

# USAID Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health (YPE4AH) Project

## End of Project Dissemination Report 2020 - 2024





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# ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Meaning
<b>CIP</b>	Capacity Improvement Plan
<b>C4C</b>	Champions for Change
<b>CLMS</b>	Commodity Logistics Management and Supply
<b>CHEW</b>	Community Health Extension Workers
<b>CSG</b>	Community Sensitization Guide
<b>DAI</b>	Development Alternatives Inc
<b>DHIS2</b>	District Health Information Systems 2
<b>FP</b>	Family Planning
<b>FY</b>	Financial Year
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GCE</b>	General Certificate of Examination
<b>GIZ</b>	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GSR</b>	Grassroot Soccer
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>JAMB</b>	Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board
<b>LSETF</b>	Lagos State Employment Trust Fund
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>MDA</b>	Ministries Departments and Agencies
<b>NFPC</b>	Nigeria Family Planning Conference
<b>NUPAS</b>	Non-U.S Organization Pre-award Surveys
<b>OCA</b>	Organizational Capacity Assessment
<b>PMNCH</b>	Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
<b>PPMV</b>	Patent and Proprietary Medicine Vendor
<b>PWD</b>	Persons With Disabilities
<b>PYD</b>	Positive Youth Development
<b>PYD</b>	Positive Youth Development (PYD)
<b>PHC</b>	Primary Health Clinics
<b>PAG</b>	Project Advisory Group
<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprise



Acronym	Meaning
<b>SBC</b>	Social Behavior Change
<b>SPHCMB</b>	State Primary Health Care Management Board
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>NPI</b>	USAID's New Partnerships Initiative
<b>WFI</b>	Women Friendly Initiative
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>YBR</b>	Yellow Brick Road
<b>YACs</b>	Youth Advisory Committees
<b>YEDI</b>	Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative
<b>YPE4AH</b>	Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health Project





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By 2025, Nigeria's youth population aged 10-29 is projected to surpass 57 million, with a significant portion being adolescents aged 15-19. This surge, driven by a high fertility rate and early childbirth, particularly among less educated and economically disadvantaged women, has resulted in a growing base of Nigeria's population pyramid. In major states like Lagos and Kano, adolescents make up approximately half of the population, facing high unemployment rates and a multitude of health and social challenges, including sexual and reproductive health issues, mental health concerns, and exposure to gender-based violence. Marginalized groups in urban slums are particularly vulnerable, with limited access to reproductive health services and heightened risks of early pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and unsafe abortions.

These adolescents often lack the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, with teenage pregnancies being more prevalent among those from less educated and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Barriers to accessing contraceptives exacerbate the situation, leading to higher rates of unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Despite progress in understanding the needs of adolescents, significant resistance remains, particularly from parents and religious groups, towards providing reproductive health education and services to unmarried adolescents. This gap highlights the urgent need for comprehensive approaches that address both the health and social determinants of adolescent well-being in Nigeria.

### ***Empowering Nigeria's Urban Adolescents***

In May 2020, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nigeria awarded the Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health (YPE4AH) Project to DAI Global LLC and its partners—Yellow Brick Road (YBR), Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI), Women Friendly Initiative (WFI), and Grassroot Soccer (GRS). This five-year cooperative agreement, designed through a co-creation process, empowers young Nigerians with the skills, social capital, and resources necessary to realize their potential. The primary goal of the project is to improve the health and well-being of urban, underprivileged, out-of-school, and unmarried/married adolescents aged 15–19 living in urban slums in Lagos and Kano States by increasing the uptake and sustained use of voluntary family planning (FP) services, using a holistic, human capital approach.

### ***Ambitious Goals for a Brighter Future***

The YPE4AH project seeks to empower urban adolescents in Lagos and Kano States by equipping them with the skills, social capital, and resources necessary to achieve their goals and improve their overall well-being. Targeting underprivileged, out-of-school, and unmarried/married adolescents aged 15-19, the project focuses on increasing the uptake of voluntary family planning (FP) through a holistic approach that includes enhancing life skills, fostering leadership, and improving livelihood opportunities. Aligned with USAID's New Partnerships Initiative (NPI), YPE4AH promotes local ownership and self-reliance by strengthening the technical and organizational capacity of local partners to sustain adolescent FP/RH programming and support long-term community development.

### ***Innovative Approaches to Transform Lives***

YPE4AH employs a multifaceted approach to achieve its objectives. Central to the project are Youth Hubs, which serve as safe spaces where adolescents can access FP/RH services, counseling, and empowerment programs. These hubs utilize evidence-based curricula, such as the SKILLZ program, which combines sports and group activities to foster healthy behaviors and promote gender equity.



The project's social and behavior change (SBC) strategies include community mobilization, mass media campaigns, and targeted social media outreach under the TEENSMATA brand. These efforts aim to challenge harmful social norms, raise awareness about adolescent health issues, and drive demand for FP/RH services.

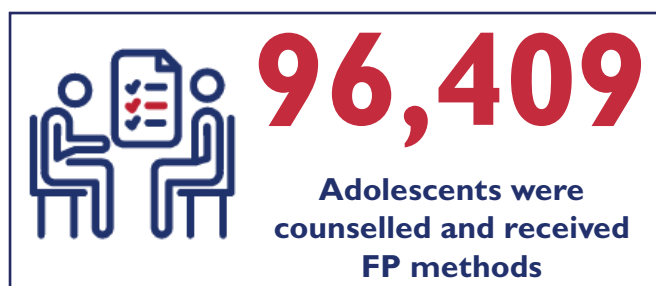
Life skills development is a key component of YPE4AH, with the SKILLZ program providing adolescents with essential knowledge in FP/RH, financial literacy, and leadership. Leadership training is further enhanced through the Champions for Change (C4C) curriculum, which empowers young people to become community advocates and agents of change.

Additionally, YPE4AH collaborates with private sector partners to offer job training, internships, and entrepreneurial opportunities, addressing the socioeconomic determinants of adolescent health. Capacity-building efforts focus on strengthening the organizational capabilities of local partners, ensuring that they can sustain and scale the project's impacts.

### **Impact That Speaks Volumes**

Since its inception, YPE4AH has made significant progress in improving adolescent health and well-being. The project has engaged over 67,000 adolescents in life skills and FP/RH education, with many showing increased gender-equitable beliefs and enhanced knowledge of FP. The project has also trained 248 healthcare providers, ensuring that youth-friendly services are available in intervention communities. FP services have been delivered to over 96,000 adolescents, preventing thousands of unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

- Trained providers offered FP counselling to 116,595 adolescents in both the spoke (72,287) and hub (44,308) facilities. Among these, FP services were provided to 96,409 adolescents, culminating in 21,367 CYP. About 72% of the adolescents who received these services were new acceptors of family planning, and 55% of adolescents continued to use FP at least one-year post service provision
- The project provided technical support to 842 C4C graduates for advocacy initiatives and built the capacity of 200 youth coaches and 12 master trainers on implementing the C4C leadership program.
- Secured training, internship and apprenticeship opportunities for 1,882 (M: 423, F: 1,459) SKILLZ United graduates to support youth workforce readiness, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship which will address socioeconomic determinants of adolescent health. The YPE4AH project leveraged in total \$688,361 from trainings and other private sector engagements.
- Through the technical support of DAI the capacity of the three local consortium partners, YEDI, YBR, and WFI, was strengthened in the programmatic, financial, and other institutional capabilities in preparation for potential direct USG funding. Following the organizational capacity assessments (OCA) and non-U.S. organization pre-award surveys (NUPAS) assessment in September 2023 the three organisations met the 90 percent of their annual capacity improvement plan (CIP) benchmarks for each of seven intervention areas; and funds



transitioning was achieved with partners positioned and supported in FY 24 to handle 75 percent of all programming utilizing their strengthened systems.

- The project's social behavior change initiatives have reached millions through TEENSMATA's social media platforms and radio campaigns, raising awareness and fostering community support for adolescent health issues.

### ***Paving the Way Forward***

The implementation of YPE4AH has yielded valuable lessons that can inform future programming. Collaboration with local stakeholders, including state governments and community leaders, is crucial for creating an enabling environment and ensuring the sustainability of adolescent health initiatives. Expanding and enhancing Youth Hubs to provide more comprehensive services will be essential to meet the needs of the growing adolescent population. Integrating life skills, leadership, and livelihood training with FP/RH services has proven to be an effective strategy for achieving positive health and development outcomes.

However, challenges such as inconsistent supply of FP commodities and the lack of standardized adolescent health data have highlighted areas for improvement. Future programs should focus on securing reliable supply chains for FP commodities and advocating for the establishment of a unified national system for adolescent health data collection.

### ***Sustaining the Momentum***

YPE4AH has established a solid foundation for sustainability, with project activities being integrated into local government systems in Lagos and Kano. The handover of Youth Hubs to local authorities, along with ongoing support for healthcare providers, ensures the continuation of FP/RH services for adolescents. The creation of FP commodity linkages and the engagement of adolescent leaders will sustain the project's impacts beyond its duration. Furthermore, the capacity-building efforts have empowered local partners to continue delivering high-quality adolescent health programs, ensuring that the benefits of YPE4AH will be felt for years to come. The project's emphasis on local ownership and sustainability positions it as a model for future adolescent health initiatives in Nigeria and beyond.



# INTRODUCTION

By 2025, Nigeria's population of young people aged 10-29 is expected to exceed 57 million, with a significant proportion being adolescents aged 15-19. This surge is driven by a high fertility rate of 5.3 births per woman, early childbirth (as early as 12 years old) particularly among less educated and economically disadvantaged women, and a teenage childbirth rate of 19%. These factors contribute to the widening base of Nigeria's population pyramid. Lagos and Kano, Nigeria's most populous states, have adolescent populations constituting approximately 16.2% and 38.2%, respectively. In Lagos, adolescents, who are estimated to make up about 50% of the population, now exceed 10 million. They face high unemployment rates amidst a rapidly growing population.

In Kano, adolescents represent around 50% of the state's estimated 15 million residents, with a fertility rate of 5.8%, higher than the national average. These young people confront numerous health and social challenges, including issues related to sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, mental health, substance abuse, communicable diseases, trauma, and violence. Marginalized groups, particularly those in urban slums, face heightened reproductive health risks due to poverty, limited educational opportunities, early sexual debut, low contraceptive use, and increased exposure to gender-based violence. These conditions lead to a prolonged risk of pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancies, and unsafe abortions.



## Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health (YPE4AH)



**6 LGAs Reached**  
in Lagos and Kaduna  
to deliver intervention

Targeting Male & Female  
adolescents between  
**15 -19 years**



### Challenges Facing Adolescents

Nigeria's adolescent population is set to continue growing, as those under 15 currently make up about 44% of the nation's total population. Generally, adolescents lack the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and face significant barriers in accessing the services they need. Teenage pregnancies are more prevalent among adolescents from less educated, unskilled, and poor families. Inaccessibility to contraceptives further exacerbates the issue, contributing to teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Early sexual debut and marriages (before age 18) significantly increase the risk of unhealthy sexual behaviors and teenage pregnancies, which are associated with high morbidity and mortality rates for both mother and child. These pregnancies also negatively impact educational attainment, as adolescent mothers are more likely to drop out of school. According to the Demographic Health Survey, 19% of teenage women aged 15-19 in Nigeria have begun childbearing, with rural teenage women being three times more likely to have started childbearing than their urban counterparts (27% versus 8%). Teenage pregnancy rates vary significantly across states, ranging from 1% in Lagos to 41% in Bauchi, with Kano at 2.4%.

### Knowledge Gaps and Barriers to Reproductive Health

Despite the high rates of teenage pregnancies, many parents adhere to the belief that unmarried individuals do not need access to reproductive health services. Even where such services are provided at youth-friendly health centers, they often face opposition from parents and religious groups. A 2016 landscape analysis found that parents generally do not support contraceptive access for their adolescents, believing that sexual activity should be



confined to marriage. Despite the median age for sexual debut among Nigerian women being 17.3 years, and 19% of 15-19-year-olds having already begun childbearing, there is significant resistance to discussing sex and contraception with adolescents before they turn 18. YPE4AH formative research revealed that 35% of sexually active adolescents begin sexual activity before age 16. However, only 56% of parents in Kano and 86% in Lagos believe that adolescents should discuss sex-related matters and contraception before age 18.

### **Addressing Adolescent Reproductive Health Needs**

A comprehensive understanding of human rights, gender equity, and accessible healthcare is essential to meeting adolescents' reproductive health needs. Data indicates that 31.8% of adolescent females aged 15-19 have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 10.6% have experienced sexual abuse. Adolescents also face various social and psychological challenges, including school dropouts, drug abuse, unemployment, and a tolerance of sexual violence. Although the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) addressed adolescents' right to reproductive health education, information, and care 26 years ago, Nigeria, like many low-income countries, has been slow to respond. Despite progress in understanding adolescents' SRH needs, attitudes, and behaviors, and the risks they face, the implementation of policies to promote adolescent health and development has been limited by state autonomy in program development.

### **Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health Project (YPE4AH) Partners**

In May 2020, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nigeria awarded the Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health (YPE4AH) Project to DAI Global LLC and its partners—Yellow Brick Road (YBR), Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI), Women Friendly Initiative (WFI), and Grassroot Soccer (GRS). This five-year cooperative agreement, designed through a co-creation process, empowers young Nigerians with the skills, social capital, and resources necessary to realize their potential. The primary goal of the project is to improve the health and well-being of urban, underprivileged, out-of-school, and unmarried/married adolescents aged 15–19 living in urban slums in Lagos and Kano States by increasing the uptake and sustained use of voluntary family planning (FP) services, using a holistic, human capital approach.

The project is centered around Youth Hubs, which provide safe spaces for adolescents to access FP and reproductive health information and referrals. These hubs offer evidence-based, high-impact curricula focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), youth empowerment, and equitable gender norms, integrating sports and engaging activities with group sessions led by youth coaches.

### **Target Participants**

The target participants include urban, underprivileged, out-of-school, and unmarried/married adolescents aged 15-19. Engaging both girls and boys is key to fostering social norm change around FP and promoting positive gender norms. The project also targets key influencers, including parents, healthcare providers, policymakers, community leaders, potential employers, private investors, and peer groups, to create a more supportive environment for young people. Using USAID's Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework, the project builds on youth assets, activates youth as agents of change, and integrates gender equality and social inclusion principles. Partnerships with public and private sector entities facilitate youth job training and placements, ensuring the sustainability of these interventions.





# PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

## *Project Objectives*

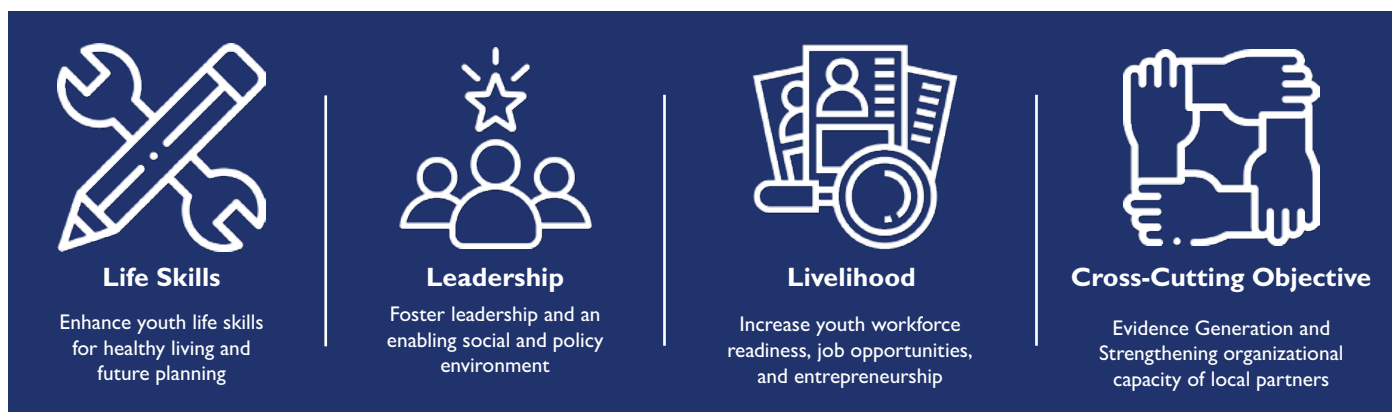
1. **Life Skills:** To improve adolescents' skills for healthy living and future planning.
2. **Leadership:** To foster an enabling social and policy environment for adolescent health and development.
3. **Livelihoods:** To increase youth workforce readiness, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship to address the socioeconomic determinants of adolescent health.

The YPE4AH project aligns with the New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) to promote local ownership, relevance, and self-reliance. As a program under USAID's NPI, it emphasizes engaging new, local, and underutilized partners. A key crosscutting objective is to strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of local partners to deliver and sustain adolescent FP/RH programming, while also fostering evidence generation and learning.





# PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES



The youth-powered ecosystem is anchored by Youth Hubs—dedicated safe spaces where young people can access family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) information and referrals. The project incorporates and adapts the evidence-based, high-impact SKILLZ curriculum, which blends sports and interactive activities with group sessions led by Youth Coaches. This approach fosters healthy behavior changes and promotes shifts in attitudes toward more equitable gender norms. The Youth Hubs are linked to youth-friendly FP/RH services and additional social support resources, including those addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and mental health.

Youth Advisory Committees (YACs) and broader youth-led, human-centered design approaches ensure that program interventions and social and behavior change (SBC) activities remain agile and responsive to the needs of young people. Our methodology integrates USAID's Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework, which builds on youth assets and empowers them as agents of change in their lives and communities. We prioritize gender equality and social inclusion throughout the implementation process. Furthermore, the initiative leverages partnerships with public and private sector entities to facilitate youth job training and placements, ensuring the sustainability of all interventions.



**SKILLZ Intervention:** The project implemented a distinctive life-skills program known as the SKILLZ intervention, specifically designed to empower out-of-school adolescents. This program equips young people with the tools they need to make healthier decisions, understand gender norms more comprehensively, and improve their financial literacy. Through the SKILLZ intervention, adolescents are mobilized and enrolled in youth hub programs by trained Youth Coaches, where they participate in the SKILLZ United and SKILLZ Club programs.

The SKILLZ United program offers a 12-course curriculum (11-course in Kano) that engages adolescents in family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) education. This program empowers them to make more informed and healthier decisions regarding sexual relationships and contraceptives. Additionally, the optional SKILLZ Club program provides a three-course curriculum focused on financial education and soft skills, helping adolescents gain independence. The interventions, implemented by YEDI and Grassroot Soccer (GRS), use a sports and fun-based approach combined with impactful health and life skills education to attract and inform young people.

The SKILLZ intervention is tailored to suit the unique socio-cultural contexts of each focal state. In Lagos, the program adopts a mixed-sex education model, while in Kano, it emphasizes a gender-segregated approach with non-sport activities such as dance and singing for adolescent girls. Youth Coaches also deliver the SKILLZ curriculum within communities to reach adolescents who cannot visit the hubs due to distance or transportation costs.

**TEENSMATA Youth Hubs:** YPE4AH established and launched six Youth Hubs—four in Lagos and two in Kano—as safe spaces where adolescents can access youth-friendly services and referrals without facing stigma or discrimination. In Lagos, the first two pilot Youth Hubs were established in 2021 (Kosofe and Lagos Island LGAs),

with two more launched in February 2022 (Mushin and Ikorodu LGAs). In Kano, the Youth Hubs in Ungogo and Wudil LGAs were established in March 2022. The State Governments of Lagos and Kano identified and allocated appropriate spaces within each LGA for the Youth Hubs, demonstrating local ownership and commitment to sustainability. Each hub engaged health providers who served as coordinators, offering FP/RH counseling and services to adolescents both at the hubs and within surrounding communities. For those unable to access FP services due to barriers like distance and transportation costs, community-based interventions were implemented. Hub coordinators also provided referrals and links to nearby facilities for FP/RH, mental health, GBV, substance abuse, and other health services. Advocacy efforts with state and local governments promoted commitments to assign health providers to the Youth Hubs.

**Community Sensitization:** The project designed and implemented various community-based programs across focal communities to reach large numbers of adolescents and community members, generating demand for FP/RH services and driving adolescent referrals to USG-supported facilities. The project developed a Community Sensitization Guide (CSG), used by community mobilizers to ensure accurate FP/RH messaging during community interventions. These community-based approaches included community mobilization sessions, facility-based outreaches, and single-session outreaches. To create an enabling environment for adolescents to access SRH services, the project organized parental engagement and community awareness forums targeting key influencers such as parents, caregivers, husbands, community, and religious leaders through a series of community dialogue events.

