

A REPORT ON INTEGRATION OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INTO CLIMATE JUSTICE MOVEMENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN JINJA DISTRICT



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALP	Adaptation Learning Program
CAN	Climate Action Network Uganda
CBOs	Community-based organizations
CDOs	Community Development Officers
DCDOs	District Community Development Officers
EAC	The East African Community
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGDs	Focus group discussions
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation
JDLG	Jinja District Local Government
JDLG	Jinja District Local Government
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PWD	People with Disabilities
RHU	Reproductive Health Uganda
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UBOS	The Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCBHCA	Uganda Community Based Health Care Association
UGANET	Uganda Network on Law, Ethics, and HIV/AIDS
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
YPWDs	Young People with Disabilities

Executive Summary

Introduction: The integration of Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) into climate justice movements is crucial for addressing the intersecting vulnerabilities faced by young people with disabilities in Jinja district, Uganda. Despite global and national commitments to both SRH and climate justice, these areas often remain siloed, leading to fragmented policies and interventions that fail to adequately address the unique needs of this marginalized group.

To gather further insights, Restless Development Uganda commissioned a research study that set out to understand the integration of sexual and reproductive health into climate justice movements from the perspectives of young people with disabilities in Jinja district. Specifically, the study set out to realize three objectives that included; i) to explore the experiences and perceptions of young people with disabilities regarding the inclusion of SRH issues in climate justice movements in Jinja district, ii) document case studies of the successful integration of SRH into climate justice movements led by or involving young people with disabilities in Jinja district and iii) explore the role of community-based organizations in supporting the integration of SRH and climate justice for young people with disabilities in Jinja district.

Results: Using a cross-sectional qualitative method, we found that; Deep rooted community myths, negative perceptions and prejudices against young people with disabilities drives stigma, increases exposure to risky SRH practices and creates barriers for meaningful participation in climate-justice movements. These perceptions disproportionately affect young women and are reinforced in family settings by parents and care-takers. These are exacerbated by their limited capacity to support and respond to the unique SRH needs. This is affecting their meaningful participation in SRH and climate- change related activities in communities. Fostering youth with disability participation will require sustained education and awareness targeting communities and families.

Integrating SRH in climate-justice movements is more effective where focus is on those issues that affect the day-to-day living experiences of young people.

As a result of poverty and deprivation, young people with disabilities perceive SRH issues as less of a priority. Instead, they focus on activities that have the potential to generate income for them to thrive. To address this requires education and awareness raising on how the lack of attention to SRH issues affects their livelihoods and vice-versa.

Conclusion: The integration of SRH in climate-justice remains low and less impactful but there is lots of potential to scale it if CBOs and movements invested to practically connect climate change and SRH. Addressing deep-rooted myths, prejudices and misconceptions about young people with disabilities is key in driving success. Designing lasting solutions that foster the engagement of young people with disabilities in SRH and climate-change initiatives requires that they take lead and have accessible platforms to have their voice heard.

Recommendations: To build sustainable initiatives, programme leaders should focus on sustainable solutions that engage young people with disabilities across the programme life-cycle and tailor programme designs to specific needs and categories of disability. They should also prioritize inclusive education and awareness, empowerment and advocacy. While youth leadership at every stage of the programme cycle – and in all interventions is pivotal in inspiring their participation and building sustainable initiatives, opportunities for young people with disabilities to lead are limited to conventional bureaucratic structures that are perceived not to truly represent their plight.

Moreover, programme leaders should collaborate with disability-focused organizations to address challenges and amplify the voices of young people with disabilities. These partnerships ensure that sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and climate justice initiatives are genuinely inclusive., and lastly

Invest in Accessible Technology tools such as screen readers and sign language services, is crucial for equal participation in program activities. This promotes equity and empowers young people with disabilities to engage fully in meaningful initiatives.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The integration of SRH into climate justice movements is crucial for addressing the intersecting vulnerabilities faced by young people with disabilities in Jinja district, Uganda. Despite global and national commitments to both SRH and climate justice, these areas often remain siloed, leading to fragmented policies and interventions that fail to adequately address the unique needs of this marginalized group (UNFPA, 2022). While efforts have been made by organizations like Climate Action Network Uganda (CAN) to bring together various stakeholders working in climate justice and SRH, these efforts have often overlooked the unique needs of young people with disabilities, particularly those from Jinja district (CAN, 2024). The lack of targeted initiatives for this group means that their specific challenges and vulnerabilities remain unaddressed.

