MAYE STRATEGY
A360 PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing recognition of young people as key stakeholders in health promotion and disease prevention efforts across the globe. Young people are not just beneficiaries of health services but also active participants and partners in shaping health policies and programs that affect them. This is evidenced by international frameworks such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that recognize the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes related to health. Many countries and organisations have shown progressive interest in MAYE and have committed to pursuing the MAYE agenda.

PSI as a signatory of the global consensus statement on meaningful adolescent and youth engagement[1], which affirms that young people have a fundamental right to actively and meaningfully engage in all matters that affect their lives. Meaningful engagement of young people is central to the common vision of achieving the outcomes and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), FP2030 goals, and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health among other internationally agreed upon targets for eliminating poverty and promoting health, rights, and wellbeing.

Adolescents 360 (A360) (2016-present), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the Children's Investment fund Foundation (CIFF) and implemented by Population Services International (PSI), co-designed with young people adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) interventions across four countries. These interventions position contraception as a tool that can help girls (and couples) pursue their self-defined aspirations, expand girls' contraceptive method choices, and strengthen health systems to be more responsive to the unique needs of adolescents. A360 actively seeks to create an environment where young people have voice and agency, their contributions are valued, and they are given equal opportunities to contribute to the AYSRH agenda within A360's mandate and beyond. To support these efforts, in 2021 A360 developed a MAYE framework through a consultative process with a multi-country, multi-sectoral group of project and partner stakeholders. The framework guided the A360 MAYE agenda and situated young people at the centre of all project objectives and activities.

After nearly three years of strategy implementation, A360 was able to identify what was and was not working within this strategy framework and pinpoint gaps which needed to be addressed to ensure the project delivered on its MAYE commitments. Within A360's process evaluation, conducted in partnership with Itad in 2023, adolescents reported limited opportunities to provide feedback on their experience in the program. Even when their feedback was actively solicited, they were not always clear on the scope and purpose of their input. This and other project learnings demonstrated that though the MAYE strategy made concerted effort to promote capacity building and meaningful participation of project youth staff (Youth Innovation Champions / Officers - YICs / YIOs[2]), it needed more clarification and rigor in its approach to direct engagement of adolescents as important project stakeholders. Additionally, the initial strategy provided limited guidance on how the project could institutionalize its MAYE approaches within government and partner systems to promote their sustainability beyond the life of the A360 investment.

This strategy aims to build on what has worked so far and to address these identified gaps, enabling A360 to meaningfully deliver on its commitments to young people across the project geographies.

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1   Global consensus statement for meaningful adolescent engagement 2020 https://www.meaningfulyouthengagement.org/
2   YICs / YIOs are individuals between the ages of 19 and 30, generally employed as staff or consultants of A360, that support the project to deliver on project activities and support it to elevate the voices of adolescent users. They have proven to be key change makers and champions for adolescent needs.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

VISION

A place where every young person has a voice and agency, feels their contributions are valued, is respected, and is given equal opportunities to contribute to the AYSRH agenda within A360's mandate and beyond.

GOAL

To create a sustained enabling environment where young people are meaningfully engaged and participate in the development and implementation of all A360 policies, programs, and processes that affect them. Accountability to the objectives within the MAYE strategy will ensure that A360 envisions, implements, and holds itself accountable to meaningful engagement of young people and adolescents within the scope of all aspects of our program implementation.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND SUB THEMES

A360's MAYE strategy is organized around four key objectives, each containing sub-themes that provide clarity on the types of strategies that will be implemented across A360 geographies to achieve the goals of the objective (Figure 1). These four key objectives include:

1. **Build capacity:** Empower young people to actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights, and wellbeing.

2. **Activate change agents:** Engage young people as a source of change for their own health and wellbeing, and for their communities' positive development.

3. **Elevate youth and adolescent voices:** Magnify young people's voices, ideas and creativity so that they can contribute to the body of knowledge on MAYE.

4. **Strengthen the enabling environment**: Create an enabling environment for young people to lead, actively participate, and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.

A360 is also committed to following the principles set out in the global consensus statement on MAYE within these broad strategy objectives. This includes taking a rights-based approach, sharing information transparently, safeguarding voluntary participation, respecting young peoples' diverse views, ensuring safety, and promoting accountability.