**Parental Engagement Strategy:** The USAID YPE4AH Project recognizes parents, caregivers, and trade masters as crucial influencers in promoting healthy behaviors among out-of-school, unmarried, and urban adolescents. Formative research and assessments revealed that many parents lack the information and skills needed to engage their children on sensitive topics like contraception, unplanned pregnancies, gender-based violence, and substance abuse. To address this, the project initiated quarterly parental engagement sessions aimed at improving parents' knowledge and ability to discuss these issues with their adolescents. These sessions provided essential information, shared key health messages, and taught communication skills. Additionally, the project formed parental cohorts, selecting influential parents to become advocates for adolescent sexual and reproductive health within their communities. This approach not only increased parental involvement but also fostered broader community advocacy for adolescent health.

**Service Delivery:** YPE4AH trained 248 healthcare providers across various cadres—156 in Lagos and 92 in Kano—including patent and proprietary medicine vendors (PPMVs), nurses/midwives, community health extension workers (CHEWs), pharmacists, and doctors. These providers were trained to deliver youth-friendly services such as family planning counseling, screenings for GBV, mental health, and substance abuse, both at hubs and in surrounding facilities. The training utilized a three-module curriculum covering commodity logistics management and supply (CLMS), basic contraceptive technology (BCT), and national guidelines on promoting integrated access to adolescent health services.

To expand adolescents' access to high-quality, youth-friendly FP/RH service delivery, the project created a "Hub and Spoke" model. This model consists of a Youth Hub connected to a network of youth-friendly reproductive health providers (spoke facilities) within each LGA. These networks were supported with FP methods, consumables (e.g., pregnancy test kits, cotton wool, surgical gloves), and relevant medical equipment (e.g., ward screens) to ensure continuity of care and services for adolescents. The project collaborated extensively with state governments to supply FP methods to public facilities (PHCs) in each LGA and extended this collaboration to private sector partners, leveraging existing resources for integrated quality services for adolescents. Private partners included bilateral agencies like UNFPA, implementing partners like DKT, Society for Family Health Nigeria, and various civil society groups in Lagos and Kano. To maintain quality service delivery across the network of facilities, the project provided ongoing mentoring and support to trained providers through activities such as periodic support supervisory visits (SSVs) and review meetings.

To address the issue of provider turnover in public sector facilities, the project implemented whole-of-site sensitization events—a step-down training program designed to build the skills of other facility providers who were not initially trained by the project, ensuring the continuity of adolescent-friendly services despite staff transfers. These



sensitization events also fostered a positive attitude among all facility staff towards adolescents seeking care, further reinforcing the hubs as safe spaces for quality service delivery. The sensitization targeted a wide range of facility staff, including security guards, cleaners, data clerks, and, in some cases, spouses of trained providers in PPMVs.

**Social Behaviour Change (SBC):** The YPE4AH project developed comprehensive, evidence-based SBC strategies to achieve its objectives in Lagos and Kano. These strategies aimed to promote healthier behaviors, challenge harmful social norms, and encourage adolescents to adopt positive practices through interpersonal communication (IPC), mass media, and social media. The project introduced the brand **TEENSMATA** to highlight its activities at the hubs, share key messages through creative content, and showcase the project's impact. Through TEENSMATA's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), the project reached 29,741,766 people with life-saving messages about family planning and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health rights and needs. Additionally, mass media campaigns, including radio advertisements, live interviews, and promotional segments in Lagos, reached 19,283,907 people. These campaigns not only raised awareness about the **TEENSMATA** Youth Hubs but also encouraged parents to engage in discussions about sexual and reproductive health with their adolescents.

At the community level, SBC activities were designed to foster significant engagement in the areas where YPE4AH was implemented. A key element of these activities was the mobilization of adolescents within communities to receive vital information using a community discussion guide and to be referred for FP services at various spoke facilities. This approach, launched in May 2023 in Lagos and in May 2024 in Kano, reached a total of 255,126 adolescents—200,308 in Lagos and 54,818 in Kano. Of these, 49,191 adolescents received referrals for services, with 12,875 completing the referral process. In addition to engaging adolescents, the project provided essential health information to 71,917 parents and community influencers (55,771 in Lagos and 16,146 in Kano), contributing to a more supportive environment for adolescents to seek services with the backing of their parents and community leaders.

To highlight various aspects of the program, demonstrate its impact on beneficiaries, and showcase collaboration with the government and growing acceptance of youth sexual and reproductive health, the project produced 36



short documentary videos.

This component was designed to enhance youth leadership and advocacy skills, elevate youth voices within local health systems, prioritize adolescent issues on the policy agenda, and drive increased investment in state and federal programs for comprehensive adolescent health and well-being. The YPE4AH project integrated USAID's Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework to leverage youth assets and empower young people as catalysts for change.

To ensure that the project was aligned with the real needs of adolescents, YPE4AH established and inaugurated 10-member Youth Advisory Committees (YAC) in both Lagos and Kano. These committees played a critical role in the design and implementation of the project and its curriculum, ensuring that the interventions were responsive to the health needs of adolescents. The project adapted DAI's Champions for Change (C4C) curriculum for the capacity-building program, which covered essential topics such as transformational leadership, negotiation skills, good governance, and community mobilization.

Participation in the leadership program required adolescents to first complete the SKILLZ curriculum. A self-assessment tool used during the SKILLZ program helped identify potential leaders for the leadership track. The C4C leadership program then focused on enhancing leadership and advocacy skills, mentoring adolescents to become community advocates, and equipping them to engage key stakeholders in promoting increased political commitment and investment in adolescent health programs. The project provided technical support to 842 C4C graduates for their advocacy initiatives and trained 200 youth coaches and 12 master trainers in implementing the C4C leadership program.



The private sector engagement (PSE) strategy was designed to enhance youth workforce readiness, expand job opportunities, and foster entrepreneurship. The project partnered with 90 private sector entities, primarily small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in Lagos and Kano to help adolescents access training, internships, volunteer opportunities, apprenticeships, and job placements across both the private and public sectors.

To achieve these goals, the project collaborated with public and private sector partners to secure funding and in-kind contributions, utilized Youth Hubs to deliver livelihood training sessions, and facilitated job placements for adolescents. As a result, 1,882 adolescent beneficiaries were enrolled in job training, financial literacy, skills empowerment, employment, internship, and vocational programs. The project successfully leveraged contributions from government and private sector partners, amounting to \$688,361 across Lagos and Kano States.



DAI approached capacity development for partners with a focus on comprehensive improvements, addressing both administrative and programmatic aspects of their operations. Traditionally, capacity development for local partners centered on enhancing management functions such as governance, accounting, procurement, and administration to mitigate fiduciary risk. However, the current USAID Local Capacity Development Policy goes beyond these areas, emphasizing the importance of strengthening partners' service delivery effectiveness and scalability to ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

Over the first three years of project implementation, DAI delivered a broad range of training and technical assistance activities aimed at enhancing partners' governance, financial management, program management, human resources, and other critical organizational functions. Organizational development specialists with expertise in financial management, compliance, organizational development, and program execution were engaged to lead this process. They used targeted questions and document reviews to guide their assessments, culminating in the creation of action plans. These plans outlined the necessary interventions, technical assistance, assigned responsibilities, and timelines for completing activities, providing each organization with a clear roadmap for progress and outlining the next steps with DAI's targeted support.

DAI assisted the three local consortium partners—YEDI, YBR, and WFI—in conducting participatory Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCA) and Non-U.S. Organization Pre-Award Surveys (NUPAS), followed by the design of tailored capacity improvement plans. The capacity development efforts aimed to strengthen the programmatic, financial, and institutional capabilities of these local partners, preparing them for potential direct USG funding. An assessment conducted in September 2023 revealed that all three organizations achieved 90 percent of their annual Capacity Improvement Plan (CIP) benchmarks across seven key intervention areas. This milestone was a critical step that enabled the transition of funds, positioning and supporting the partners in FY24 to manage 75 percent of all programming utilizing their enhanced systems.





Partners	Type of support Received	State
<b>WufWuf Development Association</b>	Pomade making, Tailoring	Kano 660 (F:530/M:130)
<b>Aurora beauty bar</b>	10 days free make-up training.	Kano 27 (F:27/M:0)
<b>Murjanatu Hafiz Tailoring Services</b>	3-months on tailoring	Kano 12 (F:12)
<b>Rahma Isa Tailoring Services</b>	3-months on tailoring	Kano 12 (F:12)
<b>AMY Crochets</b>	Free training on knitting	Kano 5 (F:5/M:0)
<b>Habiba Ent'</b>	5 days vocational skills trainings on Liquid wash and petroleum jelly production	Kano 680 (F:624/M:56)
<b>Aliyu Fashion &amp; Design</b>	3 month apprenticeship training on tailoring. Have also supported 5 trainees to setting up by attaching them to an existing tailoring shop where they now earn a living	Kano 28 (F:0/M:28)
<b>Adulkadir M. Ado</b>	3 month apprenticeship painting on tailoring. Have also supported 5 trainees to setting up by attaching them to contracts	Kano 15 (F:0/M:15)
<b>Nura Rabi</b>	Proposal Writing Workshop for 3 days to 10 Adolescents	Kano 10 (F:6/M:4)
<b>UNFPA-Abdulhamid Bagara</b>	Donation of Condoms 5 cartons	Kano
<b>SPHCMB-</b>	Donation of Condoms 2 boxes	Kano
<b>DKT</b>	Provision of RH commodities (Injectables & Pills) by DKT Nigeria to 12 facilities in Kano	Kano
<b>SMOH</b>	Provision of RH commodities (Injectables & Pills) by Kano SMOH to two Hubs in Kano	Kano
<b>Tafe Organics</b>	Provided SKILLZ graduates with training on Soap production	Lagos 9 (F)
<b>Min. of Information</b>	Creating visibility in Lagos state via TV, Radio and Newspaper.	Lagos
<b>Ishk Tolaram</b>	Provided SKILLZ graduates with training in fashion design and Masonry and enrolled them in a 6 months' paid apprenticeship	Lagos 5 (F 4; M 1)
<b>FBNQuest</b>	Provided funding of one million naira to empower the female SKILLZ graduates with make up skills as a means of livelihood. Trained adolescents in Financial Literacy	Lagos 40 (F)
<b>Hair planet</b>	Provided adolescents with free training in wig production	Lagos 30 (F)
<b>House of Tara International</b>	Makeup Artistry and Gele tying	Lagos 40 (F)
<b>Independent Facilitator</b>	Gele tying	Lagos 19 (F)
<b>UN/LSETF</b>	Digital Literacy Training inclusive of Data and mobile phone	Lagos 18 (F 16; M 2)
<b>DKT Nigeria</b>	Provision of RH commodities (Injectables & Pills) by DKT Nigeria to 2 facilities in Lagos	Lagos
<b>Bicycle Film Works</b>	Skit making training	Lagos 70 (F 37; M 33)
<b>Illuminate Africa</b>	Virtuous Reusable pads	Lagos 200 (F)
<b>SHECAN Foundation</b>	Vocational Training in Makeup, Photography, Handcraft & Catering	Lagos 32 (F; 29 M 3)
<b>Director Bicycle -Bicycle Film Works</b>	Skit making - Social media exposure	Lagos
<b>Funke treasure- Illuminate Africa Social media exposure</b>	Funke treasure- Social media exposure	Lagos
<b>Tehmis Point</b>	Provided vocational skills training for adolescents in makeup and beauty care, baking, household product production	Lagos 109 (F 83; M 26)