In Jinja district, young people with disabilities face significant barriers in accessing SRH services due to stigma, physical inaccessibility and contraception, less knowledge about SRH and a lack of tailored health services (JDLG, 2020). At the same time, they are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, which exacerbate existing health disparities and limit their resilience and adaptive capacity (Barford et al., 2021). The absence of integrated approaches in addressing these issues results in compounded vulnerabilities, leaving young people with disabilities particularly disadvantaged.

Statistics from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) highlight the urgency of this issue: 22% of young people aged 15-24 have a disability, yet only 17% of these young people have access to sexual and reproductive health services (UBOS, 2020). These figures underscore the critical need for integrating SRH into climate justice movements across all sub-counties, tailored to address the specific challenges and vulnerabilities of each area.

Given the complex interplay between health and environmental challenges, there is a pressing need for integrated strategies that simultaneously address SRH needs and enhance climate resilience. Young people with disabilities often possess unique insights into their communities and the specific barriers they face, making their involvement in both SRH and climate justice initiatives essential. Their participation can help tailor interventions to be more effective and inclusive, ensuring that programs are responsive to their lived experiences and specific circumstances.

This research aims to explore the perspectives of young people with disabilities in Jinja District on the integration of SRH into climate justice movements. It seeks to identify the barriers they face, the support they need, and the potential for community-based, inclusive approaches to drive meaningful change. By documenting these perspectives and experiences, the study will provide valuable insights into best practices and scalable models for integrating SRH into climate justice, ensuring that the unique needs of young people with disabilities are not overlooked in policy and program development.

1.2 Aims/Specific Objectives

1.2.1 Main Objective

To understand the integration of sexual and reproductive health into climate justice movements from the perspectives of young people with disabilities in Jinja district.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To explore the experiences and perceptions of young people with disabilities regarding the inclusion of SRH issues in climate justice movements in Jinja district.
2. To document case studies of the successful integration of SRH into climate justice movements led by or involving young people with disabilities in Jinja district.
3. To explore the role of community-based organization's in supporting the integration of SRH and climate justice for young people with disabilities in Jinja district.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Study Approach

The study was anchored on Restless Development's six-step youth-led research methodology that saw young researchers take lead at all stages of the research cycle with guidance and support from staff and experts in participatory research methods. We utilised cross-sectional qualitative methods to understand the integration of SRH into climate justice movements from the perspectives of young people with disabilities in Jinja district using a qualitative research approach. This approach took advantage of the strength of qualitative methods to provide an in-depth understanding of the integration of SRH movements in climate change movements.



Image 1: Youth researchers conducting a focus group discussion (FGD) in Jinja, Eastern Uganda.

Data was collected using key and focus group discussions.

Table 1: Participants in KII and FGD

Tool	Number Respondents	Participants
KII	28	28 Young People with Disabilities, Community Development Officers, YPWD Representatives, Local Leaders, Community Based Organisation Leaders, Environmental Officers, Village Health Teams
FGD	32	Young people with disabilities, and young people in the community



Image 2: A youth researcher records a participant during a focus group discussion in Mayuge district



Image 3: A respondent speaks during a focus group discussion in Mayuge district.

2.2 Study Population

The study population in Jinja district comprised carefully selected key informants, including local officials, health providers, civil society organisations, community leaders, and youths with and without disabilities aged 18–35 years, to ensure comprehensive data collection on integrating SRH into climate justice movements.