The activities included within each sub theme are generalized and meant to be illustrative. Across A360 geographies, this strategy has been contextualized and within each objective specific activities have been identified that respond to that geography's unique context, opportunities, and constraints.

OBJECTIVE 1:
BUILD CAPACITY

Empower young people with confidence, knowledge, and skills to actively engage in A360 programming and beyond.

Sub-theme 1.1: Provide mentorship to promote personal and professional development.

Sub-theme 1.2: Support adolescent clients with programing to develop their skills, agency, and power.

OBJECTIVE 2:
ACTIVE CHANGE AGENTS

Engage young people as a source of change for their own health and wellbeing, and for their communities' positive development.

Sub-them 2.1: Promote participation in community health service delivery initiatives.

Sub-theme 2.2: Involvement in health decision-making platforms in facilities and communities.

OBJECTIVE 4:
STRENGTHEN AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Create an environment for young people to lead and meaningfully engage.

Sub-them 4.1: Sensitize key stakeholders in MAYE.

Sub-theme 4.2: Promote youth-adult collaborations.

Sub-theme 4.3: Policy advocacy for MAYE.

OBJECTIVE 3:
ELEVATE YOUTH AND ADOLESCENT VOICES

Increase visibility of young peoples' voices, ideas, and creativity to meaningfully contribute to the body of knowledge on MAYE.

Sub-them 3.1: Support young people to participate in advocacy initiatives and campaigns.

Sub-theme 3.2: Encourage participation in monitoring, research and learning initiatives.

Sub-theme 3.3: Active participation in development and dissemination of knowledge products.

Figure 1: A360 MAYE strategy objectives and sub-themes

OBJECTIVE 1

Empower young people with the necessary confidence, knowledge, and skills to actively and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights, and wellbeing both in A360's programming and beyond.

SUB-THEME 1.1: PROVIDE MENTORSHIP AND TRAINING TO PROMOTE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mentorship and training are invaluable tools to promote personal and professional development for young people. A360 will utilize these tools in combination to support young people to have the confidence, knowledge, and skills to contribute. By leveraging the expertise of mentors, and the resources of training programs, A360 can support young people (YICs, YIOs, YPPs, adolescent clients) to enhance their capabilities and achieve their objectives more effectively through:

Mentorship: Mentors will provide guidance, support, and wisdom in the process of helping young people achieve their goals. They will help young people navigate challenges, set goals, and develop skills. These relationships should be mutually beneficial. This means that even as the young people strengthen their ability to navigate challenges and increase their confidence and aspirations, mentors should also be gaining insights into the unique experiences and perspectives of those they support.

Training: Training involves structured learning experiences designed to impart knowledge, develop skills, and modify attitudes or behaviours. It can take various forms, such as workshops, seminars, online courses, or on-the-job training. Training programs are typically tailored to address specific needs or gaps identified in individuals or organizations.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF MENTORSHIP AND TRAINING WITHIN A360

✓ Mentorship relationships can include those established between YIC/YIOs and those further advanced in their career that can support them in their professional growth. In Ethiopia, YICs are attached to staff for mentorship depending on their career goals to accelerate mentees' personal and professional development. The mentorship program is implemented using a mentorship program guide to ensure program effectiveness and accountability.

✓ In Nigeria, peer-to-peer mentorship is implemented through rotary clubs, school health clubs and community associations e.g. savings groups as platforms to train and mentor adolescents and youth. This mentorship approach involves utilizing the MAYE curriculum to impart various skills, including but not limited to goal setting, advocacy, and public speaking, enabling young individuals to learn from their peers within a structured educational environment. This equips adolescents and youth with crucial skills to enable them to become self-reliant, confident, and capable members of society.

✓ Training needs for YIC/YIOs are identified for each country and trainings/workshops to meet these needs are organised. In the past, trainings in advocacy, communication, storytelling, media engagement and public speaking have been organised for YIC/YIOs in the different countries. In Kenya, induction trainings are conducted for all new YICs.

SUB-THEME 1.2: SUPPORT ADOLESCENT CLIENTS WITH PROGRAMMING TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS AND AGENCY

A360 recognizes that the development of young peoples' skills and agency is crucial to their future success, and to their meaningful engagement within the project. Support for adolescent girls to improve their agency is the primary outcome of A360's gender strategy. Agency refers to a person's ability to define and act on their goals and requires both a positive enabling environment that promotes autonomy and the internal capabilities (confidence, decision-making skills, etc.) that support a person to identify and make choices. Strengthening girls' agency promotes their ability to advocate for themselves, pursue their goals, and contribute positively to their communities.