Partners	Type of support Received	State
<b>May and Baker PLC</b>	Anti malaria and Analgesics	Lagos
<b>Youth Moral Rectitude NGO</b>	Vocational skills training in Makeup and Baking	Lagos 20 (F)
<b>Anonymous</b>	Promotional materials (Mugs, Ankara, Umbrella, T-Shirts)	Lagos
<b>T-Lash Bakery</b>	Training of Adolescents in cake making fondant making and design followed by 3 month paid internship	Lagos 5 (F)
<b>Wave Academy</b>	Train SKILLZ graduates in Hospitality skills and place on internships thereafter	Lagos 81 ( F 52; M29)
<b>Grassroots Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Initiative</b>	Train adolescents in vocational -including, fashion design, hairdressing, shoe-making, handcrafts etc and entrepreneurial skills	Lagos 8 (F)
<b>Tehmis Point</b>	Train SKILLZ graduates in Hospitality small chops making and Ankara Crafts	Lagos
<b>Kharis and Eleos Foundation- Youth Empowerment NGO</b>	Trained Adolescents in Basic Proposal Writing	Lagos 11 ( F 7; M 4)
<b>Falcon LEAP</b>	The NGO provided training for adolescents in Ankara Craft (shoes and Bags) and Makeup Artistry and Gele Tying	Lagos 20 ( F 14 ; M 6)
<b>Atlas Initiative</b>	Wig making, Soap making, Shoemaking, Nail design and 3D epoxy training	Lagos 6 (F)
<b>The Brothers Assurance International Organization (TABIO)</b>	Training in graphics and design, Photography, Catering, Jewellery making and goldsmithing. Electrical engineering	Lagos 40 (29F/M 11)
<b>Lagos State Waste Management Agency (LAWMA Academy)</b>	Training in recycling and sustainable energy	Lagos 5 ( F 4; M 1)
<b>GIZ/ Nigerian German Centre for Migration &amp; Development</b>	Provided training to Ikorodu Adolescents on Fashion Upskilling in Ankara Stoning	Lagos 20 (F 19; M 1)
<b>Yetrose Academy</b>	Free certificate training in Fashion design to youths	Lagos 4 (F 3; M1)
<b>ATC Foundation</b>	free certificate training in Basic Microsoft-Word, Excel and PowerPoint to youths.	





# RESULTS AND IMPACT



## SKILLZ intervention:



# 67,173

Adolescents  
reached with life  
skills training



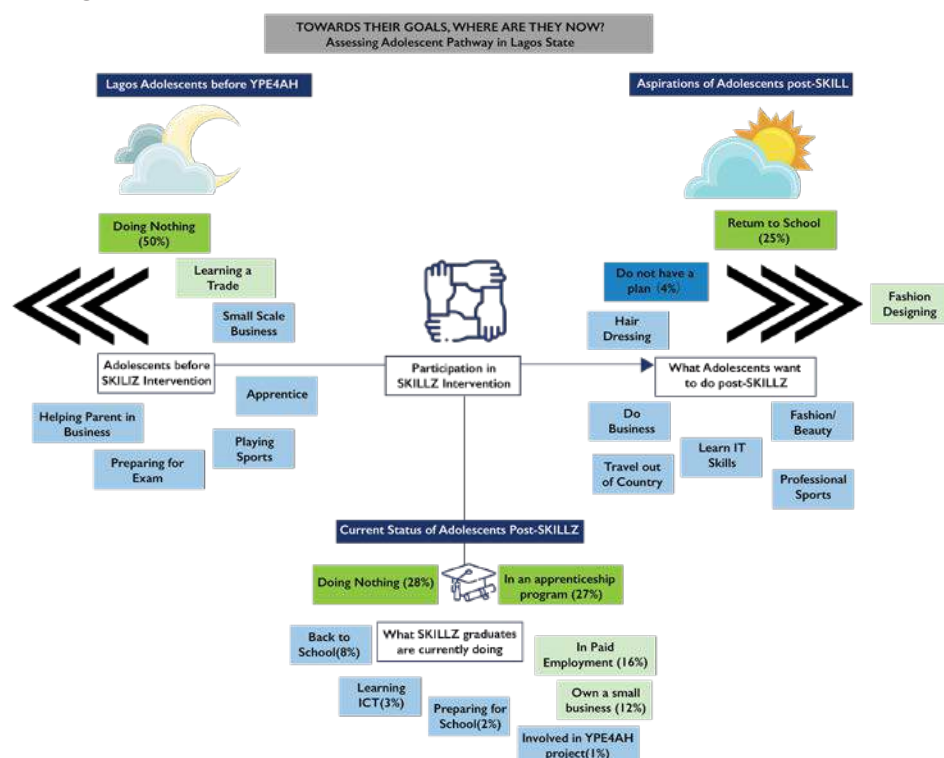
**66,668**  
Graduates  
from the SKILLZ

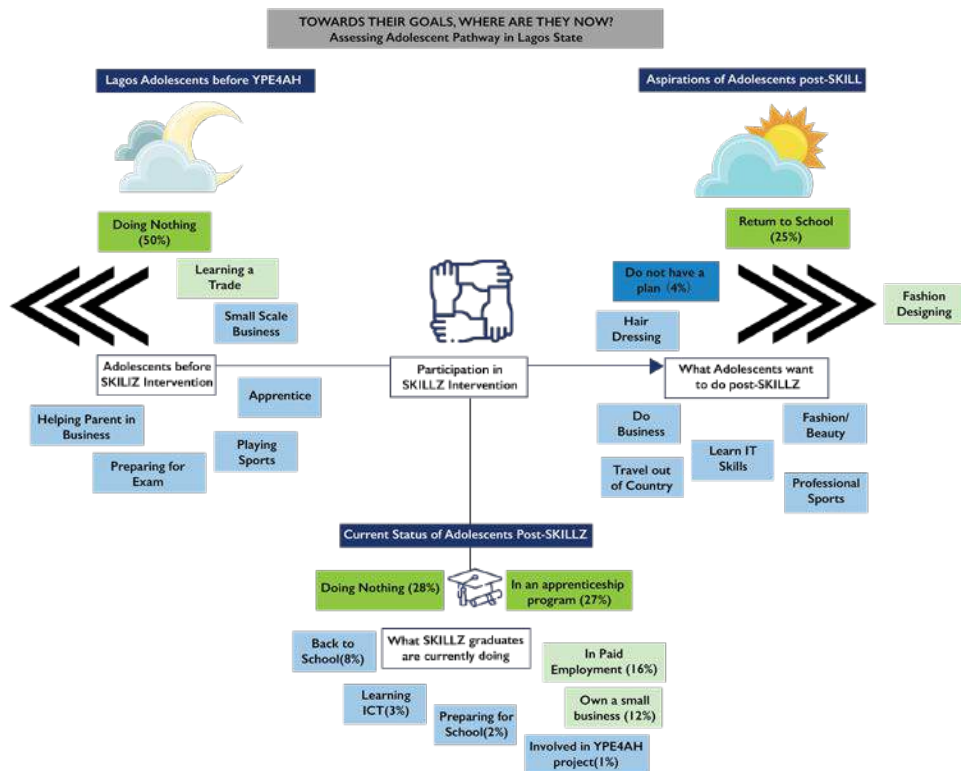
**37,781 Female**  
**28,887 Male**



**65,000**  
Enrolled into  
SKILLZ Clubs

- Reached **67,173** adolescents with life skills training (**57% female, 43% male; 59% aged 15-17 years old, 41% 18-19 years old**) using the locally adapted SKILLZ United curriculum in Lagos and Kano.
- Graduated **66,668** adolescents (**female: 37,781; male: 28,887**) from the SKILLZ united and enrolled 65,000 adolescents (99 percent) into the follow-on SKILLZ Clubs.
- The project significantly increased female adolescent participation in the SKILLZ program progressively from **41 percent in FY21 to 58 percent in FY23**.
- More than 50% of adolescents who participated in the interventions visited the Youth Hubs at least once a week post-intervention.
- Findings comparing pre- and post-evaluations of the SKILLZ training revealed that 6870 percent of these adolescents increased gender equitable beliefs directly as a result of the interventions (slightly higher among adolescent boys (68.8%), than adolescent girls (67.8%)). There was also a remarkable increase in perception about key FP related concepts; with greater changes among female adolescents, and among those from Kano (a conservative state in Northern Nigeria) compared to their male and Lagos counterparts.
- Significant life changes occurred among beneficiaries, who reported life changes in years post-intervention. The final longitudinal survey revealing that about 40 percent have contributed positively to community, 24 percent returning to school, and 15 percent leaving toxic and unstable relationships, amongst other changes reported.
- Pathway qualitative findings also revealed that among adolescents who were met doing nothing in their communities before the SKILLZ intervention, intervening with the life-skills program resulted in reducing that figure by nearly half in Lagos and Kano.