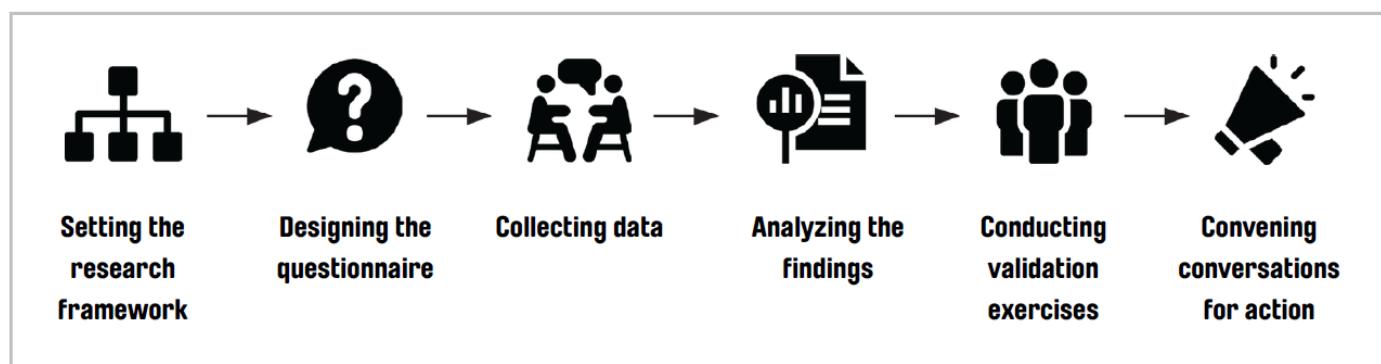


Figure: Girl-led Research Methodology

2.3 Sampling Design

The study purposively selected 24 key informants, including young people with disabilities and their representatives, local and community leaders, community-based organisation leaders, environmental officers, and village health teams. Four focus group discussions involved young people aged 18–35 years, both with and without disabilities, who were residents of Jinja district and had interacted with SRH services or climate justice movements.

3. Findings

Objective 1: Perceptions And Experiences Of Young People With Disabilities In The Inclusion Of Sexual Reproductive Health Issues Within Climate Justice Movements.

From the study, we found that:

3.1 Community Myths Undermine Disabled Youth

Deep rooted community myths, negative perceptions and prejudices against young people with disabilities drive self-stigma, low self-esteem that increases their vulnerability and exposure to risky srh practices, and creates barriers for meaningful participation in climate-justice movements

This narrative was expressed by the majority of respondents we spoke with. A male representative for young people with disabilities from Jinja retorted:

“ Historically, people have a belief that PWDs are the ones that are mostly uneducated, PWDs are the ones with nothing they can do, PWDs are the ones that are incapable. The thinking around is that when many see you with a disability, it means inability. So that is the reason why they have been forgetting and leaving them behind. ”

Getting young people with disabilities engaged will take long-term and sustained interventions that put them at the fore-front and mobilize those around them and foster a supportive and inclusive environment for their engagement and ensure that their voice is heard.

3.1.1 Family Stigma Blocks SRH Choices

Discrimination/ exclusion, stigma against young people with disabilities re-enforced in their family settings affects their srh and ability to make informed choices about their SRH.

This perception was pronounced among most of the respondents we spoke with. The non-consensual approach is driving vulnerability to sexual exploitation exacerbated by the limited capacity by parents and care-givers to effectively communicate to young people with disabilities. As such, there were reported incidents of coercing them into family planning – like vasectomy for both young women and men was common.

As a PWD leader noted from their experience:

3.1.2 Parents' SRH Knowledge Gaps Endanger PWDs

Parents and care-givers lack the capacity to engage and advise pwds on the srh needs – including those associated with their growth and development. This in turn exposes them to sexual exploitation leading to unwanted pregnancies.

“ Parents that now that she/he has grown, she/he might start giving birth let's go inject her or carryout vasectomy, it is not her right that he/she is willing coz it's not her decision, they are just forcing her, they are thinking on his/her behalf on something that he/she might not be preferring coz sincerely who doesn't want to have a baby? Everyone would like to have a baby if there is a chance but you find a decision was made on their behalf on something that they might not have been willing. If it's a boy they say aahh! Now that one let him go and be injected. They inject him and the injectable sterilizers claiming that if that one gives birth, they will disturb us. ”

Integrating SRH into disability interventions will require parents, care-takers and community engagement, sensitization and awareness on communication, SRH education.