Skills development encompasses a wide range of competencies that are essential for personal, academic, and professional success. This includes both hard skills (technical skills specific to a particular job or field) and soft skills (such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability). Providing young people with opportunities to acquire and enhance these skills equips them to navigate the challenges of the modern world, compete in the job market, and thrive in their chosen endeavours.

Providing such opportunities and more for young people's agency and skills development will contribute to their personal growth, and professional development, empowering them to actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF AGENCY AND SKILLS BUILDING FOR ADOLESCENTS WITHIN A360

- ✓ Direct provision of **life skills programs** (such as Binti Shupavu skills classes or MMA Life Family Health (LFH) classes) which can enhance girls' core capabilities – particularly in areas such as goal setting, decision-making, negotiation, problem solving, and communication.

- ✓ Direct provision of or referrals to **vocational training programs** which can offer practical, job-oriented skills development. Young married adolescent girls known as **female mentors** in Nigeria mobilize other girls directly to participate in the LFH safe-space classes where they are exposed to vocational skills trainings in leather works, bead making, tailoring, makeup, and hair dressing.

- ✓ Linkages to **apprenticeships or internships** that can provide girls with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, learn from industry professionals, and develop practical skills in specific trades or professions.

- ✓ Referrals to **entrepreneurship training programs** that can support young aspiring entrepreneurs in developing business skills, creating business plans, and launching startups.

- ✓ Training needs for YIC/YIOs are identified for each country and trainings/workshops to meet these needs are organised. In the past, trainings in advocacy, communication, storytelling, media engagement and public speaking have been organised for YIC/YIOs in the different countries. In Kenya, induction trainings are conducted for all new YICs.

OBJECTIVE 2

Engage young people as a source of change for their own health and wellbeing, and for their communities' positive development.

SUB-THEME 2.1: PROMOTE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES

Youth participation in community health service delivery processes (such as mobilization and provision of health information and services) is not only beneficial for the health and well-being of the community but also for the personal and professional development of young people. Young people often bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and innovation to community health initiatives. Their enthusiasm and willingness to explore new ideas can lead to the development of innovative approaches to healthcare delivery, outreach, and education. Youth participation also facilitates peer-to-peer education and outreach efforts within the community because young people are often effective communicators and influencers among their peers, making them valuable advocates for health promotion messages, preventive care, and healthy behaviours.

Additionally, involving young people in community health initiatives empowers them to become active agents of change in their communities and allows community health initiatives to address specific health issues that affect young people including sexual and reproductive health. By involving youth in the design and implementation of interventions, these initiatives can ensure that services are tailored to the unique needs and preferences of young people. Involving young people in these community health service delivery initiatives will not only strengthens the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives but will also nurture the next generation of leaders and advocates for public health and social justice.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF YOUNG PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY WITHIN A360

- ✅ Health education workshops and training sessions led by young people for community members are organised in partnership with the community leaders. A range of topics on health like SRH including SGBV and contraception are discussed. In Ethiopia, adolescent satisfied contraceptive users work closely with the WDAs to provide FP information to communities during coffee ceremonies.

- ✅ Training young people as peer educators to deliver health information and promote healthy behaviours among their peers. Peer educators conduct outreach activities, facilitate discussions, and provide peer support on a variety of health topics relevant to young people. The YPPs (young peer providers) in Kenya conduct door to door mobilisation for mobile health clinics/outreaches and facilitate FP discussions for adolescents during the adolescent health clinics. Youth community-based distributers in Nigeria referred to as Big Sistas support distribution of contraceptives to adolescents in the communities to promote uptake and method continuation.and hair dressing.

- ✅ Utilize mobile health (mHealth) technologies such as mobile apps, SMS surveys, and online platforms to provide health information and counseling to young people. Develop user-friendly apps or digital tools that allow young people to discuss health matters in a safe space. In Nigeria, digital platforms known as the **9ja girls and Big sista chat bot** on Facebook and Instagram are used to equip adolescent girls with information on topics around life, love and sexual and reproductive health in general. This digital approach is manned by trained adolescents and young people within the A360 program creating a safe space where adolescent girls can discuss their SRH challenges and needs.

