

# Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Eliminating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence through Partnerships with Feminist and Youth-Led Organizations in West and Central Africa

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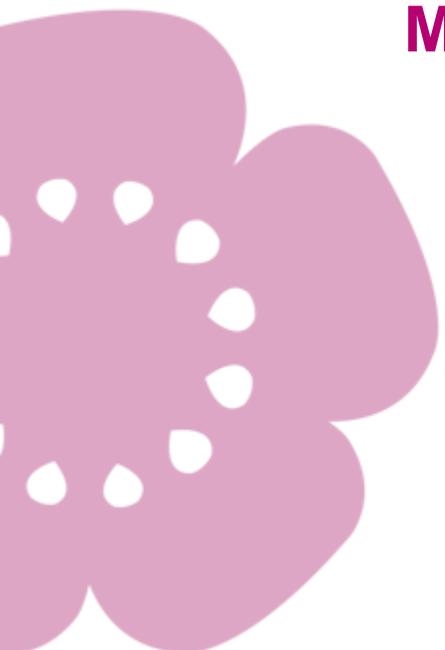
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# Background & Program Intervention

- **West and Central Africa (WCA)** is one of the youngest regions in the world, with **an estimated 77 million young people** (ages of 15 and 24).
- **Young people around the world face many challenges**, particularly in terms of respect for their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Across the region, **violence against women and girls is endemic**, with high rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- EngenderHealth's Building Equitable Partnerships with Youth-Led Organizations (YLOs) in WCA to Advance SRHR and Eliminate SGBV project in Benin, Burkina, and Côte d'Ivoire aims to **support local organizations addressing the SRHR needs of young people.**



# Methodology

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- We established **partnerships with young feminist activists and organizations** from all three countries, which facilitated joint activities. We learned that partnerships with a **range of different stakeholders** are crucial to achieving desired results for communities.
- We selected **nine youth-led organizations** that we identified as being the most committed, having sound reputations, and able to quickly mobilize. We **assessed their capacities and needs**, identified common themes, and created and **implemented customized plans to strengthen their capabilities**.



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# Results / Key Findings

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- We trained **52 young leaders** from YLOs (aged 18 to 30, 73% of whom were female)
- We indirectly reached **1,305 other YLO members and volunteers** across the region.
- All organizations developed **SGBV prevention action plans**, which are currently being implemented.



Youth attending a training on gender and sexual and reproductive health  
*Credit: Kounadee Traore*



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# Program Implications / Lessons

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- **Flexible, local, agile, and customized partnerships with YLOs** can strengthen and increase meaningful youth participation in SRHR programs and activities, including those targeting SGBV.
- Including young people across all project phases **enhances their responsibility and decision-making power** while affirming their leadership.
- YLOs often have limited institutional capacities. Partnerships that include **targeted institutional and financial support** while simultaneously supporting the implementation of their activities can yield immense success.
- More donors and partners must be **willing to invest** in similar capacity strengthening partnerships **to maximize outcomes.**



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