3.1.3 Young Women With Disabilities: Increased Risk of Sexual Abuse

Young women with disabilities are more vulnerable and at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. This is driven by stereotypes and prejudices about their sexual health.

It emerged that families and communities think that they should not enjoy their sexual rights – including engaging in healthy relationships and making choices on how and when to have children. In some instances, parents are very uncertain about their growth and development, with some holding onto stereotypes that people with disabilities do not actually experience body changes that come with adolescence. When young people experience these changes, they are quick to intervene with a view of “protecting them” – including resorting to non-consensual family planning interventions.

Addressing family and care-giver related challenges that affect meaningful engagement of young people with disabilities requires development of tailored family support programmes that empower and support parents and care-givers on the value and strategies for supporting young people with disabilities. Parent support groups in communities could be a good way to create opportunities for parents and other key stake-holders to share, learn and devise mechanisms for enhancing the engagement of young people with disabilities.

3.2 Integrating SRH and Climate Justice for Youth with Disabilities

Key elements and outcomes of successful case studies involving the integration of sexual reproductive health into climate justice movements led by or involving young people with disabilities.

3.2.1 Linking SRH and Climate Justice for Disabled Youth

While integrating srh in climate-justice movements remains a challenge, there is potential to bridge the integration knowledge between climate-justice and srh especially where focus is on those issues that affect the day-to-day living experiences of young people with disabilities and communities.

The study drew insights from a leading climate-justice movement as a case study given that they operate in the area, and one that has attempted to integrate SRH and climate justice.

CASE STORY 1: GIRLS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Girls for Climate Action is a grassroot Girl/Young women eco-feminist movement that is putting their realities and experiences to advocate for climate justice at the local and national levels. The movement was started by young women and girls who live in the riparian zones of the River Nile in Jinja, Uganda whose activism started from the experience of floods and droughts and at the same time the lack of freedom to access the River Nile and the various streams that were being polluted by investors. The movement started to demand leaders for action and ensure that the companies that pollute the Nile and the various streams can be held

accountable, demanding for inclusion in the local environmental and local policies, translating the policies into local languages and create more awareness, capacity building for young women and girls in all their different diversities.

This is a young women-led movement that is centering their lived realities and experiences as they advocate for Just and Resilient communities that live in harmony with the environment. Their vision is to build a just world that is resilient and thrives in harmony with the environment.

The movement sets out to actively engage young women and girls to tackle the climate crisis and promote climate justice while centering their lived realities and experiences through advocacy and policy engagement, climate leadership and supporting young women/women Led local climate wwards behavioral change appreciating the role of education in changing mindsets.

In their quest to achieve climate justice, they appreciate the need to foster connection between climate justice and SRH as a way to generate sustainable and comprehensive context specific and community-led solutions.

While the movement has members and individuals that champion work around SRH, they note that achieving clarity in the integration can only happen when organization's appreciate the two variables more holistically as opposed to specific components of their initiatives. From their experience, this lack of clarity about the connection has affected the integration and yet they do not have a full understanding or expertise in SRH.

This was affirmed by the leader of a model climate-justice movement in Jinja expressing that:

“ I would say, we are trying to bring solutions that tackle the challenges that are in line with SRH but we are not working on SRHR. We partner with organizations that are solving different issues that we know are bringing about injustices or inequalities... We have recently brought on board an organization in Iganga that focuses on SRH but other than delivering one-off SRH trainings targeting women with disabilities, they don't have expertise in this area. ”

They go on to further retort that:

“ Most of the organizations are also now trying to understand what climate justice means and most of the organizations don't even understand what climate justice means or what climate science means so they are also still confused. ”

There are examples of successful Initiatives making the effort to integrate SRH in climate-change movements though there are still gaps in connecting directly with communities where there they would be most impactful. As a Disability Inclusion Facilitator stated:

“ As Jinja District Union, we had a whole program to educate about Health issues for quite a long time and it's still on. Then we have what we call resource persons right now here at JIDU who are youths and their work is to educate their fellow youths. Then also we involve the leadership of PWDs in various areas and at various levels to continue educating the PWDs about their rights, health, and access to school education and so on. For local leaders, they have done nothing, totally nothing. ”

To maximize the impact of successful initiatives, movement leaders should prioritize collaboration with local structures.