SUB-THEME 2.2: SUPPORT INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH-RELATED DECISION-MAKING PLATFORMS AT THE FACILITY AND COMMUNITY LEVELS

Youth participation in decision-making platforms at both healthcare facilities and within their communities more broadly is essential for promoting youth-friendly healthcare services and addressing the unique needs of young people. Including young people in decision-making processes ensures that their perspectives, concerns, and priorities are heard and valued in health policy and programming efforts. It promotes inclusivity and representation, allowing youth to voice issues that directly affect their health and well-being and helps healthcare facilities and community health programs tailor their services to better meet the needs of young people.

Participating in decision-making platforms also fosters agency, responsibility, and empowerment, enabling youth to make informed decisions about their health and advocate for their rights within healthcare systems and communities. It enhances their leadership, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, preparing them to become effective advocates, policymakers, and leaders in the field of public health.

Youth participation in decision-making platforms on health will contribute to more responsive, inclusive, and youth-friendly healthcare systems and communities to create positive change and improve health outcomes for the young people.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING PLATFORMS WITHIN A360

- ✓ Identifying **youth advisory boards or councils** within healthcare organizations, hospitals, clinics, or public health agencies where young people can be engaged to provide input, feedback, and recommendations on health services, programs, and policies. YIOs in Nigeria are active members of Adolescent Technical Working Groups and Ward Development Committees with some being chairs and co-chairs in these forums.

- ✓ Encourage and support young people to participate in **health policy forums, conferences, and summits** where policies and strategies are developed, discussed, and implemented. Provide opportunities for youth to present research, deliver presentations, and engage in debates on health-related topics. YIC/Os in Ethiopia have participated as delegates in International, National, and local forums/conferences including RISE Acceleration plan, National Health Exhibition, Women Deliver among others which has allowed them to build confidence to share their views and contribute to decisions that affect their health and wellbeing.

OBJECTIVE 3

Increase visibility of young peoples' voices, ideas, and creativity to meaningfully contribute to the body of knowledge on MAYE.

Young people bring diverse perspectives, experiences, and insights to the table and by amplifying their voices, we enrich discussions, decision-making processes, and research on MAYE.

Their unique viewpoints can challenge assumptions, spark innovation, and lead to more inclusive and effective strategies for engaging young people in health initiatives. In addition, young people are often at the forefront of innovation and creativity and by amplifying their ideas, we tap into a wealth of innovative solutions to address complex health challenges facing adolescents and youth. Their fresh perspectives and out-of-the-box thinking can inspire new approaches, technologies, and interventions that resonate with young people and improve health outcomes.

SUB-THEME 3.1: SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ADVOCACY INITIATIVES AND CAMPAIGNS RELATED TO ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH HEALTH, RIGHTS AND WELLBEING

Advocacy initiatives provide a platform for young people to amplify their voices and raise awareness about issues that affect their health, rights, and well-being. By speaking out on behalf of themselves and their peers, young advocates draw attention to pressing issues, challenge stigma and discrimination, and demand action from policymakers and stakeholders. Youth-led advocacy initiatives have the power to influence policy decisions and shape legislation that directly impacts their lives. By mobilizing grassroots support, conducting research, and engaging with policymakers, young people can advocate for laws, policies, and programs that promote their health, rights, and well-being. Through advocacy campaigns, young people increase their health literacy and civic engagement by learning about their rights, understanding complex health issues, and taking action to address them. This process fosters a sense of civic responsibility and collective action, leading to increased community involvement and social cohesion.

There should be deliberate efforts to collaborate with other youth-led organizations, community groups, and stakeholders to build coalitions and alliances around shared advocacy goals and to make the efforts more effective. Collaboration supports resources pooling, expertise sharing, and amplifying each other's voices to increase the impact and reach of advocacy efforts.

