



**Activity Report: Rulindo Youth Center Visit**

**Activity Title:** Youth Dialogue on Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> December 2025

**Venue:** Rulindo Youth Center

**Organization:** Equality Advocates

**Project: EmpowerYouth Project**

**Background and Purpose**

On December 2025, Equality Advocates visited Rulindo Youth Center to engage young people in discussions on Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). This activity was conducted under the EmpowerYouth Project, which aims to empower youth by providing information and education on gender and SRHR. The dialogue sought to create a safe space for young people to share experiences, learn about their rights, and access accurate SRHR information.

**Objectives**

- To increase youth knowledge on gender equality, gender equity, and gender-based violence
- To discuss power dynamics in youth romantic relationships
- To provide accurate information on available SRHR services in Rwanda
- To create a safe space for youth to share challenges related to gender and SRHR

**Participants**

- Number of participants: **30**
- Age range: **17 - 24**
- Gender composition: **19 Female, 11 Male**

**Activity Description / Methodology**

The activity was conducted through an interactive dialogue with youth at Rulindo Youth Center. Discussions focused on gender issues, including gender-based violence, gender equality, gender equity, and power dynamics, particularly within youth romantic relationships.

The session also covered SRHR services available in Rwanda, including contraceptives and safe abortion services. Youth were informed about where to access condoms, emergency pills, and other SRHR services, particularly at youth centers and health centers. Confidentiality in accessing these services was emphasized.

During the discussion, youth actively shared their experiences and challenges related to gender and SRHR.

### **Key Discussion Points**

Youth highlighted several challenges, including strong social and family pressure for girls to get married at a young age, even when they are not financially ready.

One participant stated:

“You turn 21 and the village starts saying that you are old and not married. When your peers get married, your family starts pressuring you to get married because your peers are getting married. Some even chase you away from home and you have nowhere to go.”

Another participant, shared:

“If you pass 25, no man will look at you. They will all talk to younger girls. That is why we get married when we are not ready financially, because when you wait to get financial stability, you end up 30 and above and single.”

Youth explained that pressure from families, peers, and the community often forces girls to marry early, despite not being emotionally or financially prepared.

Another major issue discussed was the situation of teenage mothers. Some young girls shared that they do not report men who abused them, even when the pregnancy occurred while they were under 18. One participant stated:

“The guy who impregnated me has no life. He can’t give me anything or the child as he has nothing himself. I can’t waste my time running after him.”

This discussion highlighted the need to further engage teenage mothers on the importance of reporting abuse, not only for justice but also to protect other girls who may be at risk.

### **SRHR Education and Demonstration**

Youth raised concerns about not knowing how to correctly use condoms. The facilitator demonstrated correct condom use and emphasized that condoms are the only method that prevents both unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Participants were also informed that incorrect use can lead to condom breakage.

### **Key Outcomes**

- Increased awareness of gender equality, GBV, and power dynamics
- Improved knowledge on SRHR services and where to access them
- Youth felt safe to openly share personal experiences and challenges
- Myths and misinformation around SRHR were addressed

### **Support Provided**

After the dialogue, girls, including teenage mothers, were provided with free menstrual sanitary pads as a form of support.

## **Challenges**

- No significant challenges encountered

## **Lessons Learned**

- There is a strong need to address social pressure around early marriage
- Teenage mothers require continued engagement and legal awareness
- Youth-friendly, confidential SRHR services are critical

## **Recommendations / Next Steps**

- Conduct follow-up dialogues focused on teenage mothers and reporting GBV
- Strengthen referrals to youth-friendly SRHR services
- Continue community engagement to address harmful gender norms

## **Conclusion**

The visit to Rulindo Youth Center provided an important platform for youth to learn, share, and reflect on gender and SRHR issues. The dialogue reinforced the need for continuous youth empowerment, safe spaces, and access to accurate SRHR information and services.