At a broader level, fostering this integration of SRH in climate-justice movements interventions requires; training and raising community awareness on how climate change impacts reproductive health. For example, they appreciate the connection between their demand that leaders take action and ensure that the companies that pollute the Nile and the various streams can be held accountable.

Revised statement here

Besides it threatens access to a critical resource – water – that is critical in facilitating menstrual hygiene practices for young women and girls in communities., ii) generating evidence on integration that speaks to the context and realities of communities and young people with disabilities, iii) empowering communities to explore the connection between the issues with particular focus on issues that relate to their day-to-day experiences.

One example highlighted is how having access to a reliable water source ultimately affects young women's menstrual hygiene and health, iv) integrate SRH education in climate-justice community engagement activities. When communities and young people appreciate this, creating local solutions that address the issues comprehensively will be much easier.

It also emerged that even in cases where events and activities relating to the integration happened, they were not accessible to young people in communities, but often restricted to higher echelons of local government structures and leadership. As a female PWD leader from a rural sub-county in Jinja district expressed;

“ In this area there is nothing and it hasn't occurred, at the sub county headquarters, it usually occurs, but in our villages, it hasn't been there. ”

Rural communities are disproportionately excluded from such events and activities and yet they are most vulnerable. Maximizing the impact of the integration of SRH in climate-justice movements should prioritize access to information that address SRH issues in the context of climate change, inclusive policy development and implementation, advocacy and awareness about the unique vulnerabilities of rural youth, deepening collaboration with community-based organizations and having integrated services that address both SRH and climate change needs.

3.3 Disabled Youth Eager but Lack SRH-Climate Support

Young people with disabilities are open to participating in initiatives that are fostering the integration of SRH in climate change but lack the resources, information, skills, platforms and support to do so.

It emerged that Information access remains a big barrier to their participation and this was retorted by a PWD leader who stated that:

“ If such programs have come, let them be informed and made aware. The challenge is that they have not been informed. If they had been informing them in time, they would be able to get included in SRH and climate justice movements but the challenge is that they are informed when the program has already gone. ”

The other emerging barrier is the cost associated with accessing them and yet the resources to make this happen are hard to come by. This was affirmed by a the Jinja PWD publicist who revealed that:

“ ...Young people with disabilities are hard to reach as a result of their mindset say like whenever engaged, they expect some facilitation which is not always the case. As leaders we also face a challenge of engaging them in these activities as it's expensive to transport them to attend such engagements. ”

Enhancing their participation can significantly improve if accessible channels to accessing information are deployed, resources that foster the mobility and access to engagement tailored to the specific needs of the different categories of disabilities are made available and this can be fostered by creating safe spaces for youth with disabilities to raise their concerns and challenges. As a disability respondent retorted:

“ Generally young PWDs have a lot of challenges that are not so much recognized by many of facilitators, activists or the initiators of these organizations and you find that many are shy even to share some of these challenges and when they are brought in without discussing their challenges that hinder them to fully get what it needs for them to involved in SRH issues in climate change movements. Maybe practical efforts for PWDs to be included and yet there are very many means whereby we can involve them in SRH issues in climate change movements. ” ”

3.4 Youth Face Barriers to Climate & SRH Leadership Due to Disability Challenges

Young people struggle to access leadership opportunities and information on pertinent climate justice and srh issues because of challenges associated with existing disability leadership structures.

It was expressed that the leaders are not accountable to the majority of the young people, are elderly and focus on personal or individual interest as opposed to highlighting the plight of persons with disabilities. This was affirmed by a key stakeholder in the Jinja district disability union:

“ PWDs to be put at the top within these programs so that they are given opportunity. You will bring a project when it is for 10 years fine but you will deny the PWDs opportunities. Then another thing is that we involve the leadership of PWDs in these programs. Let the leadership of PWDs be followed but here you get a challenge. Whenever we talk about leadership of PWDs, you run to councilors forgetting that each district in Uganda there is what we call a district union just like here you are now. ” ”

To enhance meaningful participation of young people with disabilities in integration of SRH in climate- justice movements, CSOs should invest in training and mentorship of prospective young leaders with disabilities in leadership and advocacy.