Overall, youth participation in advocacy initiatives and campaigns is a powerful force for driving positive change, promoting social justice, and advancing the health, rights, and well-being of young people and communities.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF YOUNG PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN ADVOCACY INITIATIVES AND CAMPAIGNS RELATED TO ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH HEALTH, RIGHTS AND WELLBEING

✓ **Advocacy campaigns (including media campaigns)** on issues relevant to young people's health, rights, and well-being to raise awareness and generate public support for youth-led advocacy initiatives can be organised. Traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, radio, and television, as well as digital platforms like social media, blogs, podcasts, and online forums to amplify youth voices and reach broader audiences may be used. The young people harness the power of social media to mobilize support, raise awareness, and drive action on youth health-related issues through creating engaging content, hashtags, challenges, and viral campaigns to spark conversations, amplify youth voices, and catalyse social change. In Ethiopia, YICs used social media platforms to create awareness during the National Adolescent and Youth Health forum.

✓ **Community events, forums, or town hall meetings** where young people can come together to discuss pressing issues, share their perspectives, and brainstorm advocacy strategies can be organised. Young people are encouraged to participate in events that have been organised by the communities e.g. health related commemoration events, dialogue days where they will share their perspectives and push their advocacy agenda. These events provide opportunities for dialogue, networking, and collective action among youth advocates and community members. Nigeria together with like-minded organisations organises AYP networking events, youth-led community and school-based campaigns and partnerships to jointly advocate for pressing issues among the youth. Through these advocacy efforts, adolescent help desks have been established in different ministries across the country; these provide support beyond SRH to ensure that young people's views are represented in all relevant spaces.

✓ **Young people can engage in policy advocacy efforts** to influence legislation, regulations, and government policies that impact young people's lives. This may involve drafting policy proposals, meeting with policymakers, submitting testimonies, organizing rallies or demonstrations, sharing evidence, and mobilizing grassroots support for legislative or policy changes among others. Adolescents and youth in Ethiopia took lead in coordinating the National Adolescent and Youth Health (AYH) forum event in 2023, presenting MAYE's best practices and providing valuable comments and suggestions for future initiatives focusing on adolescents and youth health (AYH). In Nigeria, Adolescent and youths in A360 communities facilitated the domestication of the AYHDP in all A360 implementing states (Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and Nasarawa).

SUB-THEME 3.2: ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MONITORING, RESEARCH AND LEARNING INITIATIVES AND FORUMS

Youth participation in research and learning initiatives and forums is vital for generating knowledge, fostering innovation, and empowering young people to become active contributors to their communities. A360 will use a collaborative approach that will involve co-creating knowledge with young people rather than simply studying or researching them to ensure that research findings reflect the realities, priorities, and aspirations of young people. By promoting youth participation in research and learning initiatives and forums, we can utilize the creativity, energy, and talent of young people to address pressing challenges, drive innovation, and create positive change in our communities and society.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF YOUNG PEOPLES' ENGAGEMENT IN MONITORING, RESEARCH AND LEARNING INITIATIVES WITHIN A360

✔ Empower young people to execute the research activities as data collectors, field supervisors, quality assurance officers. Trainings on research methods, data collection tools, and ethical considerations are provided to equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed to conduct surveys, interviews, and observations. YICs in all countries have been involved in data collection during Client Exit Interviews. They have also been involved in analysing and interpreting data to generate reports and abstracts that have been shared for learning purposes.

✔ Participation of young people within performance planning and monitoring interventions/ activities enables them to get a better understanding of performance monitoring. AYPs in Nigeria are actively involved in development of Annual Operational Plans and Work plans providing solutions, priority areas and success indicators.

✔ Embrace **participatory research approaches** that actively involve young people in the research process as partners and co-researchers rather than passive subjects. YIC/Os in all countries **lead design and adaptation** processes and support program teams in **data collection.** Youth Innovation Champions (YICs) in Ethiopia played a crucial role in designing the smart start model that was scaled up by Government.

✔ Adolescents at grassroot level have been involved in research as validators of findings of different research programs and provide feedback on program implementation through participation in CEIs.

✔ **Youth-led learning initiatives** and forums where young people can explore topics of interest, exchange ideas, and deepen their understanding of key issues will be supported. These initiatives may include youth-led seminars, discussion groups, study circles, or online forums focused on SRH topics such as pregnancy, contraception, SGBV etc. These forums will be used to support young people to develop knowledge products like abstracts, manuscripts, blogs, webinars etc. for sharing. The YIC/O conferences have been a good platform for young people to share ideas and learn from each other across geographies.

