O2-7 | Description of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth led CSOs including girls and young women) | | | There is limited evidence of self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs (including CSOs/youth-led CSOs including girls and young women) uncovered in this study, but one example is the Youth Decide Campaign – a consortium of five youth-focused CSOs who push the agenda on SRHR and education through the Youth Manifesto. | Young people were able to lobby the Ministry of Gender for inclusion of youth in the CVSU guidelines.<br>1 young person in TA Njewa has revamped his CBO and the focus areas are SRHR, gender and climate change.<br>Young people mobilized themselves and resources in response to cyclone Freddy.<br>Young people mobilized themselves and their peers and conducted SRHR campaigns.<br>Young people lobby community leaders to implement community bylaws.<br>Young people used score cards to identify challenges and propose solutions; 1 outcome was that a Member of Parliament supported the construction of a YFHS structure.<br>Young people helped with withdrawing girls from child marriages. | > Coalition for the Elimination of Child Marriage (CECAP) carried out an advocacy process to the Law on Prevention and Combat of Premature Unions and the review of the legal age of marriage in the Family Law of Mozambique.<br>> Mozambican Education for All Movement (MEPT) led a campaign aimed at repealing a decree that forced pregnant girls to take classes at night school.<br>> Civil Society Forum for the Rights of the Child (ROSC) launched a global campaign on International Girl's Day called #MyLifeAt15.<br>> ROSC created and coordinated a group of CSOs from Lusophone African countries (PALOP ) to address issues around children's rights. | Preliminary review of the KII recordings show no evidence of data on self-driven initiatives. | A total of 8 were reported: The Accountability Mechanism Consortium, which monitors implementation of SRHR policy and budget allocation; Ensuring that CSE is integrated into the school curriculum; currently advocating to lower the age of consent for accessing SRHR services; The development of the Adolescent Health Strategy, the Child and Youth Policy and the Gender Policy; Reviewing SRHR policy for the provision of youth friendly spaces; Menstrual Health Management Campaign. | From the KII interviews it was established that , 14 self-driven advocacy initiatives by CSOs were listed under O2-7, such as:<br>In Vubwi district, young people lobbied for the construction of adolescent friendly spaces from the constituency development fund after attending the social accountability training<br>In Petauke district, young people lobbied for change in the opening and closing hours of the adolescent health spaces to accommodate school going adolescents after attending social accountability training<br>Youths engaged duty bearers for funds to build dormitories in schools to provide accommodation to learners |
| O3-1 | Number/Percentage of adolescents aged 10 - 24 in the programme implementation areas utilizing SRH services including modern contraceptives | | | 23,787<br>(13,864 Ntaja 9,923 Nainunje in TA Chiwalo 22,815 Mbabvi clinic in T/A Njewa) | 33,000<br>(18,237 Ntaja 15,020 Nainunje)<br>35,109 Mbabvi clinic in T/A Njewa | Of the 943 youth surveyed, less than half (365) have used SRHR services. 47% of women have used SRHR services (including contraceptives). 7% of men have used SRHR services (including contraceptives) . | 1612<br>Boys: 633 (9.38%)<br>Girls: 979 (13%) | 2% | 95.42% (10020) |

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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-2 | Number/Percentage of adolescents aged 10-24 in the programme implementation areas reached with SRHR information/education * | SRH003 | # of young people (female) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22276 |
| | | | # of young people (male) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17320 |
| | | | # of young people (other) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | # of young people (gender non-specified) reached with comprehensive, correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy and contraception | 22,138<br>(9, 923 Nainunje and 12,215 Ntaja Health centers in TA Chiwalo) in Machinga<br>20, 034 Mbabvi clinic in T/A Njewa in Lilongwe | 31,178<br>(18,294 Ntaja 12,884 Nainunje in TA Chiwalo in Machinga<br><br>33,189 Mbabvi clinic in T/A Njewa in Lilongwe | 0 | 5532<br>Boys: 3301 (48.9%)<br>Girls: 2231 (29.6%) | 2500 (5%) | 79.19% (39,956 (22,276 girls and 17,320 boys)) |