As a result of poverty and deprivation, young people with disabilities perceive SRH issues as less of a priority. Instead, they focus on activities that have the potential to generate income for them to thrive

As a PWD interviewees affirmed:

“ The first thing, someone said that, teach me how to fish other than giving me fish coz if you teach me how to fish for me to get what to eat, even when you go away, I remain working to get what to eat. Money is needed but at times it gets done and even organizational projects get done but the knowledge delivered continuously benefit. ” ”

“ We PWDs but there are those that have brains that work effectively, now like me, I went and studied hair dressing but due to the need that I have nothing that I can do to bring in capital, am just here redundant. You might be having a passion of going to the market and sell something, but you can't manage so we would like to get assistance. ” ”

Addressing this requires education and awareness raising on how the lack of attention to SRH issues affects their livelihoods and vice-versa.

4. Empowering Disabled Youth in Jinja

The role of community-based organizations in supporting the integration of srh and climate justice for young people with disabilities in jinja district.

Integrating SRH in climate-justice movements remains a challenge, and efforts by CBOs remain isolated and less impactful due to lack of capacity in meaningful engagement and deep-rooted myths and misconceptions about the young people with disabilities.

4.1 Gaps in Disability-Inclusive SRH Approaches Limit Youth Participation

Limited knowledge of meaningful approaches to including or engaging young people with disabilities affects their participation in srh initiatives/programmes

Programme leads or implementers lack the capacity and knowledge about their peculiar SRH needs, and this affects their integration in climate-justice movement activities. As a PWD respondent expressed:

“...the people who bring such programs especially concerning climate change lack knowledge about disability, it's like you that have come here, you have had a chance to find me and we can share something but if we are to be looking at disability, we just say disability and end there. ”

It also emerged that this lack of capacity affects the design and implementation of interventions that respond to young people in their diversity, and results into a disconnect between designed initiatives and the realities or experiences of young people with disabilities. As an interviewee expressed:

“People who design these programs are not having disabilities and for them they sit in their offices and think on behalf of the PWDs in that even if you are to ask them to let you know about the categories of disabilities, they are green yet every category of disability has its special attention and needs. ”

4.2 Poor Engagement Weakens Trust and Impact

The lack of capacity to engage affects the trust and relationships that programme leads have with young people with disabilities and this affects sustainability and impact of designed initiatives.

As a disability inclusion facilitator affirmed:

“Generally young PWDs have a lot of challenges that are not so much recognized by many of facilitators, activists or the initiators of these organizations and you find that many are shy even to share some of these challenges and when they are brought in without discussing their challenges that hinder them to fully get what it needs for them to involved in SRH issues in climate change movements. I think first of all the organization leaders have been not targeting them to hear their views and how better they can add their voices into the course of SRH issues in climate change movements. ”

4.3 Ineffective Strategies Fail to Capture Disabled Youth Insights

Where there are efforts to engage them, the strategies used are ineffective and don't truly capture the insights of young people with disabilities.

As an interview respondent from Jinja city expressed;

“ When these PWDs come with their people, these ones forget that they have to talk to PWDs directly instead they pass through these ones who take care of them, yet this one has brought me so I would like you to talk to me directly the way we are talking. ”

It also emerged that the attitude of programme leaders affects engagement of young people with disabilities. This was expressed by an interview respondent from Jinja City.

“ Another thing is that, even the attitude for these people in these programs they have for PWDs, it's usually not good which brings the inclusion of the young PWDs in SRH issues and climate justice movements be low. ”

4.4 Sustainable, Inclusive Programs for Youth with Disabilities

To build sustainable initiatives, programme leaders should focus on solutions that engage young people with disabilities across the programme life-cycle and tailor programme designs to specific needs and categories of disability.