SUB-THEME 3.3: SUPPORT ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Developing knowledge products involves creating resources, materials, and tools that provide insights, guidance, and best practices for empowering and involving young people in decision-making processes and initiatives. Sharing these products is essential for raising awareness, promoting best practices, and inspiring action among diverse stakeholders. Types of knowledge products could include research reports, policy briefs, technical publications, blogs, digital content, podcasts, interviews, success stories, or other creative media.

These products can be shared with different stakeholders depending on the target audiences. Platforms used for sharing could include website content, social media campaigns, webinars or other virtual events, email newsletters, printed publications, or publication on various online newsletters. Young people can also be involved as co-authors on upcoming publication and as participants in knowledge translation technical working groups.

By engaging with these platforms, A360 will effectively share knowledge products on meaningful youth engagement and will amplify young people's voices, ideas and creativity around SRH.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF YOUNG PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS WITHIN A360

- ✅ Capacity building and engagement of young people – particularly youth staff – as data analysts, writers, and content creators. Young people have created content in form of poems, videos, podcast, blogs about their work that they have shared on different platforms including our websites, twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. For example, YIOs in Nigeria participated in the qualitative data analysis of ES data.Capturing of testimonials and success stories from youth staff and adolescent clients for external dissemination. Young people have developed success stories using poems, videos and narrations that have been presented in an internal MAYE webinar and YIC/O conference.

- ✅ Support for youth staff to develop and submit conference abstracts and monetary sponsorship for attendance when successful. Young people have been supported to attend and present abstracts international conferences like ICFP and Women deliver among others.

- ✅ Support young people to organise conferences and webinars to talk about their work and share their experiences with the wider SRHR communities within PSI and across the globe.

OBJECTIVE 4

Create an enabling environment for young people to lead, actively participate, and meaningfully engage.

Creating an enabling environment involves fostering a supportive, inclusive, and empowering culture, and promoting policy and system changes that support youth participation, empowerment, and engagement.

This includes establishing safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces where young people feel comfortable expressing themselves, sharing their experiences, and engaging in dialogue about sensitive topics. It is important to foster a culture of respect, tolerance, and acceptance, and address any discrimination, stigma, or bullying that may occur especially from the adults within their communities. This can be achieved through promoting positive adult-youth relationships/networks, helping adults to understand and support the contributions of young people in the communities and addressing negative attitudes within communities on youth participation in important discussions.

SUB-THEME 4.1: SENSITIZE KEY STAKEHOLDERS (INCLUDING INFLUENCERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND GOVERNMENT) ON MAYE

Sensitizing adults on the meaningful engagement of adolescents and youth is crucial for fostering intergenerational collaboration, understanding, and support. This sensitization will provide opportunities to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes about adolescents and youth by providing accurate information and dispelling myths. In addition, this approach highlights the diverse talents, capabilities, and contributions of young people and the importance of valuing their voices and perspectives.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF SENSITIZATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS ON MAYE WITHIN A360

- ✓ Education and awareness campaigns targeting adults to raise awareness about the importance of meaningful engagement of adolescents and youth can be organised. The project uses various communication channels such as workshops, seminars, social media, newsletters, and community events to disseminate information and resources. During these campaigns, the benefits and positive impact of meaningful youth engagement on individuals, and communities, are emphasized while illustrating how involving young people in decision-making processes leads to better outcomes, innovative solutions, and stronger communities. In Kenya, workshops with Government officials on MAYE were helpful in generating insightful discussions on MAYE and sensitize the county leaders on the importance of MAYE in the development of the counties.

- ✓ Share success stories and examples of effective youth engagement initiatives to inspire and motivate adults to support similar efforts in their own contexts. Cases where youth engagement has led to positive change, improved outcomes, and increased community resilience are shared in innovative ways using different platforms like the awareness campaigns, community meetings and media platforms among others.

- ✓ Providing training sessions and capacity-building workshops for adults on how to effectively engage and collaborate with adolescents and youth will be helpful. The trainings will provide guidance on best practices, communication strategies, and creating inclusive environments that empower young people to participate meaningfully. This approach will mainly target leadership right from the grassroot level to government entities.