## SERVICE DELIVERY

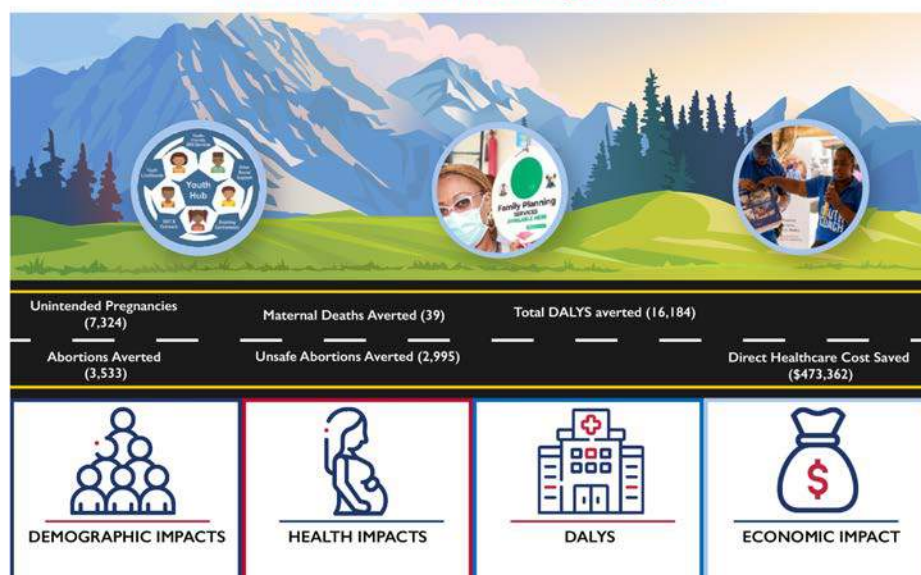
- Trained and engaged **248** healthcare providers (Lagos: 156 and Kano: 92) across various cadres – which included 154 patent proprietary medicine vendors (PPMV), 61 nurses/midwives, 23 community health extension workers (CHEW), 6 pharmacists, and 4 doctors - who provided quality FP services in the intervention communities.
- The project sustained reporting of FP services among these providers, with about **80 percent of them still providing FP** services to adolescents in the last 3 months of implementation (May-July 2024).
- Trained providers offered FP counselling to **116,595** adolescents in both the spoke (**72,287**) and hub (**44,308**) facilities. Among these, FP services were provided to **96,409** adolescents, culminating in **21,367** CYP. About 72% of the adolescents who received these services were new acceptors of family planning, and 55% of adolescents continued to use FP at least one-year post service provision.
- Findings comparing pre and post evaluation of the SKILLZ trainings revealed direct impact of the life-skills on family planning, through increased knowledge and perception about FP and specific methods, where to access the services, and intention to use FP in the future (which could be immediately during the interventions or whenever adolescents were ready). For example, knowing at least 3 methods to prevent pregnancy increased from 53.5% to 92.1%, knowing where to get support for FP services increased from 52% to 92%, knowledge of ability to make FP/RH choices increased from 64% to 92%, and intention to use FP also significantly increased from 41% to 97%.
- Lifetime impact of the service delivery showed important outcomes relating to FP. The provision of the 21,367 CYPs, contributing to 7,324 unintended pregnancies averted, and 2,995 unsafe abortions averted among adolescents. There are also 39 maternal deaths that did not happen as a result of the service provision on the project.
- Findings comparing use of FP at the formative research (2020) and at the Youth Participant survey (2023) revealed that ever use of FP increased from 7.7% to 30.8%, and proportion of adolescents speaking to other people about sex-related matters increases from 11.6% to 12.4%.
- On other services, 2,716 adolescents were screened and referred by the providers for GBV services, 1,165 received substance abuse referrals and 9,680 adolescents received information about menstrual hygiene and received mensural pads.



**248** Healthcare providers trained

**80%** Of them still providing FP services to adolescents

## YPE4AH FP Service Lifespan Impact



## SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

- Through our community mobilization efforts **35,642 (M: 8,282, F:27,360)** adolescents were reached to drive demand for FP services; single session outreaches held in Lagos and Kano states reached **9,669 (M: 2,690, F: 6,979)** adolescents with messages on alcohol and drug abuse, gender equality, prevention of GBV, and menstrual hygiene; additionally the project reached **24,121 (M:4,975, F:19,146)** adolescents via mobile outreaches and sensitization events, and **1,852 adolescents (Male – 617, female – 1,235)** via the “SKILLZ Camp”.
- The project reached **9,646** community members, parents, caregivers, community development leaders and religious/traditional leaders across Lagos and Kano with health messages on teenage pregnancy and the prevalence of substance abuse among adolescents for appropriate attention and guidance of young people.
- Reached over **29,741,766** people with messages on adolescent sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence, substance abuse and menstrual hygiene via **TEENSMATA** social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter).
- Reached **19,283,907** people through radio campaign in Lagos and Kano; produced 10 radio advertisement (radio ads), hype and live interviews that were aired across 14 radio stations in both states (**7 – Lagos and Kano – 7**).



**200** Youth Coaches

**12** Master Trainers



**35%** of all trained adolescents in leadership engaged in civil society activities post-training.

- The project provided technical support to 842 C4C graduates for advocacy initiatives and built the capacity of **200** youth coaches and **12** master trainers on implementing the C4C leadership program.
- About one-third (35%) of all trained adolescents in leadership engaged in civil society activities post-training.
- Adolescents were involved in advocating to parent and community leaders on key issues including GBV and substance abuse. Adolescents also mobilized other adolescents in their LGAs to clean up communities and garnered traction for project objectives.
- Adolescent leaders were organized into a sustainable youth group, that was responsible for providing relief materials to some persons with disabilities (PWD), and training over 300 adolescents on re-useable menstrual



pads in Kano.

- Of all adolescents engaged through the SKILLZ intervention, more than 50 percent of them reported life changes of improved leadership and communication skills (63% in survey round 1 and 55% in survey round 2, which was 2 years after for some adolescents).
- Findings from Youth Participant survey revealed that without YPE4AH, about 90% of the adolescents who reported receiving any leadership training within a 12-month period would have not received those trainings (92 percent). Only 8 percent had the trainings provided by other organizations; thus, showing impact of YPE4AH in creating change agents and leaders in intervention communities.



**1,882**

**SKILLZ United Graduates**  
Secured training, internship and  
apprenticeship opportunities

**\$688,361**

**Leveraged by the YPE4AH project**  
from trainings and other private sector  
engagements

- Secured training, internship and apprenticeship opportunities for **1,882 (M: 423, F: 1,459)** SKILLZ United graduates to support youth workforce readiness, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship which will address socioeconomic determinants of adolescent health. The YPE4AH project leveraged in total **\$688,361** from trainings and other private sector engagements.
- The project collaborated with 90 private sector partners in the SME space in Lagos and Kano, helping adolescents secure training, internship, and volunteerism, apprenticeship, and job placements in both private and public sectors.
- About eight of every ten adolescents who benefitted from the livelihood were female (78%). About 25 percent of these were also among married adolescents, a major achievement for some of these adolescents who are already saddled with childbearing, and thus having limited opportunities.
- Apprenticeship trainings were provided to over 650 adolescents which involve trainees being attached to trainers within their locality for a period ranging from 3-9 months; these included both paid and unpaid apprenticeships.
- Findings from Youth Participant survey revealed that without YPE4AH, about 40% of the adolescents who reported receiving any livelihood training within a 12-month period would have not received those trainings (36.5 percent).
- Of all adolescents engaged through the SKILLZ intervention, about 30 percent of them reported life changes of being better able to take care of their families (46% in survey round 1 and 35% in survey round 2, which was 2 years after for some adolescents). Earnings were also reported to improve for 28 percent of adolescents, with 18 percent highlighting being employed in a new trade as major life change since participation (across both survey rounds).





## Cross-Cutting Objectives

- Through the technical support of DAI the capacity of the three local consortium partners, YEDI, YBR, and WFI, was strengthened in the programmatic, financial, and other institutional capabilities in preparation for potential direct USG funding. Following the organizational capacity assessments (OCA) and non-U.S. organization pre-award surveys (NUPAS) assessment in September 2023 the three organisations met the 90 percent of their annual capacity improvement plan (CIP) benchmarks for each of seven intervention areas; and funds transitioning was achieved with partners positioned and supported in FY 24 to handle 75 percent of all programming utilizing their strengthened systems.
- The results of the organizational performance index conducted in September 2023

revealed that all three partners in FY23 had an average score of 2.3 out of 4 across the four domains measured (yielding about 58 percent), which shows the impact of the work that DAI did with the partners. This was a marked difference from the lower figures in FY22, with the most improvements seen in YBR and WFI. Consortium partners were also able to access grants due to improved program and financial management processes.

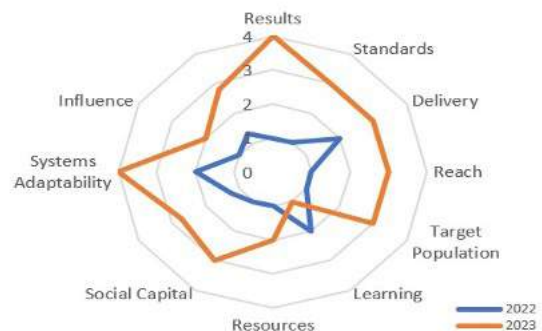
90%

**Annual Capacity Improvement Plan (CIP) met by the three local consortium partners, YEDI, YBR and WFI**

WFI OPI Plus Scores



YBR OPI Plus Scores





# SUCCESS STORIES

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## THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF ARAFAT AJOKE MUDASHIRU: FROM ADVERSITY TO ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS

Arafat Ajoke Mudashiru, an adolescent from Papa-Ajao, Mushin LGA of Lagos State, Nigeria, exemplifies the power of resilience and entrepreneurial spirit. Her remarkable journey began at the age of 18 when she joined the TEENSMATA Youth HUB in Mushin. It was there that she connected with Emah, the Hub Coordinator, through her Coach Phummy during the SKILLZ interventions.

Arafat faced significant hurdles, including dropping out of school in her final year (SS3) due to financial difficulties. Despite this setback and the discrimination, she faced as an out-of-school girl, she found hope and support at the Youth Hub. This environment, which became her second family, helped her stay focused on her dreams.

The Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health (YPE4AH) project aims to equip young Nigerians with essential skills,

social capital, and resources. Arafat's success story is a testament to this mission. She graduated from both SKILLZ United and SKILLZ Club, where she learned vital information about adolescent sexual reproductive health, family planning, gender equality, drug and substance abuse, and financial literacy.

In June 2022, Arafat seized the chance to enroll in a free five-day Make-up and Gele training organized by the Private Sector Unit and facilitated by House of Tara. She quickly mastered the high-quality, trending skills taught in the training. Her talent soon attracted notable clients, including the Chief of Party, Madam Boladale, the DAI Country Director, Dr. Joe Abah, and Lara Brock from DAI HQ.

Arafat's exceptional skills earned her a spot at the 7th Nigeria Family Planning Conference (NFPC) in Abuja in December 2022, where she showcased her abilities and gained significant recognition. This success motivated her to apply for a scholarship program at House of Tara Academy, resulting in a prestigious six-month paid internship.