As expressed by the Jinja district disability facilitator:

“ I think first of all the organization leaders have been not targeting them to hear their views and how better they can add their voices into the course of SRH issues in climate change movements. I think most people still believe that it all takes a lot. ”

Building sustainable initiatives that integrate SRH in climate-justice should also prioritize inclusive education and awareness, empowerment and advocacy.

This can be realized by;

- i) Creating platforms for young people with disabilities to share their experiences while supporting in advocacy roles to influence policy and program design related to SRH and climate initiatives,
- ii) deepen partnerships with SRH and climate-justice focused organizations and
- iii) provide feedback mechanisms that enhance their voice.

Conclusion

Achieving meaningful integration of SRH within climate justice requires more than policy alignment; it demands a concerted, ground-up approach that empowers community-based organizations (CBOs) and grassroots movements to bridge these critical areas. These entities are uniquely positioned to mobilize communities, offering culturally relevant and context-sensitive SRH and climate education. By providing these services in tandem, they can not only elevate awareness but also demonstrate the interconnectedness of climate resilience and reproductive health, particularly for marginalized communities, including young people with disabilities. With adequate investment and capacity-building, CBOs could become pivotal in driving sustainable change by providing both resources and platforms for inclusive dialogue and action.

Moreover, fostering collaboration between SRH practitioners and climate activists offers a pathway for designing holistic programs that respect environmental and reproductive rights. Such partnerships can help dismantle deeply entrenched misconceptions surrounding disability, gender, and reproductive autonomy, particularly in regions where these issues remain taboo. These collaborative efforts can also facilitate knowledge exchange and build a repository of inclusive practices that highlight the resilience and adaptability of young people with disabilities in the face of reproductive and environmental challenges. By leveraging this synergy, initiatives can become more adaptive, equitable, and responsive to the unique needs of all young people.

Finally, placing young people with disabilities at the forefront of these initiatives is critical for sustainable impact. Their direct involvement ensures that solutions are tailored to meet their needs and are not merely superficial accommodations. Enabling them to lead and advocate within their communities fosters a sense of agency, encouraging others to view them as capable changemakers rather than passive recipients of aid. This shift in perspective can create ripple effects, influencing societal norms and contributing to a more inclusive, justice-oriented approach to SRH and climate action. By centering their voices and prioritizing accessibility, the integration of SRH in climate justice can be transformed into a powerful tool for systemic change.

Recommendations

The following recommendations outline strategies for building inclusive, sustainable SRH and climate justice initiatives that actively engage young people with disabilities:

- 1. Focus on Sustainable and Inclusive Solutions:** Programme leaders should develop solutions that actively engage young people with disabilities across the programme life cycle, tailoring program designs to address diverse needs and categories of disability. This approach ensures that initiatives are not only inclusive but also adaptable and sustainable, recognizing the unique experiences of individuals within different disability groups.
- 2. Prioritize Inclusive Education, Awareness, Empowerment, and Advocacy:** Inclusive education and awareness-building, along with empowerment and advocacy efforts, are essential for fostering long-term engagement and impact. By equipping young people with disabilities with the knowledge and tools to advocate for themselves, programme leaders can support their active involvement in SRH and climate justice efforts.
- 3. Promote Youth Leadership Beyond Bureaucratic Limitations:** Although youth leadership is pivotal for inspiring participation, young people with disabilities often find leadership opportunities constrained by rigid bureaucratic structures that don't reflect their experiences. Expanding leadership roles to more authentic, accessible formats would enable these youth to contribute meaningfully at every stage of programme development and implementation.

4. **Collaborate with Disability-Focused Organizations:** Programme leaders should build partnerships with organizations that specialize in disability rights to address challenges and amplify the voices of young people with disabilities. Such partnerships bring essential expertise and insight, ensuring that SRH and climate justice initiatives are genuinely inclusive and responsive to disability-related needs.
5. **Invest in Accessible Technology and Communication Tools:** Investing in tools like screen readers, sign language interpretation, and other assistive technologies is crucial for enabling equal access and participation. These tools promote equity by empowering young people with disabilities to engage fully in initiatives, allowing them to take part in decision-making and shape impactful, inclusive programmes that resonate with their voices and experiences.

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