SUB-THEME 4.2: PROMOTE ADULT-YOUTH COLLABORATIONS

Promoting youth-adult collaborations involves creating opportunities for meaningful engagement, fostering mutual respect, and building trust between young people and adults. A360 will support establishment of inclusive spaces where both youth and adults feel welcomed, respected, and valued, ensuring that decision-making processes, activities, and initiatives are open to participation from individuals of all ages and backgrounds. By implementing these strategies, A360 will promote meaningful collaboration and partnership between youth and adults, leading to more inclusive, innovative, and impactful outcomes.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF YOUTH-ADULT COLLABORATIONS WITHIN A360

- ✔ Intergenerational dialogues encourage respectful listening, open-mindedness, and empathy to bridge generational divides and build understanding. A360 facilitates intergenerational dialogues and exchange opportunities where adults and young people can come together to discuss issues, share perspectives, and co-create solutions on different SRH issues affecting adolescents. In Kenya, community barazas offer opportunity for young people to engage with adults and have dialogue of issues affecting the young people in the communities.

- ✔ Mentorship relationships between young people and adults in the communities where adults provide guidance, advice, and support to young people based on their own experiences and expertise are supported. This encourages reciprocal learning and exchange of skills and knowledge between mentors and mentees. In Ethiopia, the Women Development Armies, commonly known as WDAs mentor young married adolescents in by working closely with them to discuss FP in their communities and mobilize young girls to access FP services at the facilities.

- ✔ A360 will encourage youth and adults to work together on joint projects or initiatives that address common goals or issues. This could involve planning community events, organizing advocacy campaigns, or implementing service projects that benefit both groups.

SUB-THEME 4.3: POLICY ADVOCACY FOR MAYE

Advocating for policy change on MAYE ensures that young people, especially those from marginalized or underrepresented groups, have a seat at the table and their voices are heard in matters that affect their well-being, rights, and future. Policies that promote meaningful youth engagement advance principles of social justice and equity by addressing systemic barriers that prevent young people from actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.

By utilizing various policy platforms and forums effectively, young people can amplify their voices, engage diverse audiences, and mobilize support for policy change on meaningful youth engagement, ultimately leading to more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: EXAMPLES OF POLICY ADVOCACY FOR MAYE

- Advocate for the inclusion of youth representatives on health boards, committees, or advisory panels at the local, regional, or national level and ensure that young people have a meaningful voice in decision-making processes related to healthcare governance, planning, and resource allocation. YIOs in Nigeria are members of ward development committees in their communities where they lead strategic advocacies and participate in sectoral policy guidance.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

This document is an overarching guidance tool for A360 countries to ensure active participation and meaningful engagement of young people across all areas of project implementation. Strategic approaches should be adapted and contextualised by the A360 countries to ensure alignment with the different government structures, policies, health systems and cultural preferences. However, caution should be taken during contextualisation to ensure country strategies closely align to these overarching global strategies.

Country offices are advised to prioritize strategies under at least two sub-themes for each objective. This means that country offices MUST implement strategies under each objective. A360 countries should critically analyse their capacities, health systems, social and political environments as they identify approaches for implementation. Deliberate efforts should be made by A360 project to identify and earmark resources for implementation to support the countries to do more.

A360 country strategies should clearly prioritize strategies that don't just engage youth staff but lay out how adolescent users will also be meaningfully engaged – in response to the gaps identified in the implementation of the prior version of the strategy.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A360 countries will each establish governance and accountability systems for meaningful youth engagement to support implementation of the MAYE strategy based on their unique structures and internal systems.

In the development of these systems, the following guidelines should be followed:

- **Youth Representation:** Ensure that young people are represented at all levels of the project, including in leadership positions, advisory boards, and committees. Actively seek out diverse voices and perspectives to reflect the interests and experiences of young people from different backgrounds.

- **Clear Mandates and Responsibilities:** Define clear mandates and responsibilities for youth representatives and adolescents within the project. Clarify the roles, and expectations of all young people (including adolescents) that are actively participating and meaningfully engaged in different activities. The YICs should be provided with ToRs and be supported to develop Career progression plans.

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for all young people involved in the design, and implementation of the project's policies, programs, and processes to enhance their skills based on their needs. Invest in their professional development to support their meaningful participation within the organization.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensure that there are clear guidelines and mechanisms for reporting on all activities conducted by young people. Reporting lines should be clear and all necessary tools for reporting should be provided. Establish mechanisms to review performance and achievement of goals/objectives for the activities conducted on a regular basis.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from young people on their experiences within the project. Create avenues for them to raise concerns, provide suggestions, and express their opinions in a safe and supportive environment.