*The YPE4AH TEENSMATA project has made me think more about my future, how I am going to build my future, and also taught me about life, that hard work is always rewarded.*  
- Arafat Ajoke Mudashiru

Now, Arafat not only earns an income through her make-up and Gele skills but also teaches other adolescent girls at the hub. Her long-term goals include becoming a renowned professional make-up and Gele artist, saving enough money to return to school, supporting her siblings' education, and providing for her family's needs.

Through the YPE4AH project, Arafat's voice and potential have been unlocked, paving the way for a brighter future for her and other adolescents in rural communities across Lagos and Kano. She furthered her commitment to youth advocacy by attending a leadership training through the YPE4AH C4C Leadership program and has expressed interest in becoming a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) member for the project.

Arafat hopes her story will inspire other young people to stay focused on their goals and remain content despite challenges. Her journey is a powerful example of resilience, growth, and the impact of youth empowerment initiatives. Reflecting on her journey, Arafat shared, "The YPE4AH TEENSMATA project has made me think more about my future, how I am going to build my future, and also taught me about life, that hard work is always rewarded."

## CULTIVATING BETTER LIFE SKILLS TO COMBAT SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN ADOLESCENTS

In Northern Nigeria, substance abuse is a significant issue that profoundly impacts individuals, families, and communities. This crisis contributes to poverty and underdevelopment, causing both financial and physical strains. A lack of awareness about the symptoms and dangers of drug abuse allows many adolescents to fall into substance abuse, jeopardizing their futures. Failure to recognize behavioral changes, late discovery, insufficient knowledge, ignorance, or nonchalance towards these symptoms often leads to addiction.

Malam (Mal) Gambo Shehu, a father of five boys, three of whom are adolescents, has not let his physical disability hinder his determination to improve lives. Despite being a retired civil servant, he now drives a tri-cycle to make ends meet.

Mallam Gambo's boys were known to be a menace in the community,

they were out of school and had no skills or vocations as such, they were not engaged in any productive venture. Mallam Gambo was having a tough time because



*My sons have changed and I am happy  
- Malam Gambo Shehu*

they would not listen to his advice about the bad company they kept. They started experimenting with drugs, and one had even started stealing items to support his drug abuse problem. Mallam Gambo was so frustrated with their behaviours, and this escalated to the boys constantly engaging in fights with thugs in Ungogo community.

"I was going about my business when I saw a convergence of young people at the TEENSMATA Youth Hub. Curious, I went to find out what was happening. I was informed that there was a new program aimed at improving the lives of children aged 15-19 years. I went back home, and the following day brought four adolescent boys—two of mine and two from my neighbors. I left after they were enrolled," Malam Gambo recounted.

The project followed up with Malam Gambo and his sons for feedback after they graduated from the SKILLZ program. He responded happily, "They greet myself and their mother now, they listen to us, they ask what they can do to help around the house, and even seek our advice. They have changed, and I am happy!"

YPE4AH is transforming the lives of adolescents, empowering them to think positively about their futures and make better decisions, thereby becoming better adults and contributing positively to society. To YPE4AH, Malam Gambo expressed his gratitude, saying, "Thank you for the good work you are doing. Teaching someone life skills is a big deal. Thank you."





## LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: YOUTH-POWERED ECOSYSTEM TO ADVANCE URBAN ADOLESCENT HEALTH (YPE4AH) IMPROVES ACCESS TO LIFE SKILLS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Nazifi Suleiman, an adolescent boy from Wudil LGA in Kano, had lost all hope of happiness and a productive future. A few years ago, the now 18-year-old was in an accident that left one of his legs disabled, requiring him to use a crutch. This injury confined Nazifi to his home, straining his relationships with friends and family.

As an out-of-school adolescent who lost his limbs in an accident, his life seemed bleak and hopeless. He was denied access to school because of poverty, having no source of livelihood and suddenly stripped of his ability to support himself, he felt trapped in a cycle of despair, life had no meaning. He couldn't even play football, which is his favourite sport.

People with disabilities in Nigeria continually encounter stigma,



*I thought my life was over. I had no way to earn a living, and everyone around me saw me as a burden. YPE4AH was a turning point in my life...I am able to take care of myself and my family to the amazement of people in my community - Nazifi Suleiman*

discrimination, and obstacles to accessing essential social services and economic opportunities. Their unemployment rates are nearly double those of the general population, largely due to attitudinal, mobility-related, technological, and physical barriers, including inaccessible workplaces. Assistive devices, crucial for mobility and technology access, are costly and hard to obtain. Additionally, many face frequent job denials, negative attitudes from employers, unsuitable job placements, low expectations at work, and a lack of reasonable accommodations.

Many in his community and family expected him to resort to begging for a living, which deepened his sense of hopelessness and depression. “I thought my life was over. I had no way to earn a living, and everyone around me saw me as a burden,” he said.

In March 2022, Nazifi's life took a positive turn when he met Muhammed Ibrahim, a YPE4AH Youth Coach, in the community. Muhammed, who had been working to engage adolescents through the local TEENSMATA Youth Hub, invited Nazifi to join the program. With courage and encouragement from Muhammed, Nazifi enrolled in SKILLZ United in April 2022. He completed the SKILLZ Club and United programs and became an Adolescent Champion after participating in the Champions for Change (C4C) training.

Despite living with a physical disability, Nazifi, like many adolescents in Nigeria, has benefited from life skills and leadership training to support his healthy growth. Throughout the project lifespan 63 adolescents living with impairment received SKILLZ training through the project.

The training covered various topics, including how to relate to people, healthy living, identifying supporters, understanding one's body and mind, and learning about adolescents' rights and responsibilities. These teachings empowered Nazifi to re-engage with his community and assume a leadership role.

In just five months, Nazifi transformed from a state of despair to becoming an active community leader. With his new advocacy and mobilization skills, he was selected as a member of the YPE4AH Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), a group of adolescents providing leadership and serving as a youth lens to project management. YAC members address issues affecting adolescents with key stakeholders, fostering a deeper understanding of their needs and shaping services to better address them “It was a turning point in my life. The skills I gained empowered me to

take control of my future, I have also started selling sharp sand for building to contractors though on a small-scale, but I am able to take care of myself and my family to the amazement of people in my community” Nazifi shared.

Nazifi’s journey is a testament to the impact of inclusive training and support, showing that with the right opportunities, even the most challenging circumstances can be overcome.

## **TRANSFORMING POTENTIAL INTO POWER: HOW YELLOW BRICK ROAD LTD. BECAME A MODEL FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**



*DAI has empowered Yellow Brick Road (YBR) and other local partners through its organizational development support to access direct donor funding, implement programs effectively, and sustain developmental objectives. YBR’s transformation serves as a testament to the impact of strategic capacity building provided by DAI.*

**- Kaliko Olowole, Yellow Brick Road Managing Director**

In Lagos, many local Non-Governmental Organizations and small for-profit organizations operate without the organized structure necessary to enhance productivity or make a significant impact. Yellow Brick Road Ltd. (YBR), a small for-profit advertising and communications company based in Lagos, was no exception. For over 10 years, Yellow Brick Road struggled with improper board composition, irregular meetings, inadequate financial reporting standards, and ineffective internal controls. These deficiencies hindered Yellow Brick Road’s ability to access donor funding due to perceived non-compliance.

Yellow Brick Road’s lack of a structured governance framework and sound financial practices posed significant challenges. The absence of a properly constituted board and regular meetings led to limited strategic oversight. Furthermore, inadequate financial reporting and internal controls rendered YBR high-risk in the eyes of potential donors, restricting its growth and impact.



In May 2020, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded the Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health project to DAI and three local partners, including Yellow Brick Road. This initiative aimed to implement life skills and adolescent family planning activities in Lagos and Kano while



strengthening the organizational capacity of the consortium partners. A baseline assessment conducted at the project's inception highlighted Yellow Brick Road's operational gaps, leading to the development of a comprehensive improvement plan.

YPE4AH provided Yellow Brick Road with site visits, mentoring, and hands-on support. This technical support focused on enhancing governance, financial management, and internal controls.

Within two years of receiving this technical support, Yellow Brick Road underwent a remarkable transformation. The organization evolved from being high-risk to a no-risk entity, as evidenced by the non-US pre-award survey assessment tool.

Yellow Brick Road reconstituted its board, expanding membership from two to five members to better reflect the organization's needs. The board now meets at least twice a year, ensuring robust strategic oversight and decision-making. In addition the organization invested in Sage 5 accounting software, significantly improving its financial reporting and compliance. The new software streamlined financial processes, ensuring accurate and timely reporting. With the project's guidance, Yellow Brick Road overhauled its internal control systems, establishing robust checks and balances to ensure accountability and transparency.

Through its organizational development support, the project has empowered YBR and other local partners to access direct donor funding, implement programs effectively, and sustain developmental objectives. Yellow Brick Road's transformation serves as a testament to the impact of strategic capacity building. The enhanced governance, financial management, and internal controls have positioned YBR as a reliable and compliant partner, ready to make a lasting impact in the community.

The partnership between Yellow Brick Road and YPE4AH has catalyzed a profound transformation. Yellow Brick Road's journey from operational inefficiencies and non-compliance to robust governance and financial health illustrates the power of targeted capacity building. As Yellow Brick Road looks to the future, it does so with renewed confidence, ready to leverage its strengthened organizational framework to drive sustainable development and positive change in Lagos.

## **FROM DESPAIR TO EMPOWERMENT: AMINA MUHAMMAD'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS**

"My encounter with Coach Fatima Adamu Muhammad (Yar Wudil) marked a turning point in my life " recalled Amina Muhammad. At 18 years old and battling depression following her divorce, Amina learned about the TEENSMATA Youth Hub, a safe space offering various activities.

Upon completing the SKILLZ training in June 2022, Amina enrolled in the Champions for Change (C4C) program to become one of the adolescent champions. With a keen interest in tailoring, she was attached to Murja, a master trainer in tailoring from Wudil LGA, for a four-month training period.

In Nigeria, young people often face significant challenges in acquiring the right skills to secure a livelihood. Many educational systems struggle with issues such as inadequate infrastructure, outdated curricula, and a lack of vocational training opportunities. These deficiencies hinder the ability of young people to gain practical skills relevant to the job market. Unemployment and underemployment rates among Nigerian youth are alarmingly high, partly due to the mismatch between the skills provided by the education system and those demanded by employers. These factors contribute to a cycle of poverty and limited economic opportunities, making initiatives like YPE4AH crucial for empowering youth and providing them with viable paths to sustainable livelihoods.