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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| O3-3 | Quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) | | | Rating the quality of CSE in school, the national CSO and consortium lead officials commended the in-depth policy content to be of good quality but they criticised the implementation and access to services on the ground. | Quality of SRHR education and information has improved as it is provided by trained personnel. The critical sources of information for SRHR education and information include the Masukani pa Nkhani za Umoyo Radio Programme, YouthWyze, Champions of Change, drama / sensitization at community level and health workers.<br>CSE is currently not being provided in schools. Sexuality education is part of Life Skills Education, but it is unclear whether all schools cover sexuality education and what the quality is. | There is no solid evidence on the quality of SRHR education and information (CSE and other SRHR information) available but qualitative findings reveal that these interventions are either non-existent (CSE) or the SRH information is sub-standard and insufficient. | The quality of SRHR education and Information is improving. People at community level, including parents and the young people themselves are becoming more aware about their SRHR rights. However, the inclusion of persons with disability is still a challenge. Young people expressed their worry on exclusion of persons with disability in various programs. Demands were raised for IEC materials to include visual illustrations for the young people to use when they disseminate the SRHR information to the community. | CSE is offered from grades 5–12. Although CSE materials are available, schools struggle to provide good quality CSE due to social norms that discourage discussions on “youth sexuality”. Educators and school staff have reservations about teaching CSE as it is sometimes perceived to promote sex among youth. While some youth friendly, interactive methods are used (e.g., small group discussions, debates), educators still struggle to engage adolescents (especially girls) in such discussions. They therefore still need the pedagogical skills to deliver CSE. | All interviews suggested that there has been increased access to SRHR services and information among adolescents in Petauke.<br>The number of adolescents and young people aged 10 - 24 recently utilizing SRH services were as follows: Boys = 8,580; Girls =15,024.<br>The number of adolescents and young people aged 10 - 24 recently utilizing modern contraceptives was 18,152. |
| O3-4 | Changes observed of adolescents who freely and safely demand SRHR services and information | | | n/a | Adolescents are now able to demand SRHR services and information, unlike in the past. Downside is that services (particularly contraceptives) are not always available. | n/a | Because of increased SRHR information, more girls and boys feel empowered to make decisions about their SRHR needs and their bodies and thus, more demand for SRHR services has been created. Unfortunately, this demand does not have a corresponding supply of SRHR services. | n/a | All interviews suggested that there has been increased access to SRHR services and information among adolescents in Petauke<br>The number of adolescents and young people aged 10 - 24 recently utilizing SRH services were as follows: Boys = 8,580; Girls =15,024.<br>The number of adolescents and young people aged 10 - 24 recently utilizing modern contraceptives was 18,152. |

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| O3-5 | Changes observed that gatekeepers (including teachers, health and community workers) take action on improved (A)SRHR | | | n/a | Two major changes were observed. Youth friendly health services have been revamped and services are also being provided through outreaches including mobile facilities. Despite this, there was one head teacher and 1 key informant in Machinga who had problems with providing contraceptives to the youths arguing that this promotes sexual activity. | n/a | SAT, a consortium member responsible for outcome 3, of Break Free! Programme has been in the forefront, providing SRHR services at school and the community level. However, it is working in only one out of the 24 communities. Moving forward, increasing SRHR services should be part of the advocacy strategy more explicitly as explained in the recommendations section | n/a | Religious leaders have integrated SRHR information in youth meetings in churches. Some parents are now supporting children to access SRH information and services. Some traditional leaders have integrated information on SRHR in traditional meetings, continued withdrawing girls from marriages and taking them back to school and have adopted bylaws against early marriage and pregnancy. |
| O3-7 | Changes observed that parents and caretakers adopt positive social norms on adolescent SRHR, gender equality and inclusion | | | n/a | There seems to be a positive transformation and many parents are accepting that adolescents can access SRHR information, services (incl. contraceptives) unlike in the past. However, other parents are resisting and don't like their children to use contraceptives. | n/a | The attitude of gatekeepers like teachers and health workers has changed. For example, they are now taking an active role in pursuing ASRHR both in school, at the health facility and at community level. The traditional leader for instance, has been on the forefront annulling child marriages (CM) | n/a | > Some parents support school re-entry policy, particularly among girls by offering to take care of their children.<br>> With coming of free education, many parents have supported girls to be in school.<br>> Some parents have agreed to have their children withdrawn from marriage and resume school.<br>> Parents agreed not practice initiation ceremony during school days.<br>> Parents adhered to the revised initiation ceremony. |
| SG-1 | Percentage of girls and young women who do not feel at greater risk of harm due to Break Free! involvement | | | 0 | 61,54% | no data | 27 out of 33 (82%) | no data | 29 out of 33 (88%) |
| SG-2 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have trust in the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | | | 0 | 84,21% | no data | 28 out of 31 (90%) | no data | 25 out of 27 (92,6%) |

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| | | Code | Indicator | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results | baseline results | mid-term results |
| SG-3 | Percentage of girls and young women involved in Break Free! who have access to the reporting mechanisms to report safeguarding concerns | | | 0 | 73,08% | no data | 31 out of 33 (94%) | no data | 27 out of 33 (81.8%) |

Break Free!

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

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SRHR AFRICA TRUST
YOUTH-LED HEALTH

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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MEMORIAL TRUST
Creating Opportunities: Unleashing Potential

KIT Royal Tropical Institute