- **Recognition and Appreciation:** Recognize and appreciate the contributions of young people to the organization. Celebrate their achievements, highlight their successes, and acknowledge their efforts through awards, certificates, and public recognition.

- **Integration into Organizational Culture:** Embed youth engagement principles into the organizational culture and values. Foster a culture of inclusivity, respect, and openness that values and respects the perspectives and contributions of young people.

By implementing these governance and accountability systems, countries can create an environment that empowers young people to participate meaningfully in all processes, leading to more inclusive, responsive, and effective outcomes.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF MAYE

Institutionalizing meaningful youth engagement involves embedding mechanisms within government structures to ensure sustained and effective participation of young people in decision-making processes.

A360 countries will promote, support, and strengthen institutionalisation of MAYE through:

- **Policy Framework Development:** advocate and support integration of MAYE strategies within Government health frameworks. Governments may also be supported to develop comprehensive health policy frameworks that recognize the importance of youth participation in governance. These frameworks should outline the principles, objectives, and strategies for promoting adolescent and youth engagement across government sectors.

- **Legal Mandates:** Governments can also be supported to enact laws and regulations that mandate the inclusion of youth voices in decision-making processes at various levels of government. This could involve establishing quotas for youth representation in advisory bodies or creating legal mechanisms for youth consultation on relevant policies.

- **Youth Councils or Committees:** A360 countries will integrate their MAYE youth support structures with formal structures such as youth councils or committees within government institutions. These bodies should have clear mandates, resources, and decision-making powers to influence policies and programs.

- **Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs for both youth representatives and government officials involved in youth engagement initiatives. This could include workshops on AYP responsive programming and service delivery leadership, advocacy, communication, and negotiation skills to enhance effectiveness.

- **Resource Allocation:** advocate for allocation of dedicated budgets and resources for youth engagement activities within government agencies. This ensures that sufficient funding is available to support youth-led initiatives, projects, and programs.

- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Foster partnerships and collaboration between government institutions, civil society organizations, youth-led groups, and other stakeholders. Collaborative efforts can amplify the impact of youth engagement initiatives and promote sustainable change.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and impact of youth engagement initiatives. Regularly review progress, collect feedback

RESULTS AND INDICATOR FRAMEWORK FOR THE STRATEGY

This list provides a selection of outcome level indicators relevant to this strategy.

Countries are not expected to include all of them but should select the most relevant indicators based on their selection of approaches and interventions.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
1. **Build the capacity of young people to actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.**	Young people gain knowledge and skills to actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.	• Number of young people assigned to a mentor and complete mentorship programs. • Number of young people / YIOs & YICs who graduate or complete a training package (disaggregate by type of training and those with / without certification evidence). • Number of young people enrolled/linked for agency and life skills training programs.
2. **Engage young people as a source of change for their own health and wellbeing, and for their communities' positive development.**	Increased participation of young people in community activities and decision-making forums as change agents for their own health and wellbeing and for their communities' positive development	• Number of young people involved in community mobilization and sensitization activities within their communities. • Number of young people working as peer providers/peer educators in their communities. • Number of adolescents reached by their peers in the communities and through online platforms. • Number of decision-making forums where young people are participating (disaggregated by level: community, regional/state and national). • Number and percentage of young people participating in decision making forums at different levels.
3. **Amplify young people's voices, ideas and creativity and contribute to the body of knowledge on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement**	Young people's voices, ideas and creativity are amplified to create positive change in areas that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.	• Number of advocacy initiatives championed by young people at different levels • Numberand % of young people participating in advocacy forums at different levels • Numberof young people (YIOs / YICs) participating in MERL initiatives for the project (disaggregated by type of activity: data collection, design, field supervision, quality assurance or research evaluation) • Number of knowledge products that are developed and shared by young people by type • Number of knowledge sharing platforms organised by young people

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
4. **Create an enabling environment for young people to lead, actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing.**	Young people enjoy a conducive environment where they can lead, actively participate and meaningfully engage in activities and forums that affect their health, rights and wellbeing	• Number of adults and key influencers that have been sensitized on MAYE • Number of government structures that develop systems to support MAYE • Number of adult-youth joint collaborative engagements/activities organised • Number of adults that report improved collaborations with young people • Number of policies/frameworks/plans that support youth participation and meaningful engagement at National, regional/state/county and community level