*I am excited because my encounter with YPE4AH has helped alleviate my anxiety. I now have a meaningful occupation, as well as a meaningful life. - Amina Muhammad*

After completing her training, Amina perfected her skills and began sewing baby dresses. “I discovered a passion for creating beautiful garments for little ones,” she explained. Currently, she earns between N10,000 to N15,000, with her income increasing during peak seasons. Over the past six months, Amina has actively engaged in training other young married and unmarried girls in sewing “So far, I have graduated six adolescents who are now earning income from making baby clothes,” she noted with pride.

Reflecting on her journey, Amina expressed her gratitude, saying, “I am excited because my encounter with YPE4AH has helped alleviate my anxiety. I now have a meaningful occupation, as well as a meaningful life.”

## LEADERSHIP BEYOND AGE

Shehu Adebayo, an 18-year-old also known as ‘Alhaji’ Shehu from Mushin Local Government Area, has demonstrated exceptional leadership and advocacy skills from a young age. At 16, he participated in the Champions for Change Leadership training, which significantly boosted his self-confidence and ignited his passion for leading various advocacy initiatives both within and outside his community.

Shehu has led numerous initiatives to improve the health of young people. He has facilitated Champions for Change training sessions, led a leadership camp for the YMCA, organized community outreach programs on the HPV vaccine, and advocated for climate change. Additionally, he hosted an online webinar on the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, educating young girls and boys about the dangers of abuse and the importance of reporting it. Shehu also became an advocate for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) with the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria, a national non-governmental organization promoting reproductive health in Nigeria.



*As a young person, you can be all you want to be. Leadership is not by age.*

**- Shehu Adebayo**



In 2023, Shehu participated in the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) Art for Well-being competition organized by the 1.8 Billion Young People for Change Global Forum for Adolescents, funded by the World Health Organization. His participation in this global competition allowed young people to voice their concerns about adolescent sexual reproductive health and inspired underprivileged adolescents to build courage and overcome limitations. Emerging as the second finalist, Shehu won a cash prize of \$100 and an award for second place in the film category among 787 entries from 414 countries. He was nominated alongside adolescents from countries including the United States,

India, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kenya. As a member of the Global Youth Advisory Council supported by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Shehu has consistently used his leadership experience to engage young people in adopting healthy lifestyles and behaviors.

Shehu also serves on the Youth Advisory Committee of the Youth-powered Ecosystem to Advance Adolescent Health (YPE4AH) project, where he amplifies youth voices and shares insights on adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues. In July 2023, he showcased his exceptional leadership qualities by securing funds for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) exams for himself and three peers who wished to return to school. As a result of his efforts, two of the four students achieved outstanding results and proceeded to sit for the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) exams to gain university admission.



Currently, Shehu is leading a competition themed “Art over Addiction” to highlight the dangers of substance abuse and encourage young people to express themselves through art, music, and spoken words, with cash prizes for the winners.

### **ATTRACTING GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CENTERS THROUGH BETTER PERFORMANCE**



The YPE4AH project, implemented at the community level, has significantly supported Primary Health Care centers, privately-owned clinics, and Patent Medicine Vendors, ensuring a broader and more effective reach to young people within the local government areas.

Before the project's introduction in Wudil Local Government Area, Kano, there was no established system for monitoring, supervision, or tools to measure the efficiency of service delivery. Primary Health Care centers operated at the bare minimum and, in some cases, were unable to provide necessary services due to inadequate supervision and a lack of essential reproductive health commodities.

A state government stakeholder highlighted that the YPE4AH project has been immensely beneficial to clinics across the local government area. The project has introduced systems and tools that have enhanced efficiency, including Supportive Supervisory Visits, database tools, data monitoring and analysis, quarterly review meetings, and an increased supply of commodities to meet the high demand from young people in the community.

Reflecting on the impact of YPE4AH support Malam Bashir Usman PHC Coordinator Wudil LGA Kano notes that “This great support has kept us on our toes and shown us that the project is interested in the wellbeing of our young people and not just the fanfare of implementation as we have seen with other projects in the past. The Healthcare management Board of the State government now recognizes how we can deliver optimally and commends the growth we have achieved.”

The Primary Health Care centers have experienced an increased supply of family planning commodities, supporting their providers and the health coordinator at the TEENSMATA Hub. Monthly data records also show significant improvement in clinic activities, reflecting the positive impact of the YPE4AH project.

## PARENTING BEYOND RESPONSIBILITY: A LIFE-SAVING INTERVENTION

Mrs. Akinfolarin, a dedicated parent whose daughter's involvement in the SKILLZ sessions evolved into becoming a Youth Coach and mobilizing her peers, shared a profound story of intervention that changed a young girl's life.



*She didn't just save a life; she became an Upstander. - Mrs. Akinfolarin*

In December 2022, during a TEENSMATA parental engagement meeting, and in subsequent sessions, Mrs. Akinfolarin gained essential knowledge on sexual and reproductive health, child safety, and intervention strategies. This new-found awareness heightened her vigilance, enabling her to notice troubling signs of neglect and potential abuse in Chiamaka, a friend of her youngest daughter.

Moved by compassion and a strong sense of responsibility, Mrs. Akinfolarin acted swiftly. Recognizing TEENSMATA as a secure space for adolescents, she reported her concerns to the Youth Coach, seeking advice on how to assist Chiamaka. What followed was the uncovering of Chiamaka's distressing circumstances. Adopted at nine, Chiamaka had suffered from physical and sexual abuse, inadequate care, and was often kept from attending school. Yet, despite these adversities, Chiamaka's spirit remained unbroken, fueled by her determination to pursue education and secure a brighter future.

Through the diligent efforts of the TEENSMATA Youth Coach and Hub Coordinators, Chiamaka was provided with a safe and supportive environment where she could share her story and receive counseling. Given her age, she was referred to The Cece Yara Foundation, an organization specializing in supporting children facing similar challenges. Thanks to the timely intervention of Mrs. Akinfolarin, the TEENSMATA Youth Hub, and The Cece Yara Foundation, Chiamaka now flourishes in a nurturing environment. Finally, she is receiving the respect and care she deserves, with her education prioritized to empower her toward a promising future.

Mrs. Akinfolarin's story is a powerful testament to the transformative impact of parental engagement and collective action in creating a safer world for all children.





# CHALLENGES

Challenge	Effect	Mitigation strategy
<b>Poor adolescent traffic into the Youth Hubs and Spoke facilities.</b>	Lower than expected service use and associated service data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designed community mobilization activities across the LGAs - trained and equipped community mobilizers to boost demand generation and referrals to Youth Hubs and spoke facilities.</li> <li>Adapted and improved strategies for delivering SKILLZ intervention to attract more adolescents to health providers; Youth Coaches were given directory of health providers, and SKILLZ delivery now includes making visiting the providers fashionable, even within community interventions (as against them going when in need).</li> <li>Youth Coaches were assigned to refer adolescents within their communities to the spoke facilities, a shift from their usual job descriptions - this was to ensure that adolescents who lived far from the Youth Hubs could easily access services.</li> </ul>
<b>Stock-out of FP commodities</b>	Stock-out affected adolescents' access to FP services within the Hubs and public health facilities (PHCs) increasing dissatisfaction amongst adolescents following counselling services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adolescents were referred to spoke facilities to access FP services (although this was not their preferred choice)</li> <li>The project worked with the State Governments to stock up the hubs and PHCs when available - resulting in constant supply of free FP commodities.</li> <li>The project also collaborated with private sector partners (DKT International) to leverage free FP commodities.</li> </ul>
<b>Differences in cultural contexts</b>	The context in Kano required adaptations to the target population and curricula content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SBC strategy design was aligned to fit into the socio-cultural content and context of Kano state</li> <li>The project consistently engaged key stakeholders in Kano State - State Government, civil society groups and community and religious leaders in the design and implementation of the project at all levels - this helped create an enabling environment for project implementation and address the sociocultural barriers affecting adolescent access to services and products offered by the project.</li> <li>The SKILLZ United program in Kano was modified to have three (3) separate SKILLZ United curricula with content specific for each adolescent group (unmarried boys, unmarried girls, married girls).</li> <li>Advocacy programs helped to change the culture of limiting unmarried adolescents from accessing FP/RH within facilities in Kano state to one where unmarried youth were welcomed and not judged.</li> </ul>
<b>Initial difficulty experienced by some Youth Coaches at delivering the SKILLZ curriculum in Hausa</b>	Communication challenges during SKILLZ delivery between Youth Coaches and participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of the English version to allow for in-depth understanding for the Youth Coaches struggling to deliver in Hausa to enhance their understanding and improve delivery.</li> <li>Asides the regular Hausa print of the SKILLZ Curricula, some copies in English have been provided to aid the understanding of the Hausa Curricula by Coaches who need them.</li> </ul>
<b>Drop in motivation among Service Providers at the Spoke Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to the work seemed to wane.</li> <li>Private providers are not motivated to document service utilisation and attend review meetings.</li> <li>Some providers dropped off the Activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-cadre providers received additional technical support beyond the training, including review meetings to provide extra learning on key components that can improve their business (e.g., reducing stock-out)</li> <li>The project included providers in outreaches; further strengthening the referral linkage and reinforcing togetherness.</li> </ul>

Challenge	Effect	Mitigation strategy
<b>Security concerns around the Youth Hubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The hesitancy of some participants to visit one of the Hubs alone, due to the presence of hoodlums and those smoking around the Hubs.</li> <li>Football activities and surrounding logistics (parking) causing distraction for adolescents at the Hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project engaged community leaders in our advocacy efforts to increase security alertness around the Youth Hubs - resulting in security personnel guarding the adolescent safe space</li> <li>Advocacy efforts resulted in regular patrols commenced by the Lagos Neighborhood Watch (a government-owned security outfit).</li> </ul>





# LESSON/S LEARNT

The implementation of YPE4AH provided valuable insights that have shaped future programming. Key lessons learned include:

- **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** A critical takeaway was the importance of establishing strong collaborations with key stakeholders in the focal states. Partnerships with state governments (MDAs) were instrumental in creating enabling environments for the project to thrive. Their active participation in project design and implementation fostered local ownership and support. Collaborating with implementing partners, private sector groups, civil society organizations, and community-based structures proved invaluable in providing adolescents with access to family planning (FP) services, other health and non-health services, economic empowerment opportunities, and strengthened community support to address their overall health and well-being.
- **Engagement of Multi-Cadre Providers:** The project effectively engaged various cadres of health providers and facilities, including PPMVs, nurses/midwives, pharmacists, CHEWs, and doctors, to ensure adolescents had access to FP services. This approach addressed the challenge of where adolescents could safely, easily, and conveniently access FP services by providing multiple options. Training providers to deliver adolescent and youth-friendly health services was crucial—it enhanced their capacity to offer friendly and equitable FP services, making facilities safe spaces for adolescents and encouraging them to seek FP services at hub and spoke facilities.
- **Reaching Vulnerable Adolescents:** Introducing community-based interventions was vital in reaching vulnerable adolescents in hard-to-reach communities. These approaches created increased demand for FP services among adolescents, leading to greater access to FP services during community programs and more referrals to hub and spoke facilities.
- **Socio-Cultural Adaptation:** Designing programs that align with the socio-cultural context of the focal states and communities is essential. Adopting a flexible approach in program design and implementation helps address unique socio-cultural barriers. For example, in Kano State, the Youth Hub program was adjusted to avoid mixing unmarried and married coaches in the same training sessions, particularly during practices related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Continuously reviewing strategies and approaches to accommodate cultural differences ensures effective program delivery.
- **Broad Impact of Information:** The SKILLZ intervention's impact extended beyond the primary beneficiaries to include their friends and siblings. The program's influence also reached indirect beneficiaries, such as Youth Coaches, Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) members, and adolescent champions. Many adolescents reported that the program improved their ability to care for their families and contribute positively to their communities. Indirect beneficiaries have also experienced positive outcomes, such as returning to school, gaining employment, and taking control of their lives.
- **Special Services Provision:** The provision of special services, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health support, and gender-based violence (GBV) services, to vulnerable and hard-to-reach adolescents was enhanced through mobile services during community-based outreaches. This approach ensured that these adolescents received the necessary support to improve their health and well-being.
- **Capacity Development:** Building the leadership skills of adolescents provided them with opportunities to take on leadership roles, empowering young people to contribute meaningfully to their communities.



# SUSTAINABILITY

YPE4AH developed comprehensive sustainability plans for both Lagos and Kano to ensure the long-term impact and continuation of the project's initiatives after its conclusion. These plans outline several key factors influencing sustainability, including the involvement of key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), the engagement of stakeholders at all levels, active participation by adolescents, and strong leadership from Project Managers and the Project Advisory Group (PAG). The plans emphasize state government readiness, in relation to its fiscal sustainability, integration of YPE4AH-related activities into MDA planning and budgeting, continued youth involvement and leadership in adolescent health programming, and the potential for securing funding from other donors and partners aligned with YPE4AH's objectives.

## ***Handover and Local Government Involvement***

By the end of the project, significant progress had been made toward ensuring sustainability in both states. In Lagos, the Youth Hubs were successfully handed over to the local governments and the Ministry of Youth and Social Development. A clear pathway was established for integrating the operational costs of the Youth Hubs into local government budgets. Both Lagos and Kano LGAs committed to recruiting healthcare providers to continue delivering quality FP services to adolescents, with ongoing training and supervision managed by the Ministry of Health.

## ***Sustained Youth Engagement and Leadership***

The organized group of adolescents, supported by the Youth Advisory Committee established by the project, provides a robust platform for YPE4AH's initiatives to continue beyond USAID funding. These adolescents will continue engaging their peers within their communities, sustaining the foot traffic to Youth Hubs and ensuring access to essential services. The adolescents trained in leadership roles are now a pool of volunteers available for state governments to engage in future adolescent programs. Additionally, some of USAID's expendable assets have been allocated to the Youth Hubs, with management oversight provided by the state Ministries of Youth.

## ***Integration with State Ministries and Services***

Livelihood and leadership opportunities will continue to be provided by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, which has established strong linkages with the Youth Hubs and adolescents from the project's inception. Services at the spoke facilities will also persist, and to ensure widespread impact, some trained healthcare providers will conduct step-down training within state-led or zonal meetings, extending the reach of the project's benefits.

## ***Critical Steps for Long-Term Sustainability***

Beyond the sustainability plans agreed upon by both state governments, several critical steps were taken before the completion of the YPE4AH project to ensure long-term viability. In Lagos, funding for Adolescent Health Programming was secured at the Primary Health Care Board level starting in 2024, and a reliable FP commodity linkage between State Ministries of Health and Safe Spaces was established and implemented under government supervision from 2023. This integration ensures that sustaining health commodities in the Youth Hubs becomes part of the state's health system.

## ***Progress in Kano***

In Kano, similar progress was made. The FP commodity linkage established in 2023 has proven effective, and in January 2024, the state government domesticated the Adolescent Health Policy and developed its own annual operational plan for adolescents, which is crucial for maintaining relevant health programs. Kano also began the process of domesticating National Guidelines for State-funded procurement of FP commodities to address frequent stock-outs. Additionally, adolescent champions in Kano have been linked to existing advocacy groups to sustain initiatives and secure funding for ongoing programs. These champions have adopted the name "TEENSMATA Initiative" and plan to take over the project's social media platforms after project closeout.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Addressing Inconsistent Supply of Family Planning Commodities:** A significant challenge during the implementation of the project's service delivery program was the inconsistent supply of family planning (FP) commodities. Due to donor restrictions on procuring FP commodities, the project relied on donations from state governments and private partners, which were sporadic. This inconsistency hindered adolescents' access to FP services, limited their choice of FP methods, and diminished their trust and satisfaction with the services. For future adolescent sexual and reproductive health programs, we strongly recommend strategies to ensure a consistent supply of free sexual and reproductive health commodities. While collaboration with public and private partners was beneficial, future programs should explore establishing partnerships with social marketing enterprises, international and local charities, foundations, and pharmaceutical companies to secure a more reliable supply chain.

**2. Expanding and Enhancing Youth Hubs:** The establishment of Youth Hubs provided safe, welcoming spaces for adolescents to seek and access sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services, helping to overcome barriers such as knowledge gaps and social stigma. However, the number of Youth Hubs was insufficient to meet the needs of the large adolescent population in the focal LGAs, and the services offered were limited in scope. For future programs, we recommend:

- **Expanding the number of Youth Hubs in focal LGAs** to ensure broader service coverage and accessibility for adolescents.
- **Transforming Youth Hubs into comprehensive service delivery centers** that provide integrated health and related services exclusively for adolescents. Adopting a one-stop-shop (OSS) approach, similar to the model used for key populations in Nigeria, could address the stigma and discrimination that adolescents face when accessing FP services in both public and private facilities.

**3. Integrating Multi-Pronged Approaches for Adolescent Development:** The project was designed to address the social determinants of adolescent health through a multi-pronged approach, focusing on life skills, leadership, and livelihoods. However, limited funding, primarily for FP, restricted the ability to combine these elements for all adolescents. Leadership and livelihood were a limited track on the project, making it difficult to estimate varied outcomes among those receiving all the different components of the multi-pronged approach, and those who only went through the life-skills curriculum and received counselling. This was a significant limitation, as it prevented a comprehensive assessment of the combined effects of health, livelihood, and leadership interventions on achieving positive health and developmental outcomes. Although the project focused on assessing positive health outcomes following up those who were exposed to the curriculum (which combined the various touch points) over a period and made comparisons with observed figures of similar adolescents during the formative research. It is recommended that other programs of this kind are able to combine the approaches for a large number of adolescents to adequately track the impact of receiving more than one objective in influencing health outcomes of adolescents. This will allow for a more robust evaluation of how combined interventions influence health and development outcomes.

**4. Standardizing Adolescent Health Data Collection:** The lack of standardized adolescent health data at both national and sub-national levels was a persistent challenge. While FP data is integrated into the national DHIS2 system, adolescent health data lacks such a unified system. The absence of standardized tools across adolescent health programs at the national level impacted our ability to align with existing reporting systems. The project found some success at the sub-national level, particularly in Lagos, where a tool was used to collate data across implementing partners. This tool was adapted and piloted in Kano, leading to the development of an electronic data system to support a state-wide approach to adolescent health data in Lagos, with plans for Kano as well. We recommend that this tool be used as a template to demonstrate the value of adolescent data collection across states, ultimately leading to discussions about establishing a unified national system for adolescent health data.

# CONCLUSION

This unique program has demonstrated that adolescents living in urban slums and those outside traditional educational settings can be effectively engaged and supported to enhance their agency, build assets, and lead initiatives that improve their health and well-being. The program particularly highlights the importance of long-term thinking regarding family planning (FP) and contraceptive use. By integrating life skills, leadership, and livelihood training with FP services, the program has fostered a holistic approach that encourages adolescents to adopt healthier perspectives on their lives and futures.

The program also showed the benefits of providing access to essential services within standalone safe spaces that are linked to existing Primary Health Centers (PHCs) for commodity supply, referrals, and provider exchanges. These spaces, sustained by ongoing youth engagement activities and supported by government and private organizations, have successfully increased demand and utilization by addressing issues of confidentiality, privacy, and trust. Adolescents were able to express themselves freely and seek help when needed, thanks to the use of health providers in non-traditional settings.

Future adolescent programming, particularly in urban slums and across Nigeria, must prioritize what young people define as safe spaces and ensure that confidentiality, privacy, and trust are upheld. Strengthening the capacity of providers who are close to where adolescents live, making them more youth-friendly, is a sustainable way to enhance service delivery. Additionally, exploring how health outcomes can be improved through the combined effects of health, livelihood, and leadership initiatives across different locations and groups could yield valuable insights.

Regarding localization, the project has demonstrated that continuous capacity building for local organizations within the YPE4AH consortium, coupled with a staggered cost transition for the three partners, has significantly enhanced their ability to deliver quality health programming, even in areas they were not previously familiar with. This experience confirms that localization works and that local partners are now equipped to take on greater roles with improved systems that are compliant and capable of effective program implementation. With the sustainability strategies already in motion, we anticipate the long-term impacts of YPE4AH will be felt for years to come, with some partners leading the way in their respective states.

We recommend adopting a human-centered approach in designing adolescent programs, combining learning and livelihood initiatives with FP outreach, fostering key collaborations with more local organizations and stakeholders, and revisiting the concept of safe spaces to better integrate them with PHCs. Additionally, a synergistic approach between the public and private sectors is crucial to positioning adolescent health within a comprehensive framework that enhances overall well-being. Finally, we strongly advocate for the establishment of a central national system for adolescent health data in Nigeria, equipped with validated and standardized tools to drive data usage across all states in the country.





# ANNEX - Photo Gallery







The U.S. Agency for International Development-funded Youth-Powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health activity empowers young people with skills, social capital, and resources needed to realize their full potential. The program improves adolescent health by increasing access to voluntary family planning services and situating family planning within a broader, more holistic context of youth empowerment, coupled with a deeper understanding of the challenges that adolescents face.

**For more information scan here**

